



**Recognizing Our Past,
Strengthening Our Community,
Shaping Our Future**

Dallas Downtown Association Strategic Plan 2027-2029



Dallas Downtown Association

As part of the Oregon Main Street Network and a member of Main Street America, the Dallas Downtown Association uses the nationally recognized Main Street Approach™ to capitalize on downtown's unique assets. Implemented in 1980, Main Street America was created to revitalize downtowns across the country that had fallen into decline. The interstate system and the creation of shopping malls had an adverse effect on our downtowns, causing travelers to bypass communities, and diverting shoppers to the malls.

The Dallas Downtown Association has a board of directors and four committees based on the Main Street™ model. The board of directors include a mix of downtown stakeholders who care about downtown and want to see it be vibrant, seek to increase

community prosperity, build a thriving business community, and increase social engagement. The DDA has four committees to support the broad range of activities to enhance downtown and provide opportunities for people to be involved in making a difference in our community.

The committees include:

- Economic Vitality Committee: Support existing businesses and fill downtown buildings with locally owned businesses.**
- Design Committee: Create an attractive ambiance with revitalized downtown facades and streetscapes reflective of the historic character and small-town community feel.**
- Promotion Committee: Highlight downtown through events and activities.**

- **Outreach Committee:** Provide the framework for the operations, successful management, and sustainability of the DDA.

Dallas Downtown Association Mission Statement:

The Dallas Downtown Association fosters a vibrant historic downtown through restoration, economic vitality, arts, and community engagement by working together to ensure a sustainable and inclusive destination for all.

Dallas Downtown Association Vision Statement:

Our vision for downtown Dallas is to create a vibrant, diverse, and welcoming destination that embraces both its historic charm and its potential for the future. Our downtown will be a place where residents and visitors alike can enjoy a wide array of experiences, from shopping at unique boutiques to dining at innovative restaurants. Through strategic partnerships and

creative initiatives, we will build a downtown that inspires and delights, driving economic growth and enriching the lives of all who visit.

Dallas Downtown Association Strategic Plan 2027-2029

Purpose

This strategic plan organizes the DDA Downtown Catalyst strategies into a clearer, action-oriented framework. It is designed to help guide downtown programming, partnerships, investment, promotion, and placemaking in alignment with the organization's values.

The plan centers on strengthening downtown as a welcoming gathering place for residents, visitors, families, entrepreneurs, and community partners.

Core Values

People-Centered

We believe in being good ancestors. Downtown should serve as a central gathering place that uplifts the city, strengthens community connection, and continues to thrive for generations. The goal is to create a place residents and visitors are proud of and eager to return to.

Collaboration & Partnership

Meaningful partnerships and intentional collaboration create effective, lasting change. The DDA's work is grounded in grassroots leadership, community support, and interconnected organizations working together toward shared outcomes.

Access & Belonging

By identifying barriers to participation and improving access, downtown becomes stronger and more welcoming for all. Greater involvement brings more viewpoints, preserves more stories, and helps the community grow.

Supporting Small for Greater Impact

Supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, and small-scale development builds community wealth and encourages meaningful local investment. The DDA's work should center the people who power and support the local economy.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Family Experiences and Opportunities

Ensure downtown is a place where families feel welcome, engaged, and included. This priority focuses on family-friendly events, businesses, volunteer opportunities, and multi-generational experiences that create positive memories downtown.

Target Audiences

Audience	Description
Local families	Residents seeking safe, welcoming, and affordable activities.
Multi-generational groups	Families and community members of all ages gather together.
Residents and visitors	Anyone looking for community connection and local experiences.
Volunteers	Community members who want to support downtown activities and events.

Strategic Focus

Continue positioning downtown as a place where “everyone is family” and this is everyone’s “living room.” Programming should prioritize experiences that are accessible, welcoming, and easy for families to participate in. “Pull up a chair, you are welcome here.”

Daytime and early evening activities are especially important, with weekends and holidays offering strong opportunities for family participation.

Current Strengths and Assets

Downtown already has several assets that support this priority:

- Existing events that serve a broad range of community members.
- Business ran opportunities that create positive local experiences.

- Volunteer opportunities that connect residents to downtown initiatives.
- Promotion channels including social media, the website, and community bulletin boards.
- Indoor assets such as schools, gaming, experience-based businesses, and the library.
- Outdoor assets such as walking paths, wings and murals, including a park and easy access to other parks, the amphitheater, and the Courthouse Square.
- Community resources including nonprofit partners such as Bambino's, the Dallas Food Bank, and the Clothing Closet.
- Fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in kind partners that help fund the ability to provide events and activities.

Opportunities for Improvement

The DDA can strengthen this area by improving coordination, accessibility, and consistency across family-focused programming.

Potential improvement areas include:

- Expanding the volunteer database, volunteer training, and making volunteer engagement easier.
- Ensuring events are planned with foreseeable access needs in mind.
- Improving promotion so families know what is happening downtown and how to participate.
- Encourage businesses to maintain welcoming, inviting, and clean storefronts.
- Increasing fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in kind partnerships.

Potential DDA Actions

Action	Description
Increase, improve, and advocate for activation of public spaces.	Focus on the park, murals, sidewalks, and the amphitheater for recurring family-oriented activities. Advocate for increased public space.
Strengthen volunteer coordination	Expand the volunteer survey and database to support varying age groups helping with events, cleanup days, festivals, and community programs.
Develop family event standards	Create a simple checklist for access, safety, timing, restrooms, seating, and family needs.

Partner with schools and youth-serving organizations	Help facilitate the coordination of events, performances, displays, student markets, or opportunities downtown.
Promote family-friendly businesses	Highlight restaurants, shops, and activity providers that welcome children and families.
Consult with businesses about providing experiences that account for family needs.	Consider stroller usage, walkers, mobility devices, pictures for menus, or having games available. Encourage businesses to maintain welcoming, inviting, and clean storefronts.
Seek out additional funding.	Increase fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in-kind partnerships.

Priority 2: Dining and Food Opportunities

Promote downtown as a local food hub where residents, workers, tourists, and groups can gather for dining, markets, events, catering, food trucks, and social food experiences.

Target Audiences

Audience	Description
Residents	People who live in the community and want local dining options.
Downtown workers	Employees seeking breakfast, lunch, coffee, dinner, or to-go meals.
Tourists	Visitors looking for local flavor and memorable food experiences.
Social groups	People seeking places to gather, celebrate, or connect.
Event organizers	Groups looking for event locations, catering, or food-centered experiences.

Entrepreneurs Food vendors, farmers, makers, and small businesses seeking opportunities.

Strategic Focus

Position downtown as a food destination and use experiential activities to increase foot traffic, support restaurants, and encourage community connections.

Food experiences are strongest when paired with other activities such as live music, games, shopping, scavenger hunts, tours, and downtown events.

The market can also function as a business incubator for vendors, farmers, makers, and food entrepreneurs.

Current Strengths and Assets

Downtown has several assets that support food-based experiences:

- Historic downtown character that complements dining and tourism.
- Walkable sidewalks and pleasing aesthetics.
- Multiple indoor event spaces for both small and large gatherings.
- A variety of restaurants are already located downtown.
- Outdoor event spaces including the amphitheater, Courthouse Square, Ian Tawney Park, and restaurant-adjacent areas.
- An outdoor market that encourages business development in these areas.

Opportunities for Improvement

The DDA can increase the impact of downtown dining by coordinating promotion, timing, business participation, and event design.

Potential improvement areas include:

- Creating food experiences that combine dining with entertainment and shopping.
- Planning additional events to bring people into businesses.
- Supporting food entrepreneurs through market participation and business development pathways.
- Improving wayfinding and promotion for restaurants, markets, and food events.

Potential DDA Actions

Action	Description
Plan or promote tasting experiences	Consider restaurant weeks, tasting trails, picnic nights, food truck gatherings, or progressive dinners.
Explore partnering on tours and routes	Connect food businesses with wine tours, bus tours, biking routes, farm to table experiences, and visitor itineraries
Encourage pairing food with entertainment experiences	Combine dining with live music, games, shopping, scavenger hunts, art, or seasonal events.
Promote to-go meals	Encourage convenient downtown meal options for workers, residents, jurors, and visitors.
Support market vendors as entrepreneurs	Use the market for small business growth and future opportunities. Connect vendors with downtown businesses.
Meet with businesses to evaluate signage and accessibility.	Include suggestions and discussions on utilizing a-frame signs, outdoor seating, clear pathways, and messaging. Considerations include utilizing pictures for communication.

Priority 3: Health and Wellness

Position downtown as a place that supports physical, mental, social, and community wellbeing. This priority brings together retail, recreation, education, professional services, and social service organizations around the shared goal of improving quality of life.

Target Audiences

Audience	Description
Families	Households seeking wellness services, recreation, and healthy activities.
Seniors	Older adults seeking accessible health, wellness, and social opportunities.

Workers	Downtown employees seeking convenient wellness options.
Residents	Community members seeking health, fitness, counseling, and support services.
Visitors	People who may participate in trails, fitness activities, wellness events, or recreation.

Strategic Focus

Connect existing health and wellness assets into a more visible downtown identity. Many businesses can participate, including those not explicitly health-related, by supporting healthy choices, outdoor activity, social connection, and community wellbeing.

Traditional, holistic, and alternative options all contribute to the downtown wellness ecosystem.

Current Strengths and Assets

Downtown already has a broad range of wellness-related assets:

- Nearby hospital access, located just outside the district.
- Mental health, counseling, and wellness facilities within downtown.
- Professional health services including dental, chiropractic, vision, physical therapy, hearing aids, and natural remedies.
- Fitness and movement offerings such as gyms, dance, yoga, and martial arts.
- Downtown walking options and proximity to trails within the district.
- Restaurants that may offer or identify healthy menu options.

Opportunities for Improvement

The DDA can strengthen downtown's wellness identity by improving visibility, coordination, and programming.

Potential improvement areas include:

- Mapping and promoting wellness-related businesses and services.
- Creating wellness activities in public spaces.
- Encouraging restaurants to identify healthy menu options.

- Coordinating with gyms, trainers, studios, healthcare providers, and social service organizations.
- Connecting wellness to downtown walking routes, trails, and outdoor assets.
- Expanding wellness programming beyond traditional business hours when feasible.

Potential DDA Actions

Action	Description
Create a downtown wellness map	Highlight health providers, fitness studios, trails, walking routes, counseling services, and wellness businesses.
Promote healthy menu options	Work with restaurants to identify and promote healthier choices.
Offer outdoor wellness programming	Encourage local gyms, trainers, yoga instructors, or dance studios to provide classes, walks, or boot camps downtown.
Develop walking routes	Create signed or promoted walking loops connecting downtown assets, murals, trails, parks, and businesses. Support increasing the attractiveness of these areas through beautification methods such as clean streets, additional trees, and attractive storefronts.
Host wellness events	Consider health fairs, senior wellness days, family fitness events, mental health awareness activities, or trail-based programming.
Convene wellness partners	Bring together healthcare, fitness, counseling, social service, and recreation partners to coordinate downtown wellness efforts. For example, hold a health fair.

Priority 4: Tourists and Tourism

Promote downtown as a distinctive destination for visitors seeking history, architecture, arts and culture, shopping, dining, outdoor recreation, and authentic local character.

Target Audiences

Audience	Description
Heritage travelers	Visitors interested in history, architecture, and local stories.
Cultural tourists	Visitors seeking arts, events, local identity, and unique experiences.
Business travelers	People visiting for work, conferences, meetings, or regional business.
Outdoor enthusiasts	Visitors interested in biking, walking, trails, parks, and recreation.
College students	Students and families who may visit, shop, eat, or attend events.
Wine enthusiasts	Visitors connected to regional wineries and tasting experiences.
Pass-through travelers	People stopping on the way to other destinations.
Local residents	Residents whose pride and participation help make downtown attractive to visitors.

Strategic Focus

Create a downtown that locals love, because visitors are more likely to enjoy places that feel authentic, active, and community-supported.

Tourism brings outside consumer spending and adds to local buying power. Downtown tourism should connect visitors to shopping, dining, history, events, public spaces, and regional attractions.

Current Strengths and Assets

Downtown has several in town and nearby tourism-related assets:

- Historic district character and architecture.
- Local shopping and retail potential.
- Restaurants and food experiences that support visitor spending.
- Outdoor amenities such as walking routes, biking routes, access to parks, and public spaces.

- Hotel presence or lodging potential.
- Visitor center presence.
- Regional wineries and wine tourism connections.
- Winter building lights and seasonal decor, including Christmas Town, the scarecrow contest, and Hearts on Main.
- Pleasant and clean ambiance highlighted by revitalized buildings and well maintained grounds around downtown.
- Fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in kind partnerships.

Opportunities for Improvement

The DDA can strengthen tourism by improving visitor orientation, regional partnerships, and destination marketing.

Potential improvement areas include:

- Installing wayfinding signs for people unfamiliar with the district.
- Creating clear visitor itineraries and maps: i.e. maps of murals, things to do in Dallas list.
- Create online inspiration, such as Pinterest..
- Coordinating with regional tourism professionals.
- Sharing and using data and surveys to guide programming and promotion.
- Strengthening connections with hotels, wineries, conference organizers, colleges, and outdoor recreation partners.
- Clarifying downtown's unique identity and visitor promise.
- Making shopping, dining, history, and events easier for visitors to discover.
- Providing connections and resources for filming in downtown.
- Continue improving the ambiance of downtown by creating an alluring, safe, comfortable, and interesting external environment as accentuated by the theme of historic preservation.
- Increasing fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in kind partnerships.

Potential DDA Actions

Action	Description
Encourage the installation of visitor-oriented wayfinding	Add signs, maps, and directional tools for parking, restrooms, shops, restaurants, parks, historic sites, and event spaces as needed. Work with the city, county, business owners, and other relevant parties to ensure it is easy to find historic buildings, parking, downtown locations and other points of interest.

	Encourage and advocate for attractive and welcoming signage leading to downtown.
Convene regional tourism partners	Meet with tourism professionals, hotels, wineries, colleges, conference organizers, and outdoor recreation partners to share data and coordinate promotion.
Create visitor itineraries	Develop themed itineraries for history, food, wine, shopping, biking, families, and weekend visits.
Promote downtown to conference attendees	Partner with Salem-area conferences, hotels, and event organizers to attract visitors downtown.
Strengthen digital destination marketing	Improve online content through web pages, social media, Pinterest-style guides, maps, and event listings.
Highlight local stories	Use history, architecture, murals, businesses, and community stories to create a stronger sense of place. Utilize mapping to compare then/now.
Connect tourism to local spending	Encourage visitors to shop, dine, attend events, and explore downtown businesses. Encourage businesses to promote their offerings.
Promote Filming in Dallas	Provide resources and connections along with photos to motivate film makers to consider downtown Dallas.
Focus on the ambiance of downtown.	Encourage, advocate for, and seek out grants to add and improve murals, public art, and the urban forest. Seek out opportunities to add outdoor attractions.
Seek out ways to improve underutilized spaces.	Encourage, advocate for, and seek out grants to revitalize buildings, make use of alleyways and empty lots, and meet with building owners to assist with filling vacancies and bringing pedestrian friendly businesses downtown.

Connect and Collaborate with partners who share the same goals.	Reach out to city committees, such as historic preservation and the tree board, that share the same priorities to streamline working towards identified improvement areas. Connect with other groups, like Restore Oregon and Historic Downtowns of Oregon, to work collaboratively on shared goals and priorities.
Seek out additional funding.	Increase fundraising, supporters, donors, grants, sponsorships, and in-kind partnerships.

Implementation Framework

Strategic Roles for the DDA

The DDA can support these priorities through:

Role	Description
Collaborator	Bring together businesses, nonprofits, schools, tourism partners, tourists, wellness providers, vendors, and residents.
Promoter	Market downtown events, businesses, maps, experiences, and visitor opportunities.
Advocate	Identify barriers to access, support small businesses, and champion downtown as a community asset.

Cross-Cutting Strategies

Several strategies support all four priorities.

Improve Downtown Promotion

Create coordinated promotional tools that make it easier for people to know what is happening downtown.

Examples include:

- A central downtown events calendar.
- Social media campaigns.
- Website updates.
- Community bulletin boards.
- Printed maps and guides.
- Business spotlights.
- Seasonal downtown campaigns.

Build Stronger Partnerships

Strengthen collaboration with and collaboration amongst organizations and businesses that already serve downtown audiences.

Potential partners include:

- Schools and youth organizations.
- Libraries.
- Nonprofits.
- Restaurants and retailers.
- Health and wellness providers.
- Tourism professionals.
- Hotels and wineries.
- Conference organizers.
- Volunteer groups.
- Supporters, donors and in kind partners.
- The Chamber and Visitors Center.
- City, County and other governmental organizations that align with our mission.
- Other Main Street organizations including local, state, and national level.

Improve Access and Belonging

Apply an access lens to events, programs, and public spaces.

Considerations include:

- Time of day.
- Transportation and parking.
- Restrooms.
- Seating.
- Affordability.
- Family needs.
- Accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Language and communication access.
- Clear signage and wayfinding.
- Welcoming public spaces.

Support Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Use downtown programming and promotion to support local businesses and build community wealth.

Approaches include:

- Business spotlights.
- Market vendor support.
- Entrepreneur pathways and support.
- Events that bring people into businesses.
- Shared promotions.
- Dining and shopping maps.
- Connections between existing businesses and emerging entrepreneurs.
- Supportive and educational opportunities to increase business knowledge and support.
- Potentially expanding the DDA boundaries to promote a larger entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Summary

This strategic plan positions downtown as a welcoming, active, and locally rooted district built around four catalyst priorities: family experiences, dining and food opportunities, health and wellness, and tourists and tourism.

Across all priorities, the DDA's role is to connect partners, promote local assets, improve access, support small businesses, and invest in experiences that make downtown a stronger gathering place for residents and visitors.