

JOLIET CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report

2024

JOLIET CITY CENTER
PARTNERSHIP

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Introduction

The Joliet City Center Partnership is actively working to improve Downtown Joliet and the entire Special Service Area. This report will provide an overview of accomplishments this past year.

The Joliet City Center Partnership (CCP) was created in 1992 with a focus on the economic development of Downtown Joliet. A Special Service Area (SSA) which included all of downtown was established following the creation of the organization. In 2016, the SSA territory expanded to include the entryways into downtown including Collins Street, Cass Street and the south end of Chicago Street.

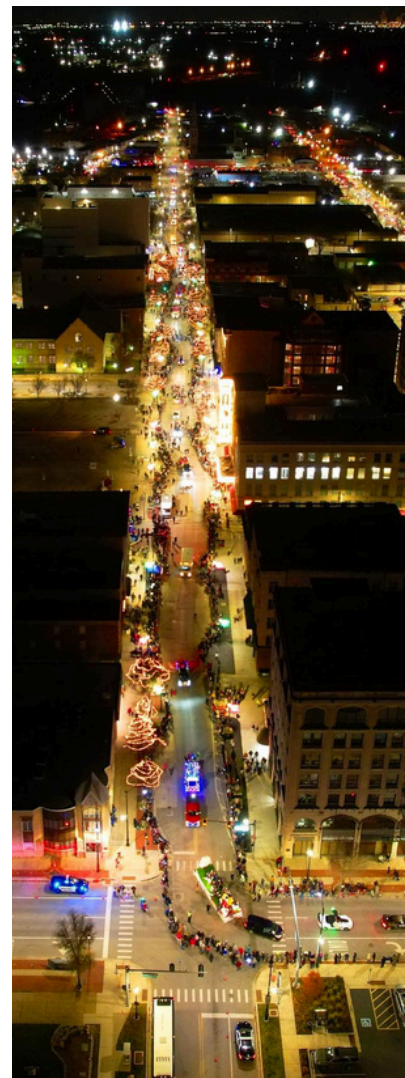
Following are the 2024 goals for the CCP:

- Work with existing businesses to ensure they remain strong throughout construction
- Conduct business retention and expansion (BRE)
- Improve marketing efforts for the Downtown and businesses in the entire special service area (SSA)
- Improve existing downtown events hosted by the CCP
- Support existing beautification efforts and advocate for additional beautification
- Serve as an advocate for businesses with the City of Joliet
- Focus on real estate development and business attraction

Several strategies were identified in order to accomplish these goals. Some of these include:

- Working one-on-one with SSA businesses to try to address concerns and connect to resources in partnership with the city
- Serving on the Equitable Transit-Oriented Steering Committee
- Promoting business attraction in order to redevelop and/or fill vacancies
- Using different social media platforms to reach a variety of different audiences and tracking the analytics provided in order to make future decisions

The remainder of the report will provide more information on how these goals and strategies were accomplished and what the results of these strategies were. 2024 had its share of challenges but significant progress forward as well.



Our Story So Far

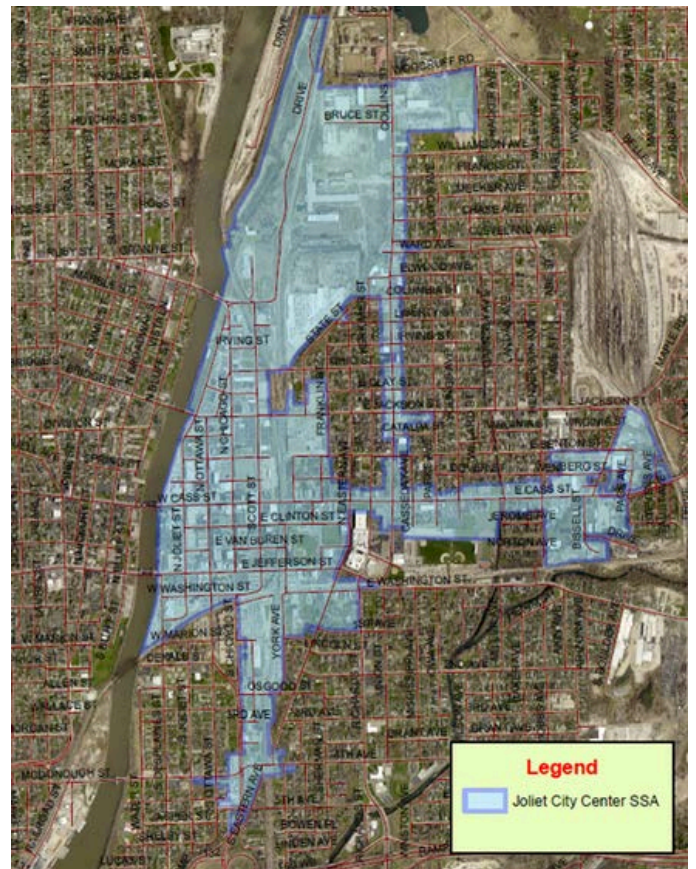
Our Mission

The Joliet City Center Partnership is an economic development organization tasked with improving all aspects of the traditional downtown central business district as well as the corridors on the east side leading into the Downtown namely Collins Street, Cass Street, as well as south Chicago Street. Working through community partnerships, Joliet City Center Partnership is committed to fostering economic development, strengthening public participation, fostering community pride, and promoting the unique assets of the Special Service Area.

The Joliet City Center Partnership also works to promote existing businesses while bringing the community together through family-friendly events that utilize our amazing location. It is in CCP's highest interest that the downtown core area remain a place that residents and tourists alike can come to enjoy themselves and create everlasting memories with friends, family and business partners.

Our Purpose

The Joliet City Center Partnership was established in 1992 in order to revitalize the Downtown area and maintain existing structures that hold architectural and historical significance. A special service area (SSA) was created in order to support these efforts. As the organization has evolved, its mission and geography has as well. The map below outlines the SSA territory.



Special Service Area

Our 2024–2025 Goals

1

Support existing businesses throughout construction.

The CCP worked closely with the city to ensure our businesses had access to the resources they needed this year throughout construction. We developed a Business Continuity Plan that guided our decisions. We launched City Center Restaurant Week for the first time ever, a college discount program to encourage college students to shop and dine downtown, and started a Downtown Lunch Club to support restaurants among other initiatives. We hosted 10 Owners & Managers meetings to keep businesses informed and provided an opportunity for them to provide feedback. Last, we ensured they were aware of street closures and other utility interruptions in advance.

3

Improve marketing efforts for the Downtown and businesses in the entire SSA.

Social media platforms, e-newsletter communications, business spotlights and ribbon cuttings were tools utilized this past year in order to better market small businesses and the SSA. A strong relationship with local media allowed the CCP to further promote the SSA.

2

Conduct Business Retention & Expansion.

Business retention and expansion activities consisted of weekly site visits, phone calls and follow-ups, improved communication efforts with both Downtown, Collins and Cass Street businesses, and resources tailored to the needs of individual businesses. Three seminars were hosted to educate business owners. The business newsletter also served as a resource to disseminate information to our businesses. A closed Facebook group solely for those affected by construction was created to provide another communication outlet. Owners and Managers Meetings in Spanish were launched in March of 2024 for the first time ever.

4

Improve existing Downtown events hosted by CCP.

CCP staff improved events in order to further support businesses. Goals included increasing margins on events, identifying which events had potential for growth, and improving the experience for visitors attending events. An additional “strolling” event was created for a total of three strolling events which brought foot traffic directly to our businesses. Further, CCP supported other downtown events through sponsorships and promotion.

Our 2024-2025 Goals

5

Support existing beautification efforts and advocate for additional beautification.

The CCP plays a large role in the beautification of the SSA including maintaining downtown planters and acting as an advocate with the City for the SSA when issues arise. The CCP also hosts two decorating competitions to encourage our businesses to improve the storefronts during the Halloween and Holiday seasons. We also launched the Downtown Music Box project which allowed us to beautify 10 utility boxes.

6

Serve as an advocate for businesses with the City of Joliet.

CCP staff worked with businesses whenever challenges arose and served as a point of contact for different departments at the city of Joliet. This role will continue to be of the utmost importance in 2025 as construction downtown continues.

7

Focus on real estate development and business attraction.

The CCP worked with developers and brokers in order to market available properties and sites. Seminars were hosted both to provide resources to existing business and to recruit new businesses to the SSA. CCP continued to use grant programs to encourage redevelopment of property and approved the most building improvement grants ever in a single year.

Our 2024 Strategy

ACTIVITY	GOALS ADDRESSED	OUTCOME
Launched Owners & Managers Association Meetings in Spanish	2, 3, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted bi-monthly meetings focused on Spanish-speaking Latinx-owned businesses for the first time ever Improved relationships and outreach to businesses along the Cass and Collins Street corridors
Launched Downtown Music Box Project	3, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with 9 different artists to beautify 10 utility boxes in the Downtown Opportunity to bring additional foot traffic for businesses
Hosted three business seminars and promoted downtown through community presentations	1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted 3 seminars to assist businesses Presented at multiple events in the community highlighting the Downtown and SSA
Promoted CCP as an economic development organization while also promoting the SSA	1, 2, 3, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 338 LinkedIn followers, a 35% growth YOY 241 page views 131 unique visitors 17% of visitors are in the "business development" field
Served on the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Steering Committee	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with city staff to recommend others to the committee and provided data requested pertaining to the study Provided feedback to the consulting firm on possible development sites
Sent monthly business and visitor newsletters	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open rate average of 38%, up 1% from previous 12 months 25,869 opens in past 12 months 1,861 clicks - 3% click rate which is 1% higher than the industry average

Our 2024 Strategy

ACTIVITY	GOALS ADDRESSED	OUTCOME
Promoted business attraction in order to redevelop properties and reduce vacancies	3, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracted three new businesses to the SSA through direct outreach and support • Approved 8 building improvement grants – the highest amount ever – including one that will add 139 mid-scale apartments to downtown
Maintained LOIS, a property inventory online platform	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 106 visitors – a 33% YOY growth, 1,376 page views for 2024 – a 22% YOY growth • Views from 11 different states • Ability to market the SSA 24 hours a day
Improvement of Downtown events	1, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an additional strolling event • Hosted the first ever strictly City Center Restaurant Week with 17 participating restaurants • Added 5 additional smaller events directly supporting businesses
Oversaw beautification in the SSA	5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversaw and covered costs of summer planter installation for the SSA • Contracted with a vendor to install holiday-themed planters for winter 2024 • Hosted over 30 volunteers for Community Cleanup Day
Promoted small businesses through the "Business Spotlight"	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12+ different businesses highlighted • The Sewing Cafe was featured and had a reach of 38,875 individuals and 601 comments. • Chicago Street Pub's post had 11,725 impressions and a post engagement of 3,589
Conducted ribbon cuttings	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ribbon cuttings hosted in past year • Promoted new businesses and encouraged networking • Invited press to ribbon cuttings

13

Property and business grants approved November 2023 – October 2024

\$189,653

Grant Amounts Approved

\$44,066

Grant Amounts Funded

22

Business starts, expansions, new ownership – November 2023 – October 2024

Tortazo at Harrah's Casino
Rapid Healthcare
Black Cat Curiosities
Ava's Locs
All That & A Touch of Soul
Amerimex Mufflers & Brakes
Niko's Pizzeria
Carotech Auto Center
BF Tire, Inc.
Rock Auto Garage
Tacos Ortega

El Guero Tire Shop
El Rincon Latino
Audiophil's Records
Exxon Food & Fuel – 334 Collins
Exxon Food & Fuel – 710 Cass
Harold's Chicken
EMT Truck Repair
El Guero Fresh Market
Joliet Discount Zone
Carnitas Aguascalientes 2
Osho Food Mart

7

Events hosted November 2022 – October 2023

16,000

Estimated Total Attendance at Large-Scale Events

10

Events sponsored November 2023 – October 2024

\$15,750

Sponsorship Amounts

Downtown Joliet's
**MONSTER MASH-UP
OF EVENTS**
JolietDowntown.com/October



JOLIET CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP

GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

SPONSORED BY:



JOIN US DOWNTOWN FOR A **FREE SEMINAR**

GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Thursday September 26th
8:30 AM

Joliet Public Library | 150 N
Downtown Joliet, IL 60432

Join us for a fun and informative seminar with local participating businesses. Michele Arana of Int'l will discuss marketing your business, product placement, and other strategies during the holiday season.



Michele Arana
SPEAKER



17 PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS

- Azul Celeste Bar & Grill
- Bishops Hill Winery
- Cross Street Grill
- Cut 158 Chophouse
- El Camaleon Bar & Grill
- Gallo de Acero
- Jitters Coffeehouse
- Juliet's Tavern
- La Joliet Taqueria
- Mousa Greek Tavern
- Puerto Escondido
- Richardson's
- Sunshine Mexican Café
- Taquerias Atotonilco
- The Reserve Steakhouse

www.JolietRestaurantWeek.com



SNAP, SCAN & SUBMIT

We're giving away multiple restaurant gift certificates! All you have to do for a chance to win is order the Restaurant Week Special from each location, snap a photo of your dish, scan each location's specific QR code, and submit the form and photo.



Retail Space
Investments

Thank you for your ongoing support of Downtown Joliet and the Special Service Area

Joliet City Center Partnership Board as of November 1, 2024

Executive Committee

Monica Cicimov, Chair – *C&C Vision Gallery*

Jennifer Howard, Owners & Managers Association – *Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry*

Tiffany Johnson, Marketing Committee Chair – *Audiophil's*

Megan Millen, Beautification Committee Chair – *Joliet Public Library*

Jim Roof, Emeritus, Economic Development Committee Chair – *Old National Bank*

Michele Arana-Bianchi– *Internode Greenery & Home*

Tim Brophy – *Will County Treasurer*

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant– *Will County Executive*

Terry D'Arcy – *Mayor, City of Joliet*

David DiLorenzo – *University of St. Francis*

Amber Duffy– *Jitters Coffee House/Duffy Realtors*

Antoinette Granholm – *Granholm & Gynac*

Susy Huerta – *Old National Bank*

Bryce Jordan – *Harrah's Casino & Hotel*

Brian Kincaid – *Joliet Junior College*

Bryan Kopman, Emeritus – *Kavanagh, Grumley & Gorbald, LLC*

Cornell Lurry – *Midland States Bank*

Greg Peerbolte– *Joliet Area Historical Museum*

Doug Pryor – *Will County Center for Economic Development*

Ron Romero – *Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66*

Diana Viveros – *Joliet Latino Economic Development Association*

Wade Welsh – *Rialto Square Theatre*

Howard Wright – *State Farm/Wright Insurance Agency*

The work we do would not be possible without our economic development partners and major sponsors including:

The City of Joliet

Will County Center for Economic Development

Old National Bank

University of St. Francis

D'Arcy Motors

Midland States Bank

Midwest Orthopaedics

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Priscilla Cordero, Executive Director

Vicki Sanchez, Marketing & Events Manager

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