



COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT



IMPACT REPORT

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We are Columbia City Connect

Meet Our 2024 Board

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THE MERCANTILE

MICHELLE SLAVICEK
VINTAGE BLESSED GENERAL STORE

COMMUNITY LEADER,

Thank you for your investment in our community. As you know, Columbia City Connect is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that beautifies public spaces and builds community through engaging activities that bring residents and visitors to the heart of downtown Columbia City.

Comprised of a team of residents, business owners, property owners, and community leaders, Columbia City Connect's board and volunteers worked hard this year growing programs and serving our community. We're thrilled to share some of 2023's accomplishments with you.

While we are excited about the accomplishments of 2023, these efforts are a starting point for a conversation about where we can go, together. The most exciting work is ahead of us.

Our downtown district currently has great momentum. Columbia City Connect is proud to be one of many groups and organizations who work together to ensure the vitality of our community.

I'm grateful for your commitment to improving the quality of life for all our community's residents and transforming our community.

In partnership,



NIKI KEISTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2023 Impact Report



ELEVATING AND ENERGIZING OUR COMMUNITY

Columbia City Connect works to **improve the downtown and quality of life** within its boundaries by supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, promoting the downtown through events, and working to beautify our downtown.

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT IN ACTION

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Cabin Fever
- Six (6) First Fridays
- Movie on the Square
- Three (3) Third Thursdays
- Wheel Week Bingo
- Ladies Night Out
- Shop Small
- Walk of Trees

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT PLACEMAKING

- Thomas Marshall Plaza
- Downtown Clean-up Day
- Historic Downtown Walking Tour
- Where are We Wednesday

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Columbia City
- Whitley County EDC
- Whitley County Historical Museum
- Columbia City Arts Commission
- Whitley County Chamber
- Peabody Public Library
- Columbia City RDC
- Brightpoint
- Indiana Landmarks
- Indiana Humanities
- WJHS The Eagle
- WEOC
- ISBDC

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Six (6) Business Seminars
- Shopping & Dining Downtown Map
- Five (5) Business Hot Spots

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

28

Events held in 2023

884

Volunteer hours

\$28,111

Financial Value of
Volunteer Hours



At A Glance 2023 Economic Impact



17,000 people engaged through Columbia City Connect Programming



28 Events Held by Columbia City Connect



48 Businesses Served by Columbia City Connect



884 Volunteer Hours Contributed in Downtown



\$3,456,641

Private Investment Dollars in the Main Street District since 2022



5

New Businesses Downtown

\$295,654

Public Investment Dollars in the Main Street District since 2022



11

Rehab Projects Completed within Main Street District



80.4% Increase in public awareness*

*stat taken from Facebook Meta Business



\$28,111.20

Financial Value of Volunteer Hours Contributed*

*stat taken from independentsector.org



715

Employees/Jobs in the Main Street District



90 Downtown Businesses and 97 Commercial Spaces

Downtown Momentum: CCC's Top 9 List



FIRST FRIDAYS

Every First Friday from May to October you'll find downtown Columbia City filled with folks enjoying food, pop-up shops, car cruise-ins, Oktoberfest, live music, and more. Local officials estimated 2,500 people attended the May First Friday alone. Bring your chairs to set up and listen to the band, do some shopping, have some drinks, or stroll with some friends.

WALK OF TREES

With thousands of attendees, Columbia City Connect's Walk of Trees continues to grow and has become a holiday tradition for many community members and families. For two weeks, the lobby of the beautifully renovated Clugston is filled with decorated trees in an array of sizes and themes. This year, forty-seven (47) trees were decorated and donated by local businesses and displayed downtown.



LADIES NIGHT OUT

Downtown Columbia City is alive with enticing shops and restaurants. Columbia City Connect hosts Ladies Night Out, Shop Small Saturday, and Cabin Fever making downtown Columbia City the spot for meeting friends to shop and grab a bite or drink. Moms and daughters come downtown to shop, enjoy an ice cream, and check out window decorations. Streets are filled with fellowship, laughter, and local shoppers.

Downtown Columbia City is *a gathering place for friends.*

Downtown Momentum: CCC's Top 9 List



THOMAS MARSHALL PLAZA

Swing by downtown Columbia City at lunchtime, and you'll find someone enjoying Thomas Marshall Plaza. Columbia City Connect fosters accessible, people-centered public spaces like the pocket park. Thanks to our sponsors and key community volunteers whose dedication continue to enrich our downtown, the Thomas Marshall Plaza is a beautiful place to relax and enjoy the afternoon with a friend.

DOWNTOWN CLEAN-UP DAY

The Downtown Clean Up Day serves as an invitation to downtown residents and business owners to take an active role in our community and a catalyst to get community members involved. Volunteers clean up alleys, pocket parks, and tree grates. Everyone's efforts give our downtown a fresh and inviting feel right before First Fridays kickoff.



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

The Distrx App guides residents and visitors through a tour of downtown historic landmarks and sites with pictures, text descriptions, and audio narration from an individual's phone. Each location's information is presented automatically as the person approaches the stop. Columbia City's rich history is placed quite literally in the palm of your hand.

Downtown Columbia City is *full of history and beauty.*

Downtown Momentum: CCC's Top 9 List



THIRD THURSDAYS

Third Thursdays celebrates local talent in local spaces. In May, Art Crawl featured the creativity of nearly ninety (90) local young artists in eleven different downtown businesses. In June and July, area residents of all ages participated in the three (3) downtown venues which provided an outlet for the community's creative talents of singing, spoken word, and an art market.

RETAIL & DINING GUIDE

"I've lived here all my life, and I never knew this shop was here!" Columbia City Connect's Retail and Dining Guide maps the downtown district to promote the downtown businesses and attractions to customers, local citizens, and visitors. The map features Amenities & Services, Shopping, Arts & Culture, and Food & Drink making easy reference for customers, residents and visitors.



BUSINESS SEMINARS

Columbia City Connect hosted six (6) business and property seminars. Through this series, Columbia City Connect forged partnerships across sectors with the Whitley County EDC, Whitley County Chamber of Commerce, and Churubusco Chamber of Commerce. Columbia City Connect continues to cultivate a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem by giving downtown businesses an opportunity to grow their skill set and network.

Downtown Columbia City is *a great place to grow a business.*

A Thank You to Our Generous Donors

We wouldn't be where we are at today without our generous sponsors and donors. Thank you to all of our 2023 Sponsors!

Generous Amount
Donated

\$24,920

Generous Amount of
Sponsorships Given

\$23,100

Generous Amount of
In-Kind Donations Given

\$10,392

Thank you to our donors



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