

Dallas Downtown Association

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

April 19, 2021



Dallas Downtown Association Mission Statement

The mission of the Dallas Downtown Association is to encourage and inspire the arts, restoration, economic vitality, and community spirit in the historic downtown district.

Dallas Downtown Association Vision Statement

The Dallas Downtown Association has a passion to see a vibrant and revitalized downtown, a welcoming destination for shoppers, travelers, and the local population. We do this by helping local businesses create an environment that is engaging, thriving, and inclusive. By working together the DDA will create a sustainable Dallas business district.

Dallas Downtown Association

As part of the Oregon Main Street Network, we use its nationally recognized Main Street Approach® to capitalizing on downtown's unique assets. Implemented nationally in 1980, the Main Street Approach® program was created to revitalize downtowns across America 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. Thanks to the MainStreet Program®, downtowns across America are springing back to life, with our community among them.

Dallas Downtown Association has a board of directors, and executive director, and four committees based on the MainStreet Program® model. The four committees are as follows:

- Economic Vitality Committee:** Fill downtown vacancies with viable businesses and upper floor housing, where appropriate, while supporting existing businesses.
- Design Committee:** Revitalize downtown facades and streetscapes reflective of the historic character and small town community feel.
- Promotion Committee:** Highlight downtown through events and activities.
- Organization Committee:** Plan and implement all functions related to the operation of the organization. We provide the framework for the operations, successful management, and sustainability of the DDA. The goal is to make the DDA indispensable for the prosperous future of the Dallas community.

In order to be successful, we need to surround ourselves with other organizations with a similar vision. We partner with a number of community organizations to achieve our mission. Some of our key partners include:

- The City of Dallas
- Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce
- Dallas Area Visitor's Center
- Dallas Arts Association
- Polk County Community Development Corporation
- Dallas Urban Renewal Agency and District Advisory Committee

Why Plan?

Strategic planning is an important tool to help set clearer goals for an organization and a road map on how to achieve those goals. This usually includes a mixture of stakeholder involvement and looking at previous, relevant planning processes. Many of these previous processes have useful information that can inform the development of the strategic plan. It is important to incorporate this information as an appropriate part of developing the plan. The outcome is intended to be a plan of work the organization can focus on over the next three to five years. It will be important for the board to periodically review the document and to update as needed to address new issues and opportunities that may arise.

Assessing Downtown Dallas

The Dallas Downtown Association board hosted a strategic planning meeting, and a survey was conducted of DDA's membership at a general membership meeting. The purpose was to identify downtown's greatest assets/opportunities and liabilities/challenges.

The key assets/opportunities identified by the board and the membership are:

- Historic downtown/town square
- Momentum among various organizations
- Improving economy and growing population
- Proximity of wine industry
- Desirable location within Oregon
- Events
- Small town feel
- Friendly people
- Safe place to live

The key liabilities/challenges identified by the board and membership are:

- Many commuters to Salem, "bedroom community"
- Downtown building vacancies (also an opportunity)
- Housing shortage everywhere, especially downtown
- Not located right off the highway- miss out on traffic
- Nothing for kids/teens to do
- Money

Key Findings

The community has participated in a number of planning and visioning efforts including the Polk County Rural Tourism Studio 15-year Community Vision, Dallas 2030 Vision, and the Rural Development Initiatives Economic Vitality Roadmap. Some of the key findings pertinent to downtown include:

- Opportunity to leverage agricultural base in farm-to-table restaurants and unique farm-focused events
- Potential to celebrate local heritage
- Develop strong and distinct craft beer and local wine scene
- Support activities to create a vibrant downtown and revitalized historic core
- Promote new growth and development with a small town feel
- Encourage community volunteerism
- Create arts and cultural events and activities
- Promote an active business and investment environment
- Support developing and enhancing the mix of businesses

The Plan

This plan is developed using a system of support mechanisms looking at "what do we want to do?" and then developing tiers of the plan that build upon objectives (programs) and tactics (program specifics). However, the plan is intended to be a guiding document and not a work plan. The board, committees, and staff have recommendations for achieving the goals but also have the flexibility to determine ways to best attain the goals.

Vision:	How we want the downtown to look, feel, and function in 10 years.
Mission:	Why our organization exists and what we do.
Goals:	Ways to attain mission.
Objectives:	Ways to achieve goals.
Tactics:	Programs or activities that support objectives.

Strategic Plan Goals to Achieve Our Mission

- Goal 1: Economic Development: Fill downtown vacant buildings with upper floor housing and locally-owned businesses while supporting existing businesses.
- Goal 2: Design: Shape the physical appearance and ambiance of downtown with special emphasis on historic preservation, pedestrian friendly environments, beautification, artfulness, and a positive image that is appealing to residents, businesses, and visitors alike.
- Goal 3: Promotion: Plan and conduct DDA sponsored events in the downtown area to highlight the downtown business district and our community.
- Goal 4: Organization: Responsible for all functions related to the operation of the organization. We provide the framework for the operations, successful management, and sustainability of the DDA. The goal is to make the DDA indispensable for the prosperous future of the Dallas community.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Economic Development Committee: Fill downtown vacant buildings with upper floor housing and locally-owned businesses while supporting existing businesses

Objective 1.1:

Historic/Food Walk

Once a month, at minimum, a food tour beginning at Latitude One and walking to various eating and drinking establishments to sample food/beverage, meet the owners, and hear their stories, and while walking from place to place, hear a history of the downtown. This will enable the DDA to showcase downtown, provides a good venue to market for tourism, as well as an education on our history. Money maker for DDA. After paying the restaurant owners for the sampled food/drink remaining money is profit for DDA. For example, ticket price is \$50 per person. Of that, \$20 goes to food and beverage, which leaves \$30 profit per ticket.

Objective 1.2:

Locable Website

Have the website of "Locable" launched and educate local merchants on how to benefit from online presence, marketing their businesses, etc. The DDA can do volunteer drives, calendar, cross promote through the site. This can be a winning website that can carry us through for many years.

Objective 1.3:

New Business Office

Open and staff with volunteers the Latitude One space at 904 Main St. The space will be used for trainings, classes, lectures, educate the public on programs, promote our area. Wine maker dinners, farm to table dinners in back garden, etc. A local office will provide a constant steady presence downtown and the public seeing value added to being a member of DDA.

Objective 1.4:

Have "shovel ready" projects ready to go before grants become available. Work with Design committee to identify back alleys that are needing cleaning, painting, structural help, contact owner and if agreeing have contracts pre-signed so when grants are available the projects are ready to go. This will provide a quick turnaround with footwork when grants become available.

Objective 1.5:

Dallas Mainstreet Movie Project

Subcommittee has one movie ready for commercial use and advertising by September.

Work with surrounding towns, visitor centers, Travel Salem, Travel Oregon, etc. This is a long term project that can only be funded by donations or grants. Approximately \$32,000 for set up of movie studio. Profits are made by actual movies purchased by public. (See grant written for Travel Oregon March 2021 for details). This showcases Downtown Dallas and is an excellent way to bring visitors and tourist economy to our downtown.

Objective 1.6:

To co-operate with other groups both inside city and in county when appropriate for projects.

Goal 2: Design Committee: Shape the physical appearance and ambiance of downtown with special emphasis on historic preservation, pedestrian friendly environments, beautification, artfulness and a positive image that is appealing to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Objective 2.1:

Assist and encourage business and property owners to maintain and improve their properties.

1. Act in the role of proponent and advisor to business and property owners to facilitate the restoration, preservation and/or repair of their existing downtown buildings and structures by helping them pursue and obtain grants, loans, and skilled help from a variety of sources to achieve these purposes.
2. Assist the City and Urban Renewal District in advertising, marketing, and coordinating their grants, loans, and assistance offered to downtown businesses and property owners to enhance their properties, both internally, and especially externally.
3. As a lesson learned from our COVID experience, work closely with business owners and the City to explore establishing a City Business Registry which will greatly enhance communications with our businesses and facilitate helping programs.

Objective 2.2:

Act in the role of advisor to the City and the URDAC to help shape the downtown urban environment on such matters as the procurement and placement of street furniture, urban forestry, lighting, cleanliness, policies and practices regarding preservation grants, loans and regulations, urban signage, art and murals, and other similar matters of mutual interest. Strive to have representation on the URDAC from the DDA.

Objective 2.3:

Be an active proponent of downtown historic preservation as a vital element in the prosperity and reputation of our Central Business District.

1. Work with businesses and property owners to explore and appreciate the history of their properties through outreach and education.
2. Work with businesses and property owners of prominent historic buildings, at their desire, to gain listings on local and national historic registers.
3. Work with all concerned to support and foster the creation of a National Register Historic District centered around the historic Courthouse Square.
4. Work with building, property owners and the Polk County Historical Society and Museum to place informational (typically bronze) plaques on historic buildings and historic sites in the downtown.
5. Provide brochures and walking tours of historic buildings and properties.

Objective 2.4:

Act as a proponent for good signage in the downtown.

1. Act as an advisor to the City in developing codes, policies and practices that achieve attractive and practical signage practices in the downtown that reflects and preserves its cultural and historic character.
2. Work with building and property owners to help them maintain their signs to a high standard and wherever appropriate, encourage them to upgrade their signage to fit the cultural and historic ambiance of downtown. In many cases, this help will include the use of such grants as offered by the URD such as the Minor Maintenance Grant program to achieve such ends.
3. Work with the URDAC and the City to improve directional and wayfinding signage leading into and around the downtown.

Objective 2.5:

Work to light the public and private spaces downtown so as to create a warm and inviting environment.

1. With particular emphasis on the dark months of the season, become the primary organization to work to light up the facades of the buildings around the Courthouse Square and environs. This includes fundraising and contracting for professional installation and maintenance of such lights as has been established by existing programs.
2. Help conceptualize and implement other downtown lighting projects such as street tree lighting, external decorative shop lighting, internal shop lighting, and other lighting projects which enhance the ambiance of downtown to make it inviting.

Objective 2.6:

Implement the DDA's approved Arts Master Plan (AMP).

1. Post-COVID-19, pick up the implementation of the AMP where from where it was suspended as the community entered COVID.
2. the latest Version of the AMP (at this writing, Version 12, dated 3/21/20), working with the AMP Edit Group, develop and implement an "AMP Procedures Manual" to guide the Design Committee's oversight and standardization of the implementation of the Plan within the DDA's framework. When complete, seek approval of this Manual from the DDA Board.
3. When the AMP Procedures Manual is complete, in concert with the DDA Board, reach out to other key organizations in the community such as the Dallas City Council, the Dallas Arts Association and others for their endorsement (not adoption) and support of the Plan.
4. Keep an up-to-date record of AMP Initiatives and as Initiatives are approved and advanced, work to keep the Dallas community informed.
5. Assist the AMP Edit Group in obtaining grants and donations for their organizational work and the implementation of the AMP Initiatives.

Objective 2.7:

Keep the downtown as neat, clean, and safe as possible

1. Partner with volunteers to conduct "clean-up" projects throughout the downtown as the need occurs, both on private and public properties.
2. Assist property owners in keeping their vacant spaces attractive by clean-up assistance, the use of "pop-up" displays of art and historic photographs and materials as a help in marketing their properties for sale/lease.

Goal 3: Promotions Committee: : Plan and conduct DDA sponsored events in the downtown area to highlight the downtown business district and our community.

Objective 3.1

Plan, organize, and conduct quality annual events for which the DDA has become known. These have been fundraisers for the DDA and brings both residents and tourists to the downtown business district.

1. Art and Wine Walk, this annual event is usually in early June
2. Murder Mystery – tentative for 2021, but often twice a year

Objective 3.2

Family events downtown.

1. Children sidewalk painting
2. BINGO
3. Pet Parades
4. Bike Treks

Objective 3.3

Fall festival with additional events.

1. Scarecrow Contest
2. Mutt Strut
3. Chili Contest

Objective 3.4

Dallas Mainstreet Movie project: Assist sub committee from Economic Development. This will help with tourism and downtown awareness.

Objective 3.5

Through the Lens: *A Winter Wonderland*: Ticketed Event. At Dallas Event Center. A Christmas setting for photography opportunities. Various scenes for the public to have photo shoots. This event will compliment the activities downtown at Christmas.

Objective 3.6

Amazing Challenge: An event that requires the public to go from business to business and complete a task in a set time. Example: The Fire Department-put on a firemen's outfit, run 25 yards, assemble hoses to a fire hydrant, partner turns on water while other partner knocks over a cone. Then on to Les Schwab and learn to put chains on a tire, etc.

Objective 3.7

Partner with other civic organizations to support the downtown events that they organize.

Goal 4: Organization Committee: Responsible for all functions related to the operation of the organization. We provide the framework for the operations, successful management, and sustainability of the DDA. The goal is to make the DDA indispensable for the prosperous future of the Dallas community.

Objective 4.1

Creation of a Membership Recruitment Sub-Committee

This sub-committee would have the responsibility to create and implement a recruitment plan. This plan

would include an initial “kick-off” followed by an ongoing and consistent effort to increase and retain membership. For the DDA to be successful, membership recruitment and retention must be a priority for the entire organization, from the board, to the committees, to the general membership. It will be this sub-committee’s responsibility to foster that vision within the whole of the DDA.

Objective 4.2

Creation of a DDA Policy and Procedure Manual

The DDA needs a comprehensive and detailed manual to guide its daily business operations. This manual will be a compliment to the bylaws. Where the bylaws provide a general outline of how the DDA runs, the policy and procedure manual will provide a detailed roadmap to guide the DDA on a day by day basis. Work on this project is already underway, but the manual is still in draft form.

- 1) Create “Rules of Engagement” for DDA Board Members. This will ensure that we are consistent in our conversations with DDA members, and the community at large.
- 2) Establish criteria for participation in DDA events by member organizations that fall outside of the DDA’s official boundaries.
 - a. Set up a booth within the boundaries to enable participation?
- 3) Establish criteria for participation in DDA events by organizations that are not members of the DDA.
 - a. Higher charge for participation?
 - b. One time free participation, then must become a member to participate again?
- 4) Create a policy for family relations between board members and potential employees.
- 5) Create a policy for replacing multiple board members who resign with differing end terms. Replacement board members are voted in by the board, and not the general membership. Therefore, there needs to be an unbiased way to determine which new board member serves what resigning board member’s remaining term.

Objective 4.3

Creation of a DDA Employee Handbook

The DDA currently has one part time employee. As we grow, we need to anticipate hiring additional people to help the DDA support its members. We need an Employee Handbook to protect our employees as well as our organization.

Objective 4.4

Review and realignment of tasks and responsibilities of the DDA, and place responsibility for that function under a specific committee. This would include the possible creation of additional sub-committees to oversee certain functions. Once this review is completed, and a listing has been established, ensure that the information is included in the policy and procedure manual.

Objective 4.5

Create a set of standards for information to be provided to all newly elected board members.

Objective 4.6

Work with the board of directors to establish sustainable funding for the DDA, through grants, donations, membership dues, etc.

Objective 4.7

Establish guidelines for the yearly review of all of DDA’s operating documents (bylaws, manuals, and handbooks) to ensure that we are up to date with all ORS 65 law changes, and that we are in alignment with the DDA’s vision for our community.

Objective 4.8

Establish a process, criteria, and a timeline for the creation of the DDA’s yearly budget.

Objective 4.9

Review current membership dues pricing to determine if changes are necessary.

- 1) Consider creating a tiered membership program
 - 2) If so, we need to create membership benefits that align with the increased costs.