

JOLIET CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report

2023

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 2023 goals for the CCP:

- Focus on real estate development and business attraction
- Promote 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

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

- Serving on the City Square Design Advisory 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
- Working one-on-one with our businesses to try to address concerns, connect to resources and maintain trust

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. 2023 had its share of challenges but significant progress forward as well. While this report is not intended to provide goals and strategies for 2024, it provides a foundation as we map out the focus for next year.



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, and south Chicago Street. Working through community partnerships, Joliet City Center Partnership is committed to encouraging 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 area remains 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 evolved, its mission and geography did so as well. The map below outlines the SSA territory.



Special Service Area

Our 2023 Goals

1

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 launched in order to provide resources to entrepreneurs and existing business, but also with the end-goal of recruiting these businesses to the SSA. This strategy was successful as we had two new businesses who attended seminars sign leases in the SSA. Further, direct recruitment of businesses led to two new additional businesses. CCP continued to use grant programs to encourage redevelopment of property.

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 print and digital Downtown Map were created to direct foot traffic to the area. A strong relationship with local media allowed the CCP to further promote the SSA.

2

Promote 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. A Business Interruption Assistance Program was created in partnership with the City of Joliet to assist businesses struggling as a result of construction in the SSA. The business newsletter also served as a resource to disseminate information to our businesses. This program will be further strengthened in 2024.

4

Improve existing Downtown events hosted by CCP.

CCP staff continued the work of improving our events in order to further support our businesses. Goals included improving margins on events, identifying which events were successful and had potential for growth, and improving the experience for visitors attending events. Two “strolling” events were created which brought foot traffic directly to our businesses.

Our 2023 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 needed. CCP staff also participated in the City Square Design Advisory Committee and provided feedback with the goal of making the square a space that is utilized 365 days a year.

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 2024 when construction projects disrupt the SSA.

Our 2023 Strategy

ACTIVITY	GOALS ADDRESSED	OUTCOME
Developed a new Business Interruption Assistance Program in partnership with the City of Joliet	2, 3, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIAP grant developed will provide rent abatement for retail and restaurants • BIAP Marketing Plan will drive additional foot traffic downtown and mitigate business losses
Launched Ready to Rock Project	3, 4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought additional visibility and foot traffic to the SSA through our Ready to Rock Art Sculpture project which was visible summer of 2023 • Raised over \$15,000 for future art and beautification projects
Hosted 3 Business seminars in partnership with Joliet Junior College's Entrepreneur & Business Center	1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-hosted 3 seminars with the EBC – total attendance over 70 • Presented at multiple events in the community highlighting the Downtown and SSA
Promoted CCP as an economic development organization	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 251 LinkedIn followers • 251 page views • 126 unique visitors • 14% of visitors are in the "business development" field
Served on City Square Advisory Committee	5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocated for a city square that will bring additional visitors and families downtown • Recommended changes that will help support our restaurants and businesses
Sent monthly business and visitor newsletters	2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication with businesses and residents/visitors • Open rate average of 38%, up 8% from previous 12 months • 25,829 opens in past 12 months – nearly 200% growth

Our 2023 Strategy

ACTIVITY	GOALS ADDRESSED	OUTCOME
Promoted business attraction in order to redevelop properties and reduce vacancies	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracted two new businesses to the SSA through direct outreach Significantly reduced vacancies at a prominent building Approved several large grants including one for the former St. Mary's property
Maintained LOIS, a property inventory online platform	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 visitors, 1,127 page views for 2023 Views from 14 different states including one from Mexico Ability to market the SSA 24 hours a day
Improvement of Downtown events	3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sponsorships and decreased expenses to improve margins on events Retired events that were not meeting our goals Created 2 strolling events which brought foot traffic directly to our businesses
Oversaw beautification in the SSA	5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversaw summer planter installation and maintenance for the SSA Contracted with a vendor to install holiday-themed planters for winter 2023 Hosted over 30 volunteers for Community Cleanup Day
Promoted small businesses through the "Business Spotlight"	2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12+ different businesses highlighted CUT 158 was featured this fall and had a reach of 2,411 individuals and 41 likes Hispanic Heritage Month video highlighting a few Collins Street businesses had a reach of nearly 1,000
Conducted ribbon cuttings	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 ribbon cuttings hosted in past year Promoted new businesses and encouraged networking Invited press to ribbon cuttings

13

Property and business grants approved
November 2022 -
October 2023

\$216,345

Grant Amounts Approved

\$112,693

Grant Amounts Funded

16

Business starts or
expansions November
2022-October 2023

Richardson's
Internode Greenery & Home
The Sewing Cafe
Fusion Natural Hair & Braid Academy
Studio Neutral
Sheena Anne Photography
Prison City Vintage
Azul Celeste Bar & Grill
Claudia's Hair Salon

Town Center Realty
Gallo de Acero
Gigi's Sweets
Duffy Signs
Waywards Art Haus
Yura Nuna-rebranding
The Juncture-
expansion

7

Events hosted
November 2022 -
October 2023

20,000

Estimated Total Attendance at Events

14

Events sponsored
November 2022 -
October 2023

\$19,750

Sponsorship Amounts

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

Joliet City Center Partnership Board as of December 1, 2023

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*

Diane Harris – *ItisAmazing*

Antoinette Granholm – *Granholm & Gynac*

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

Xfinity

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