

The Brake Room

Bikes + Coffee

What is The Brake Room + How long has it been operating?

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The Brake Room is a community space that does business as a bike shop, and a cafe.

Where did the idea come from + What makes a bike cafe unique?

- Cafes are considered to be a "Democracy Laboratory"
- They are social spaces where people of all status come together.
- The dedication to bicycles, and alternative transport normalizes the cultural acceptance of both.

Why open The Brake Room in Belleville?

- I grew up in Belleville. I know it well.
- I leverage an established network to get my business started.
- Staying local reduces the barrier for entry, making it easier to get started.

How are communities like Belleville changing as they grow?

- Belleville is just the right size. Similar to a neighbourhood in Toronto.
- Urban sprawl is now reaching Belleville from GTA.
- Old neighbourhoods are being repopulated by the "new locals".
- New locals have a different standard, ethic, palette.

How can local businesses influence culture in a community?

- You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.
- Think like a big brand. Understand the motivations of your people. Develop a narrative that influences the people.
- Be a guide. Lead people to explore the area and discover places that develop on your narrative.