

Dallas Downtown Association

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

June 16, 2017



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 appropriate as 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.

Dallas Downtown Association

Our mission is to encourage and inspire the arts, restoration, economic vitality, and community spirit in the historic downtown district. We are part of the Oregon Main Street Network and use as a basis of our revitalization effort the nationally recognized Main Street Approach® which is a practical and comprehensive model capitalizing on downtown's unique assets. The Main Street Program® was implemented nationally in 1980 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. Travelers bypassed communities, and shoppers found it more convenient to head to the mall. Thanks to the Main Street Program®, downtowns across America are springing back to life, and our historic central business district is one of them.

The Dallas Downtown Association has a board of directors; currently a RARE/AmeriCorps main street coordinator, and four committees based on the Main Street® model:

- Economic Vitality Committee:** Fill downtown vacancies with viable and upper floor housing where appropriate, while supporting existing businesses.
- Design Committee:** Revitalized downtown facades and streetscapes reflective of the historic character and small town community feel.
- Promotion Committee:** Highlight downtown through events and activities.
- Organization Committee:** Provide the motivation and focus to engage individuals and community organizations in downtown revitalization projects and activities to achieve a collaborative vision.

We partner with the City of Dallas and 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 Visitors Center
- Dallas Arts Association
- Polk County Community Development Corporation
- Dallas Urban Renewal Agency and District Advisory Committee
- Dallas Vitality Connection
- Dallas Economic Development Commission

Assessing Downtown Dallas

The Dallas Downtown Association Board hosted a strategic planning retreat on January 21st and March 8, 2017. In addition, 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.

Assets/Opportunities:

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

Liabilities/Challenges:

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 recently including the Polk County Rural Tourism Studio 15-year Community Vision, Dallas 2030 Vision, and the Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) 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.

Our Vision

The Dallas Downtown Association has a passion to see a vibrant downtown with a fully revitalized historic core. Downtown Dallas provides opportunities for new growth and development while still maintaining a small-town feel. Our active business climate and investment environment embraces the wine and craft brewing industries because of our ideal location in the beautiful mid-Willamette Valley. With creative solutions for available downtown buildings and sites and engaged property owners, Dallas is both a key visitor's destination and an inviting place to live. Visitors and residents alike are drawn to the bounty of outdoor recreational opportunities and the natural beauty surrounding downtown Dallas, finding it the perfect place to linger for its rich arts and cultural attractions, exciting events, and destination restaurants and retail shops. Our community pride, stemming from engaged and committed volunteers, is a trademark of Dallas' welcoming spirit and ensures that the historic downtown will continue to be the heart of our city.

Our Mission

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.

Strategic Plan Goals to Achieve Mission

- Goal 1: Economic Vitality: Fill downtown vacant buildings with upper floor housing and locally-owned businesses while supporting existing businesses.
- Goal 2: Design: Revitalized downtown reflective of the historic character and small town community feel.
- Goal 3: Promotion: Highlight Dallas' downtown and community activities.
- Goal 4: Organization: Provide the motivation and focus to engage community members in downtown revitalization projects and activities to achieve vision.

Goals/Objectives

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

- Objective 1.1: Partner with RDI Roadmap Property Development Team.
- Objective 1.2: Encourage strong craft beer and local wine venues and production.
- Objective 1.3: Encourage the development of upper floor housing.
- Objective 1.4: Leverage agriculture base to attract farm to table restaurants and to help existing restaurants promote use of local products.
- Objective 1.5: Network with Economic Development Commission, the City of Dallas, Oregon Main Street and others to increase business.

Goal 2: Design: Revitalized downtown reflective of the historic character and small town community feel.

- Objective 2.1: Develop and implement Arts Master plan
Tactics: mural, bronzes, banners through grants and donations
- Objective 2.2: Work on creating Dallas “pride”
Tactics: finish lighting project; historic walking tour; “sharing our story” program; wayfinding signage; highway billboard; heritage re-enactment on the square
- Objective 2.3: Clean-up vacant spaces
Tactics: temporary historic photo display “Dallas through the Ages” in storefront windows
- Objective 2.4: Encourage façade improvements
Tactics: provide design assistance; assist property owners in applying for appropriate facade grants

Goal 3: Economic Vitality: Highlight Dallas’ downtown and community activities.

- Objective 3.1: Utilize all opportunities, such as the Eclipse, to promote future events in Dallas
- Objective 3.2: Increased outreach/marketing for city center activities focused around the Courthouse Square
- Objective 3.3: Develop downtown calendar with consistently dated events. Promote and encourage existing events.
Tactics: “Out and About” events, Wine Walk, Holiday bazaar’s

Goal 4: Organization: Provide the motivation and focus to engage community members in downtown revitalization projects and activities to achieve vision.

- Objective 4.1: Create sustainable funding plan for DDA
Tactic: Grant Writer
- Objective 4.2: Increase awareness of DDA
Tactics: enhance social media, website update, e-news
- Objective 4.3: Work on volunteer development activities including recruitment, training, and recognition.
- Objective 4.4: Plan for funding and development of a year three Program Manager
- Objective 4.5: Maintain partnerships with other organizations and agencies
- Objective 4.6: Board and member development
Tactics: Provide board member orientation and training as needed.