

Milestones &Momentum

ANNUAL

2024

REPORT





CEO





Events & Marketing Manager



Assistant Manager Safety + Hospitality Ambassador



Safety + Hospitality Ambassador





Development Director



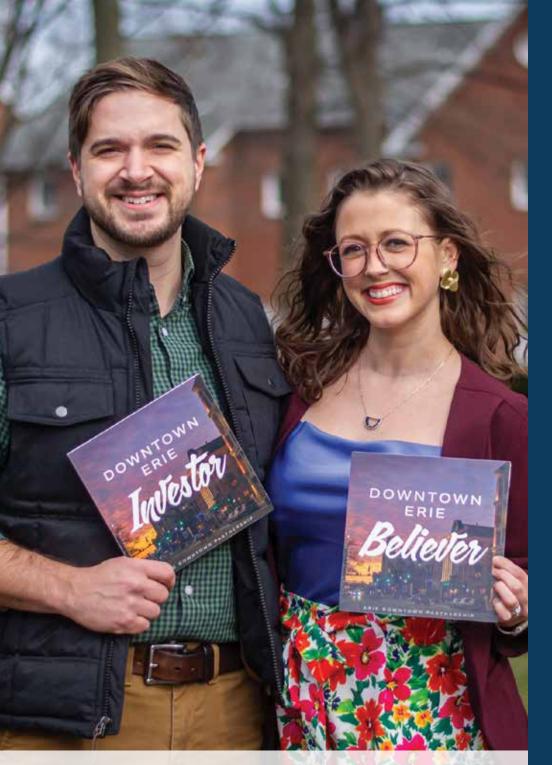
Marketing & Member Services Coordinator



Operations Manager Safety + Hospitality Ambassador



Skating Rink Manager



Reflections

Each incremental decision we've made as a community has led us to where we are today. Your partnership, your collaboration, your support of the downtown experience, as a whole, has changed the momentum of this community.

Building community with the community is a core value of our organization. It's the reason we invite people into conversations, it's the reason we include people in planning, it's the reason we invite people to the table. Quite literally.

This was emphasized more than ever when we hosted our first community dinner in Perry Square in the fall. As we ended our first Pay-What-You-Can Farmers' Market, we chose to share the abundance of the harvest season with our neighbors far and wide. We did this by inviting them to share a meal and our company together at one big table. Over 250 people from across the community were fed that evening—nourished by both the food and by the pleasure of sharing in each other's experiences.

This might have been the most profound and impactful event we've hosted to date.

As we reflect on the milestone of 20 years serving this community, we recommit to more purposeful community building that enhances the downtown experience for all.

Your partnership with us is what makes this possible. Bringing people together to be a part of the downtown experience is what makes it worth it.

CEO, Erie Downtown Partnership

Nick & Jess Taylor, Owners of MenajErie Studio and EDP donors

Environment

The Erie Downtown Partnership (EDP) is an advocate for public space infrastructure and amenities, as well as providing resources that improve downtown's built environment. In 2024, in partnership with urban planning firm Smith Group, we facilitated six public engagement sessions to help inform the Energize Downtown Erie Public Space Plan. Over 150 people met us at Blasco Library, Ember + Forge, Erie Ale Works, and last year's annual meeting to provide feedback on spaces they would like to spend more time in, as well as what activities and amenities are missing from downtown.

Working with key partners downtown, we will soon have our final draft available for the public to review further and provide additional feedback. This will be the foundation of our work to create public and third spaces that create linkages, access, comfort, and sociability.

What's Next

In 2025, we will open another round of our Façade Improvement Grant, which will assist property owners with eligible facade improvements up to \$10,000 to accompany additional grant opportunities through the EDP. We will prioritize transformational improvements and use of the Downtown Design Guidelines as a resource for changes to historic properties. Projects that enhance key corridors and positively impact commercial blocks help increase property values and attract quality tenants. Preventing blight and vacancies is essential to elevating the standard of care throughout downtown's built environment.

We are also collaborating with the City of Erie's Historic Review Commission to create both a National and Local Historic Designation which includes the Downtown Improvement District. Stakeholder meetings will be held with property owners to provide specific information on both the updates to the guidelines and the accompanying designations.







Environment What's Next

The Ambassador Service Request Portal will launch in 2025, allowing businesses to directly request assistance from the Safety and Hospitality Ambassador team. Requests will allow the ability to upload photos, priority levels, and contact information. An Ambassador will be assigned to the request and stakeholders will be notified that their request has been completed with photos if needed. This new initiative is made possible by a grant from FirstEnergy Corporation.



Ambassador John Yost clears snow during the November-December snow disaster

150+ People Engaged in Public Space Plan

Public Space Community Input Sessions

24 (AMBASSADORS) Direct Service Response

> **103** Visitor Assistance

> > Requests

70,000

Pounds of Litter & Debris Removed

109 Homeless Wellness Checks **327** Hours of Snow Removal

20,060 City Blocks Cleaned

4.4 Hours of Flower Watering, Tree Trimming, Mulching

34 Hours of Pressure Washing & Grafitti Removal

> Volunteer Clean-Up Events

15 Special Events & Partner Projects Assisted

Economic Vibrancy

Programs and services of the EDP support positive economic growth by aligning these with the current needs of the business community allowing for flexibility when needs shift.

We continue to welcome businesses into the new gift card program as well as heavily promote businesses within the district through ribbon cuttings, event collaboration and cross-promotion, and social media. Our Small Business Saturday event and vendor markets attract local creators and makers, some of whom aspire to have a business location downtown.

What's Next

In addition to EDP's longstanding Facade Improvement Grant, we will introduce three new grants to support businesses in the commercial core. These new grants include a \$20,000 Transformation Grant for substantial renovations to a building that enhances the surrounding block, a \$5,000 Outdoor Dining Grant to help businesses establish or expand vibrant spaces to enhance the pedestrian and customer experience, as well as a \$5,000 Signage Grant to assist new and existing businesses with better signage. Applications and guidelines will be available on our website this Spring. These grants are reimbursement grants and will require matching funds.



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or Relocation210/\$8,3778I61Gift Cards RedeemedBusiness Program and
Service Requests14\$412,000New BusinessesGrants for Programs
& Projects



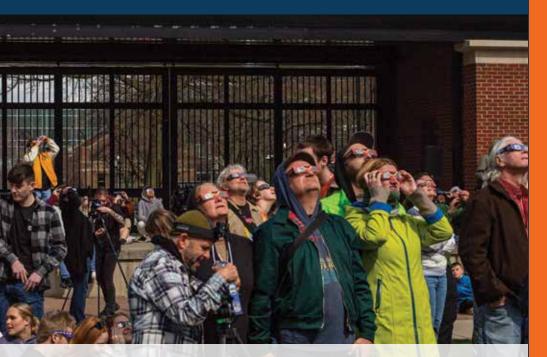
Ribbon Cutting for Bakery on 5th



Events

We experienced incredible growth in 2024 in not only the events we offered, but also the partnerships and community connections we were able to forge through those events and activation in Downtown Erie. Several major events embodied our ongoing intention to expand our programing throughout the year.

In April 2024, Erie was in the path of totality during a **total solar eclipse**, a once-in-a-lifetime astronomical event that drove major tourism to the area. EDP engaged in planning intentional events around the eclipse starting in 2022 through a local committee convened by Visit Erie. Our event in Perry Square welcomed hundreds and provided a space for partners like Gannon University, the Erie County Library, and the expERIEnce Children's Museum to plan educational engagements and learning opportunities. A visit from NASA astronaut and PA native Woody Hoburg and PA Governor Josh Shapiro helped transform the day into a major local event, one of the largest eclipse watch parties in the City.





Pay-What-You-Can Farmers Market

In June, we partnered with several local farms and community organizations to begin a new farmers market model in downtown. The Pay-What-You-Can Markets started on the East Side as a program of Wild Field Farm and Grow and Glow Urban Collaborative. With those partners, as well as Raintree Farms, the Conscious Food Project, the Food Policy Advisory Council of Erie, Groundwork Erie, and Erie Farm to School, we were able to bring a farmers market model to downtown that more effectively served the downtown population and distributed more than 7,500 pounds in locally-produced food throughout the growing season. We were also able to bookend the season with two amazing community meal events: a screening of Farming While Black and dinner in the park on Juneteenth, and a free Community Harvest Dinner in October with a meal prepared entirely from locallygrown produce and ethically-sourced staple crops. The shift to a community-focused model for food distribution aims to build social trust more effectively through food security, stabilize and improve the downtown economy, as well as support small-scale urban farmers and food producers. An investment in this hyper-local system is an investment in being able to connect our downtown population to healthy, fresh food and basic resources.

Finally, strong partnerships with the City of Erie, Erie Arts and Culture, the Erie Art Museum, Catholic Charities, the Multicultural Resource Center, and the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants yielded our first ever large-scale **World Refugee Day Celebration** in Perry Square on June 20th. This event celebrated many different refugee populations in Erie and showcased music, dance, and other performances on the stage with multicultural artisans and food vendors throughout the park.

We saw growth across many other events as well, including our **Movie Mondays series**, the **Perry Square Summer Concert Series**, our **Sunrise Yoga at Dobbins Landing**, and large events like **Erie Winter Carnival**, the **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, and **Fall Fest**. Throughout the year, our continuous goal is to draw density to downtown through regular activation of public spaces with safe, family-friendly, engaging, and uniquely local community events that contribute to the safety, vibrancy, and overall wellbeing of downtown.



Events 130 <u>92,440</u> **Events** Total Event Attendance 500+ 10 **Program Hours** New Events in 2024 \$1,425 200 Average Cost Per Event Small Businesses Vendors & Independent Artists Directly Engaged In Events Pay-What-You-Can Market \$1,280 19 Total Farmers Markets **FMNP** Vouchers Redeemed 7,515 5.9 Pounds of Food Average Pounds Purchased Distributed Per Person \$4,094 4.26 Amount Raised Average Amount Through Donations Spent Per Person 1,276 **Total People Served** 325 Meals Distributed

2024

Downtown Future Fund: A Vision for Tomorrow

A defining milestone of 2024 was the launch of the Downtown Future Fund. With an inspiring lead gift from the White Family Trust, this initiative has quickly become a cornerstone of our efforts to sustain and elevate the vitality of Downtown Erie. We are thrilled to share that 135 donors have already joined this cause, demonstrating the community's shared belief in our mission and a unified vision for a brighter future.



Sponsorship Success: Fueling Impact

The collective giving of community sponsors secured \$156,552 in sponsorships from 41 committed sponsors. Their extraordinary support allowed us to deliver transformative events, initiate impactful beautification projects, and enhance downtown safety initiatives making a tangible difference for residents, businesses, and visitors.



Downtown d'Lights



World Refugee Day

2024

Sustainer's Circle: The Heart of Generosity

Our Sustainer's Circle stands as a testament to leadership and generosity. These remarkable donors and sponsors fuel the momentum of our work, inspiring us with their dedication and ensuring the Erie Downtown Partnership continues to leave a lasting legacy.

Looking Ahead: Building on Momentum

41

Sponsors

\$156,552

Sponsorship Total

As we close 2024, we celebrate the achievements of the past year and carry forward the momentum into 2025. With immense pride and gratitude, we thank our donors, sponsors, and community members for their steadfast support. Together, we'll continue to build on this year's successes, shaping a future that reflects the best of Erie.

> **\$79,472** Downtown <u>Future Fund Raised</u>

135

Donors

\$103,757

Total Donations (inlcudes restricted gifts)





Thank You to **Our Sustainer's Circle** Donors

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organizations whose generous support through the Sustainer's Circle drives our mission forward:

Anonymous (3) Advanced Welding Technologies Albert Kahn Associates Inc. Alliance For Nonprofit Resources, Inc. Perry Square Alliance Altair Real Estate Services Asbury Woods C.A. Curtze Co. Calamari's Squid Row, Inc. **Disabled Veteran Solutions** Martin & Kathryn Eisert **Erie Community Foundation Erie Insurance Charity Challenge** Pass-Through Fund of The Erie **Community Foundation** Erie Insurance Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority **First Presbyterian Church** of the Covenant FirstEnergy Giant Eagle, Inc. Jordan Fuller Brian & Linda Graff Kelli Graham Thomas B. Hagen Hanes Erie, Inc. Alan Hilling Hannah Kirby & Samuel Caraballo, Ember + Forge Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C.

Lincoln Recycling Metz Culinary Management Tim & Lisa NeCastro The Plastek Group **PSN LABS R** Frank Media Reed Manufacturing Company **ROG'S, Inc. Rigging Crane Service** Mayor Joe & Rhonda Schember **Robin Scheppner** James Stoik **Roger & Laurel Taft** The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School Tim Hortons **UPMC Health Plan, UPMC Hamot** Toyota of Erie Weber, Murphy Fox, Inc. Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. White Family Trust Jeremy Young

The Sustainer's Circle

The Sustainer's Circle is a collective of enthusiastic donors who have committed to advancing the Erie Downtown Partnership's mission to improve both the quality of life and economic vibrancy of downtown. You help us create a better downtown experience for businesses, residents, and guests through advocacy, marketing, and placemaking initiatives.

Membership in the Sustainer's Circle is open to all individuals who make a gift or pledge of \$1,000 or more to the Erie Downtown Partnership Future Fund during the calendar year (January-December). By joining the Sustainer's Circle, you ensure that your gifts provide a consistent source of funding for invaluable programming and revitalization projects.

We are deeply grateful to all our Sustainer's Circle members. Your commitment makes it possible to bring innovative projects and meaningful change to downtown Erie.



Dr. Matthew and Katie White (center) of the White Family Trust 2024 Future Fund Lead Donor

2024 Donor list

Jesler & Sesler Cindy Skladanowski Lisa Slomski Society of Holy Trinity Group #240 Jessica Stefano James Stoik Jan Stork Fricia & Jonathan Taccone Roger & Laurel Taft David Tamulonis Famulonis Family Jenny Tompkins & Bennett Gould */*isit Erie White Family Trust Andrew Whiting Adam Williams George & Cindy Willis Paul Wojcik Family Jehny Sost Jeremy Young

Sponsors –



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As a Downtown Improvement District the Erie Downtown Partnership collects an assessment from commercial property owners in the district that contributes to the Erie Downtown Partnership's programs and services.

Assessments billed in 2024 totaled \$260,934.69.

Marketing Stats

1,126 Total Social Posts

533,600 Reach on Social Media

152 Earned Media Appearances

16,998 Social Media Followers

1.4 Million Social Media Views

59,900 Social Media Interactions

\$21,433 Amount in Downtown Advertising Spent



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Recent audit and Form 990 available on our web site



Priles

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