

# DOWNTOWN KELOWNA



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

# ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The Downtown Kelowna Association (DKA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a safe and desirable place to conduct business, live, work, and play through the cooperative efforts of its members and local government.

The BIA, officially registered in 1989, is funded by a commercial taxation assessment levy paid by the property owners within the BIA to the City of Kelowna through Bylaw No. 11645. You are automatically a member of the Downtown Kelowna Association when located within the BIA.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Renata Mills

Wow! it's hard to believe my year as President has already flown by, but what a privilege it has been to serve alongside such a wonderful group of people as my fellow Directors. Having begun my professional experience in Kelowna's downtown more than 26 years ago, sitting as President was definitely a "full circle moment" for me.

I've been a member of the DKA since 1998 when I was hired by then Executive Director Lorna Gunn to develop a new entertainment program that would help "animate downtown parks and public spaces through live cultural performances". It was a partnership between the City of Kelowna and the DKA for "Parks Alive!" and anchored an understanding in my mind of how collaboration can achieve greater benefits for our community. Parks Alive is still going strong and is one of the many events in the Festivals Kelowna portfolio that helps attract thousands of residents and visitors to our downtown annually, contributing to this vibrant and dynamic part of our city.

The 2023/24 year was another interesting period for downtown. It was 2 years past COVID, but still a time of recovery for our downtown broadly and our members specifically. From social issues such as homelessness and the challenges related to an ever-evolving drug enforcement policy, to wildfires that cut short the important and lucrative summer season for our retailers, restaurants and attractions, our members continued to face hurdles to their success. As a result, your Board refocused its efforts on member-centric conversations and initiatives that would directly benefit the membership at the local level. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of your Board of Directors regularly highlighting concerns at our monthly meetings, and the tremendous responsiveness and strategic thinking of your Executive Director Mark Burley and his staff, the DKA continued to diligently serve its members. From advocating for and providing timely information on funding for crime prevention tools, to enhanced marketing campaigns that assured the community that our downtown was very much "open for business", to the important and valuable investment in a safe and clean downtown through the Downtown On Call (DOC) and Clean Teams, now under the outstanding leadership of Brent Lobson who brought a new level of professionalism and efficiency to the programs, your downtown thrived.

Reflecting back on our year there were many highlights, but one in particular would be the recognition by the City of Kelowna and MLA Renee Merrifield that our DOC program was a model of excellence that should be replicated in other business neighborhoods in Kelowna. Thanks to a strong spirit of collaboration and the invaluable guidance, expertise, and knowledge of our DKA staff, the Uptown Rutland Business Association will be launching their very own "URBA On Call" program this spring, mirroring many benefits our own DOC continues to provide downtown.

As a "governance" Board, we are policy driven, and this past year saw fine-tuning of some Board systems. This included the creation of a new "on-boarding" process to welcome new Directors, and the formation of two new Board working Committees, "Member Engagement" and "Expansion". While still being developed, the "Member Engagement Committee" will explore even more unique opportunities to highlight and connect with our membership. The "Expansion Committee" reflects a strategic priority of the DKA in the 2024-2028 term and will research the viability of expanding our boundaries to serve the growing number of commercial and retail entities around our current boundary.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT cont'd...

I'd like to acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds, life experiences, and professional knowledge of your Board of Directors. This certainly made for some interesting discussions around the Board table and oftentimes we didn't view issues the same way. However, there was always room for differing perspectives and I was so appreciative for the opportunity to learn from people who ALWAYS had the best interests of the downtown as their guide. I can attest to the commitment of your Board this past year as they worked hard to identify member's pain points and advocate for solutions to all three levels of government and police services. I want to thank my fellow Directors for their energy, enthusiasm, sense of humour, and wisdom.

In closing, I'd also like to acknowledge the DKA staff, in particular Mark Burley, E.D, and offer my sincere appreciation for the many hours of hard work they invest in our downtown. They are a committed and passionate group, and we are so grateful to have this talented team working on our behalf for the betterment of this place we live, work, and play, your downtown.

Cheers

Renata Mills,  
Founding Executive Director  
Festivals Kelowna





## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Mark Burley

Every year as I write these messages, I start by referring to the previous year's version. In doing so, I realize that health restrictions were not part of our year at all in 2023. What continued to be a part of year was inconsistent weather, heat, cold and wildfire smoke. The effects of the aforementioned items were felt by Downtown Kelowna across the board. The cold affected our On Street Services program, heat and wildfire smoke affecting the execution of Meet Me on Bernard and the associated events and inconsistent weather hindered predicting how to plan for events.

Brent Lobson helmed the On Street Services department for the whole of 2023. Our new Director of Operations reorganized procedures and policies while getting our Downtown on Call team back to full strength and building the Clean Team to 3 members. Turnover hit us particularly hard in 2022 and it was great to see the team back to where it needs to be.

2023 saw the number of incidents fall slightly for our On Call efforts. Needles are no longer found at the rate they once were and our calls to the RCMP are not as frequent as the street population moves when asked, for the most part. As Downtown Kelowna grows, the need for the services of Clean Team grows and we addressed that with an additional member and plans for another in 2024.

As a member of the Board for Business Improvement Areas of BC, BIABC, I worked with other board members advocating for the Small Business Rebate program. This program to get money back to members who have experienced crime, vandalism and theft is a huge accomplishment of which I'm very proud. I continue to serve on the Board of Directors advocating for positive change for our businesses.

Meet Me on Bernard changed in 2023 with an earlier start and the elimination of 2 blocks included in the closure. City council asked the Board of Directors to make the decision as to whether the 300 & 400 blocks should be included in the closure. Ultimately, they voted no, and the closure is now only the 200 & 300 blocks. With only the 200 block closing for the May long weekend and 300 following for July/August, execution has changed and there are still questions in the office as to the longevity of the initiative.

Wildfires affected the summer traffic this year. Summer started slowly as we felt the affects of residents leaving for summer vacations for the first time in 3 years. Then the mid August forced the cancellation of Show N Shine which we still executed a month later in September. With the ban on travel to our city in August we advocated for refunds for our patios which resulted in a discount for those patios in 2024's version of Meet Me on Bernard.

This year saw change for the DKA in administration. Marketing Manager Facundo Rodriguez left us for UBCO and Liz Densmore, Administrative Assistant, retired. We welcomed Shari Warren as our new Administrative Assistant, and I personally took on the Marketing function for the foreseeable future. Along with Brent, Kris Johnson works endlessly at making each of our events happen and improve each year. Pawan Sandhu remains on board as our IT/Web guy to round out the office staff. We have a great office of fun people who are consummate professionals which I am grateful for each day.

I thank the Board of Directors and President Renata Mills for their continued and constant support. Our organization operates to improve the experience in Canada's fastest growing Downtown and I am privileged to lead the team in those efforts.

# MEMBERSHIP

The Downtown Kelowna membership is highly diverse, from professional services to arts and culture to entertainment and attractions. The diversity of Downtown Kelowna adds to the vibrant atmosphere and the resurgence of our area to live, work and play. Analyzing data across other cities that share our size and our level of tourism, we can see that the downtown core is trending in the right direction. Below are figures as current as of December 31, 2023.

Property Owners (Class 5 + 6)	212
Businesses	1141
<hr/>	
<b>Total as of December 31, 2023</b>	<b>1353</b>
<hr/>	

	#	% of Business Mix
Accommodation	8	0.70%
Dining / Restaurants	131	11.48%
Entertainment & Attractions	58	5.08%
General + Professional Services	680	59.60%
Shopping & Retail	264	23.13%

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## MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

In 2023, the DKA continued to make efforts to improve communications with members and the public. This included more in-person visits to businesses, follow up phone calls, and a vetting of the membership list. We continued to send out 'as needed' special bulletins about on-going challenges that affect our members like homelessness and property crime. We circulated information about the Small Business Rebate to assist members affected by property crime and vandalism, along with distributing messaging around the transition from dumpsters to "totes". A total of 94 notices, alerts, reminders, and Updates were sent in 2023 with a combined open rate of 54%. The Newsletter continued to be circulated at or near the beginning of each month, with a combined open rate of 64%. There was substantial growth in our main subscriber lists; the DKA Business Owners/Employees list grew from 885 to 1,178 subscribers, and DKA Newsletter list grew from 960 to 1,428 subscribers. We continue to face challenges with maintaining an up-to-date contact list, as there is no annual "membership renewal" process during which contact info can be verified, modified, or deleted.

# BUSINESS RECRUITMENT



2024-2028 **DOWNTOWN**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
OPPORTUNITIES

**DOWNTOWN**  
**KELOWNA**  
downtownkelowna.com





# ON STREET SERVICES

## DOWNTOWN ON CALL

The Downtown Kelowna membership all believes the [Downtown On Call](#) team is one of the most important pieces for the Downtown Kelowna Association. The On Call team is trained to deal with front line issues related to personal safety, hospitality and help create a positive social environment in Downtown Kelowna.



	2023	2022	2021
	0	0	0
Guest Services			
Pan Handle	7	6	2
Sleeper	1658	1707	1383
Loitering	2816	2507	3069
Busker	5	7	11
Alcohol	21	34	12
Marijuana	2	1	3
Other Drug/Dealing	37	49	36
Sex Trade Worker	1	1	0
Bylaw	99	167	173
RCMP	446	422	936
Medical First Aid	36	26	23
Ambulance Called	46	110	32
Resource Referral	0	4	2
Needle Pick Up	1667	2044	3631

# DOWNTOWN CLEAN TEAM

Along with the Downtown On Call Team, the [Downtown Clean Team](#) is equally as important in the eyes of the businesses. The Clean Team, dressed in blue, currently use two Kubota's to keep the roads and sidewalks clean. The street sweeper is used to clean the sidewalks, parkades, transit loop and City promenade. The Kubota's are equipped with a power washer to help with the heavy-duty jobs.



		2023	2022	2021
<b>Graffiti Covered</b>	# of tags:	315	204	245
	square metres:	331	225	661
<b>Parkades</b>	Times cleaned:	3	11	19
<b>Transit Loop</b>	Times cleaned:	2	4	7
<b>City Promenade</b>	Times cleaned:	0	3	6

# MARKETING

## WEBSITE

In 2023, The Downtown Kelowna Association continued making positive steps in creating a long-lasting website that reached broader audiences.

	2023	2022	2021
<hr/>			
<a href="#">DowntownKelowna.com</a>			
Pageviews:	24,887 views	15,751 views	18,546 views
Avg. Session Duration:	1min 08 sec	1min 38 sec	1min 52 sec
<a href="#">/Events</a>			
Pageviews:	19,699 views	34,769 views	5,942 views
Avg. Session Duration:	0min 52sec	1min 52sec	1min 05 sec
<hr/>			

As the DKA continued to rely heavily on digital media to keep engaged with the community in 2023, multiple campaigns were set into motion throughout the year. Below is a break down of all our social media campaigns with total costs.

### Marketing Promotions

Billboards	\$ 4,766
Castanet	\$ 5,593
Radio	\$ 34,860
Facebook	\$ 799
Infotel	\$ 1,348
Social Media	\$ 446

# MARKETING

## MICRO-SITES

	2023	2022	2021
<a href="#">/After5</a>			
Pageviews:	6,686	2,744	1,642 views
Avg. Session Duration:	2min 47sec	2minutes	1min 13sec
<a href="#">/Small-Shop</a>			
Pageviews:	4,363	1,931	- views
Avg. Session Duration:	4min 19sec	n/a	- min -sec
<a href="#">/Block-Party</a>			
Pageviews:	15,907	5,050	1,095 views
Avg. Session Duration:	2min 58sec	n/a	1min 51sec
<a href="#">/Taste-of-Downtown</a>			
Pageviews:	n/a	n/a	1,504 views
Avg. Session Duration:	n/a	n/a	0min 54sec
<a href="#">/Explore</a>			
Pageviews:	5,166	11,113	n/a
Avg. Session Duration	0min 58sec	1min 46sec	n/a
<a href="#">/WinterMarket</a>			
Pageviews:	12,051	13,759	1,597 views
Avg. Session Duration:	2minutes	3min 16sec	0min 00sec
<a href="#">/Blog*</a>			
Pageviews:	363	325	n/a
Avg. Session Duration	0min 41sec	0min 58sec	n/a

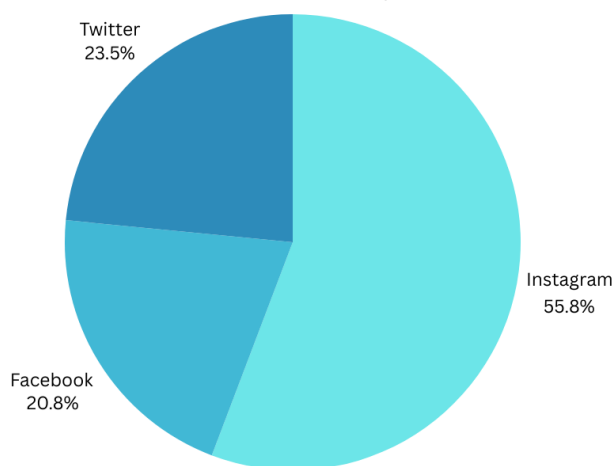
# MARKETING

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media continues to grow at a consistent rate. We are reaching, however, the point where increasing followers at a fast rate will become difficult. Working with local influencers and producing high-quality content and videos will be important to our continued growth.

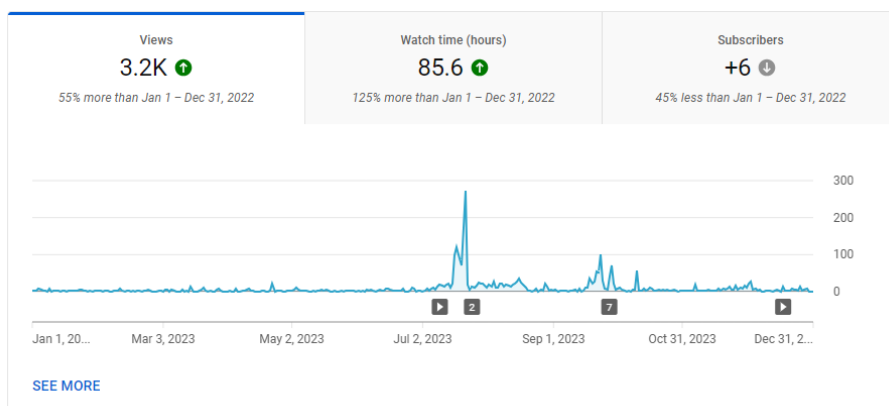
	2023	2022	2021
<b>Instagram</b>	29,381 Followers 55 Posts	28,201 Followers 468 Posts	25,545 Followers 468 Posts
<b>Facebook</b>	10,938 Followers 8,740 Likes	8,425 Followers 10,000 Likes	7,608 Followers 7,412 Likes
<b>Twitter</b>	12,356 Followers 36 Tweets 3,215	12,350 Followers 168 Tweets	12,339 Followers 468 Tweets
<b>YouTube</b>	Views 5 Videos	1,009 Views 15 Videos	1,009 Views 18 Videos

### Follower Breakdown by Platform



### YouTube Analytics

Your videos got 3,215 views in 2023



## EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

### Meet Me on Bernard

The Meet Me on Bernard (MMOB) partnership between the City of Kelowna and the Downtown Kelowna Association continued, with Tourism Kelowna much less involved and not a financial partner.

MMOB returned to Downtown Kelowna from May 19 to September 4, 2023 with a few significant changes:

#### Smaller Meet Me on Bernard Footprint (200 & 300 Blocks only)

Kelowna City Council asked the DKA Board of Directors if the 400 block (Pandosy to Ellis) and the 500 block (Ellis to St. Paul) should be closed as part of the initiative.

After discussion and a vote, the DKA Board of Directors recommended that the 400 & 500 Blocks of Bernard Ave remain open to vehicular traffic, but that businesses in the 400 & 500 Blocks be allowed to expand patios into the parking stalls in front of their establishments.

Kelowna City Council stated that any future inclusion of 400 & 500 Blocks should be revisited annually once the Mission Group's "Bernard Block" office building and residences between St. Paul St. and Bertram St. is completed.

The smaller footprint made the initiative easier to manage from an operational level, but did add costs and additional logistics for large events like Block Party & Show N Shine on Bernard.

#### Earlier Start Date (May Long Weekend)

MMOB opened in a two-stage process, with the 200 Block ("The Sails" to Water St.) ready for the May Long Weekend with the 300 Block joining at the end of June for a July 1 opening.

Business in the 300 Block were allowed to expand patios into parking stalls in front of their establishments beginning May 19, 2024.

#### Bike Valet

The City of Kelowna launched a Bike Valet pilot program, which ran on weekends between July 1-September 2, 2023. The program was viewed as a success and the City made plans to find funding for the Bike Valet for 2024.

Some of the DKA's other contributions to MMOB in 2023 included:

Site management of the initiative. The City of Kelowna and Tourism Kelowna were not actively involved in day-to-day management of the site.

Management of the MMOB website.

Digital and traditional marketing. Marketing for MMOB began 2 weeks prior to the official opening and ran until Labour Day weekend.

Hiring 4 staff members to join the MMOB on-street team to set up equipment and engage with the public.

Liaising with businesses prior, during, and after event.

DKA member communications about MMOB.

Management of the MMOB social media accounts.

Organizing and paying for 1 storage "sea cans."

MMOB continued to be well-received by the community at large, but requires dedicated project management, site management, added human resources, additional programming, and significant financial investment from the private sector, grants, and the City of Kelowna in order to see positive evolution and growth.

### Small Shop

The Small Shop promotion was once again held in April and September. 56 businesses participated in April, with 47 joining the promotion in September. Both occasions featured a prize draw, with 4 designated contest entry locations instead of each business receiving a ballot box. Downtown Kelowna was very busy during each occasion, as the promotion was purposely scheduled on weekends during which other events were taking place. Response from those who participated remains generally favourable, with most locations reporting increased sales directly related to the promotion. The message behind the promotion remains fixed on the importance of shopping local. Consideration has been given to extending the promotion to a full weekend in 2024.

## EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

### Block Party

Block Party returned on Saturday, July 22, 2023 10am-4pm and was held from “The Sails” to St. Paul Street along Bernard Avenue. An estimated 12,000 visitors attended Block Party. With the MMOB closure not extending through the 500 Block, intersections along Bernard Avenue were closed to ensure inclusion of the 400 & 500 Blocks. Pandosy Street was also closed in the 1400 & 1500 Blocks (from Queensway to Lawrence Ave). The free, family-friendly event comprises a street market, live and roving entertainment, food trucks, family activities and more. 2023 included a live DJ in the 200 Block, live music in the 400 Block, a dunk tank in the 500 Block (fundraiser for Tourette Canada), and a “Flash Mob”. Sponsorship for the event was secured from FortisBC, Recycle BC, Westcorp, and Meiklejohn Architects which greatly assisted with covering costs. The event continues to be well-received by the membership, particularly those along Bernard Avenue.

### Show N Shine on Bernard

Show N Shine on Bernard returned in 2023 – originally scheduled for Saturday, August 19, the event was postponed due to the wildfire emergency. Show N Shine was eventually held on Saturday, September 23 from 11am-4pm to the delight of the business members who were dealt a harsh blow from the fires in August. Show N Shine coincided with September 2023’s Small Shop promotion which made for a very busy and profitable day for businesses. The event was held from “The Sails” to St. Paul Street along Bernard Avenue (200-500 Blocks) and in 1400 & 1500 Blocks of Pandosy (from Queensway to Lawrence Ave). Classic cars, hot rods, and genuine collectibles lined Bernard Avenue within the Meet me On Bernard footprint from 11am-4pm. Visitors to Show N Shine were able to view the vehicles, meet & greet each of the owners, and voted for their favourites. Prizes were awarded for Best Domestic, Best Import, Best Overall in the show, and the new People’s Choice category. Those who voted for the People’s Choice award were entered to win a prize draw. Sponsorship for the event was secured from Indigo Group (Presenting Sponsor), Mirror Image Customs, FortisBC, Lorval Developments, and Collision King, greatly reducing the financial burden on the DKA. An estimated 12,000 visitors were at Show N Shine, and it will return in 2024.

### Winter Street Market & Light Up

The Downtown Kelowna Winter Street Market (WSM) was held on Saturday, December 2, 2022, from 11am-5pm, with Light Up following at 5:30pm. 40 market vendors attended, including some DKA member businesses; live entertainment, Photos with Santa, and other family activities happening throughout the day. Vendors reported excellent results, although commented that they would have liked the Market to run until 6pm. This was in contrast to 2022 when the Market ran until 6pm and vendors wanted to pack up due to the cold temperatures; in 2023, the weather was very mild which made for more comfortable outdoor conditions. Impact Events provided staff assistance day-of the event and assisted with canvassing for volunteers. An estimated 13,000 visitors attended throughout the day, with most of those showing up in the afternoon and for Light Up in Stuart Park. DKA worked with the Central Okanagan Food Bank (COFB) on a hot chocolate fundraiser, which netted \$5,597.15 for COFB from hot chocolate sales and donations from attendees.

### Santa’s Secret Code

This contest was held from December 2-16, 2023, and focused on driving traffic to participating Downtown Kelowna businesses. A total of 42 DKA businesses participated in this “scavenger-hunt-meets-word-puzzle” contest. Contest players were tasked with visiting participating locations during the contest period and would use their smart phone to scan QR codes to reveal hidden clues. Once all 10 clues were found, players had to combine the words to create a sentence – cracking Santa’s Secret Code. Businesses were very generous and donated so many items we were able to make daily prize draws in addition to the Grand Prize of a \$250 VISA card. Each business was listed on the contest web page with an interactive map, and we created a social media campaign to support the contest.

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# FINANCIALS

## BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets:		
Cash	\$227,419	\$187,740
Restricted Cash & cash equivalents	\$44,054	\$42,637
Accounts Receivable	\$5,943	\$4,547
Prepaid Expenses	\$7,318	\$6,865
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>\$284,734</b>	<b>\$242,062</b>
Capital assets	\$15,013	\$36,492
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$299,747</b>	<b>\$278,554</b>
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable & accrued	\$50,070	\$40,949
Net Assets:		
Invested in capital assets	\$15,013	\$36,492
Internally restricted	\$44,054	\$42,910
Unrestricted	\$190,610	\$158,203
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$249,677	\$237,605
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$299,747</b>	<b>\$278,554</b>



# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

	2023 Year End	2022 Year End	2021 Year End
<u>REVENUE</u>			
Membership Levy	\$1,148,954	\$1,137,572	\$1,126,084
Downtown On Call	\$100,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Downtown Clean Team	\$85,844	\$38,973	\$58,982
Events	\$74,432	\$47,682	\$17,206
Downtown Concierge	\$20,718	\$14,584	\$21,280
Other	\$45,159	\$1,202	\$485
	<b>\$1,475,107</b>	<b>\$1,310,013</b>	<b>\$1,294,037</b>
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Amortization of capital assets	\$25,915	\$34,819	\$32,674
Business Recruitment	\$6,463	\$8,277	-
Clean Team	\$247,629	\$225,594	\$189,450
Communications	\$6,421	\$5,509	\$4,833
Downtown Concierge	\$25,139	\$29,917	\$42,235
Downtown On Call	\$500,607	\$482,055	\$485,758
Events	\$137,484	\$131,149	\$42,959
Insurance	\$9,025	\$9,163	\$9,679
Interest on long term debt	-	-	-
Marketing and Promotions	\$54,808	\$94,617	\$124,494
Office and Administration	\$49,993	\$58,644	\$47,150
Professional Development	\$2,666	\$5,774	\$922
Professional Fees	\$22,755	\$19,499	\$19,116
Rent	\$59,347	\$49,071	\$38,814
Wages and Benefits	\$314,783	\$327,317	\$255,883
	<b>\$1,463,035</b>	<b>\$1,481,405</b>	<b>\$1,293,967</b>
<b>EXCESS/LOSS OF</b>			
<b>REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$12,072</b>	<b>(\$171,392)</b>	<b>\$70</b>
<b>NET ASSETS — BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$237,605</b>	<b>\$408,997</b>	<b>\$408,927</b>
<b>NET ASSETS — END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$249,607</b>	<b>\$237,605</b>	<b>\$408,997</b>

# MEET OUR TEAM

## EXECUTIVE:

President – Renata Mills, Festivals Kelowna

Vice President – Travis Pye, Lakehouse Homestore

Treasurer – Jaspal Dhial, GSL Group Propera Place

Secretary – Caroline Bye, Kelowna Yacht Club

## DKA BOARD:

Tina Thygesen, Mission Group

Crystal Dougan, Little Hobo Soup & Sandwich

Jillian Povarchook, Olive & Elle Boutique

Thomas Eaves, Pushor Mitchell LLP

Craig Shirra, UBC Properties Trust

Nathan Mathis, Sweat Studios

David Lindsay, The Train Station Pub

Jason Wills, Venture Realty Corp

## EX-OFFICIO:

Councillor Rick Webber City of Kelowna

## DKA STAFF:

Mark Burley - Executive Director

Brent Lobson - Director of Operations

Shari Warren – Administrative Assistant

Pawan Sandhu – Web & Data Coordinator

Kris Johnson— Communication & Events Manager

## **DOWNTOWN KELOWNA ASSOCIATION**

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