***Downtown Dahlonega 2022 Strategic Work Plan***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Vision**  *In 2032 downtown Dahlonega has advanced its reputation as a thriving district that preserves its historic, small-town character. It is loved by residents and visitors who enjoy the experiences it offers in shopping, dining, and living within a clean, safe, and vibrant center of business and community.*  *Successful, locally owned small businesses are brimming with a robust blend of local residents and families, university profe ssionals and students, as well as visitors who*  *are drawn to the local history, architecture, and friendly charming atmosphere.*  *Pedestrians enjoy moving with ease through an expansive network of sidewalks and crosswalks that are well -lighted and connected to nearby residential streets, the*  *University campus, and the reservoir trails. Streets are lined by new trees, flowering plants, and colorful banners throughou t the shopping district.*  *A comprehensive parking management system makes it convenient and affordable for everyone - employees, locals, and visitors – to park, thanks to new signage, information, off-street facilities, and a shuttling system that serves the business district.*  *Downtown Dahlonega is one of the greatest small-town centers in America because of its uniqueness, history, and the preservation-minded pride of its local residents.* | |
| **Community Transformation Strategies**  1. *Historic Preservation & Maintaining Authenticity* (with *Sharing Your Community’s Story*)  2. *Businesses and Amenities to Serve Residents* | |
| **Rationale**  In 2021, the DDA-Main Street office conducted three surveys: 1) Business Owner Survey, 2) Community Input survey, and 3) Downtown Leadership survey. Survey responses identified “*Historic Preservation & Maintaining Authenticity,”* and “*Businesses and Amenities to Serve Residents”* to be DDA-Main Street’s top priorities (or community transformation strategies) for the next two-three years. Data showed local residents’ very strong commitment to historic preservation of downtown buildings and their plea for more businesses to serve the community. Dahlonega is a leader in creating a climate for business success based around the historic preservation of its central business district. The extensive and concise data from the surveys are translated into this economic development plan of work for Dahlonega DDA-Main Street board and staff. | |
| ***Wildly Important Goals*** | |
| **Historic Preservation & Maintaining Authenticity** | **Businesses and Amenities to Serve Residents** |
| **Goals**  1. Repair and preserve downtown buildings  2. Preservation education | **Goals**  1. Retain, Expand, and Recruit (RER) businesses |
| **Definition for Success**  1. Twenty-five percent of privately owned properties (15) and 100% of public properties are cleaned and/or painted, repaired, and landscaped, by July 2024  2. Create & publish six downtown preservation stories, and update two walking tours, by May 2024 | **Definition for Success**  1. Retain current businesses; help expand two current businesses; recruit six new businesses for vacancies, by July 2024 |
| **Lead Board Member Amy** | **Lead Board Member Amy** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Historic Preservation*** | | | | |
| **Goal 1**  Repair and preserve downtown buildings | | | **Definitions for Success**  25% of privately owned properties (15) and 100% of public properties are cleaned and/or painted, repaired, and landscaped, by July 2024 | |
| **Partners:** Historic Preservation Commission, property and business owners, local painting contractors, area nursery businesses, City staff including building inspector | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board**  **Responsible** | **DueDates(Start&Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Perform a “walkabout” with the Main Street/DDA Board, Council, and HPC to identify properties in need of rehab or repair. | Ariel Alexander & Amy Thrailkill | 1/2022 – 7/2022 | Code Enforcement, Public Works. Council, DDA | No cost |
| Seek a bank of preservation experts to review historical photos for rehab/repair advice. | Mary Csukas & Joel Cordle | 4/2022-4/2023 | Local Contractors, HPC, Historical Society, Ga. Main Street | $2,500.00 |
| Educate property owners on the available façade, fire prevention, and history plaque grants. | Skyler Alexander & Tony Owens | 2/2022-2/2023 | Local Contractors, Fire Marshall | $500.00 Printing |
| Prepare a database of local contractors who have successfully performed restoration work on downtown buildings in the last 10 years and make it available to property owners who need contractors for repairs | Mary Csukas & Joel Cordle | 4/2022 – 6/2022 | Tim Martin, Sam Norton | No cost |
| Purchase additional benches for targeted areas (E. Main, N. Grove, Head House) | Mary Csukas & Tony Owens | 3/2022 – 10/2022 | City public works | $1,500.00 |
| Add more shade trees, plants, and small pockets of green space to increase visual appeal of East Main, South Chestatee, North Grove | Mary Csukas & Ryan Puckett | 3/2024 – 10/2024 | City public works, city landscaping staff | Projected 2024 |
| Partner with city public works to freshly paint crosswalks, add “painted sidewalk stripes” where needed, add crosswalk lighting, and replace damaged crosswalk signage - all to improve pedestrian safety. | Mary Csukas & Joel Cordle | 2/2024 – 9/2024, then ongoing routine | City public works | Projected 2024 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Historic Preservation*** | | | | |
| **Goal 2**  Preservation Education | | | **Definitions for Success**  Create and publish six downtown preservation stories, and update two walking tours, by May 2024 | |
| **Partners:** Historic Preservation Commission, property and business owners Chris Worick, Georgia Main Street, UNG, Georgia Historic Preservation Office, Lumpkin Schools | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board**  **Responsible** | **DueDates(Start&Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Implement a public art initiative that highlights Dahlonega history. This will include downtown selfie spots. | Skyler Alexander & Tony Owens | 2/2022 – 2/2023 | HPC, Chestatee Arts Alliance, Council, LCHS art class | Projected 2023 |
| Develop and distribute 6 or more preservation stories and develop and install new “Dahlonega Stories” plaques, including one at the Head House | Ariel Alexander & Ryan Puckett | 3/2022 – 12/2022 | History Department of UNG, Historical Society | $7,000.00 |
| Visit and partner with the Historical Society to find historical pictures of downtown for a “Throwback Thursday” Social Media campaign. | Skyler Alexander & Joel Cordle | 1/2022 – 1/2023 | History Department of UNG, Historical Society | No cost |
| Collaborate with University of North Georgia to digitize and share historic copies of the local newspaper – focusing first on downtown buildings and businesses | Ariel Alexander & Wendi Huguley | 5/2022 – 5/2024 | UNG Archivist, Dahlonega Nugget | No cost |
| Create education program for local school system bring local children and their families downtown and become involved – focus on Historic Preservation Month (May) and downtown buildings and/or art for selfie spots | Ariel Alexander & Amy Thrailkill | 2/2022 – 3/2023 | Lumpkin Co. School System, UNG | $1,000.00 printing |
| Revive and update the walking tour promotional materials for “Dahlonega Stories” and the Historic District | Skyler Alexander & Wendi Huguley | 4/2022 – 3/2022 | Chris Worick, HPC, Lumpkin Historical Society, Tourism office | $500.00 printing |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Businesses and Amenities to Serve Residents*** | | | | |
| **Goal 1**  Retain, Expand, and Recruit (RER) businesses for the downtown district (retail, entertainment) | | **Definitions for Success**  Retain current businesses, expand two current businesses, and recruit six new businesses, by July 2024 | | |
| **Partners and Resources:** local business owners, potential business owners, Ga. Power’s ESRI customer demographic and retail leakage data, Chamber, Tourism Board,  schools (work training)**,** Lumpkin Co. Development Authority, UNG Marketing, city community development/planning | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board Responsible** | **DueDates(Start&Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Develop or sell the 147 North Park Street property. | Mary Csukas & Amy Thrailkill | 2/2022 until sold \*Top Priority\* | Lumpkin County Development Authority, Rebecca Mincey |  |
| Proactively work with business owners on community programs while also including the Chamber of Commerce. | Skyler Alexander & Tony Owens | 2/2022 - ongoing | DDBA, Chamber, Tourism Board | $10,000 (4th of July) $1,000.00 advertising |
| Assist downtown businesses with marketing and promotion efforts, including special focus on local resident and UNG consumers | Skyler Alexander & Wendi Huguley | 2/2022 – 6/2023 | Business owners, chamber, UNG | $1,000.00 printing $1,000 advertising |
| Use data from Community Survey, Ga. Power ESRI retail leakage report, identify types of businesses needed, & provide data to current and prospective business owners (expanding, recruiting) | Ariel Alexander & A.C. Moore | 4/2022- ongoing practice | Business owners, Ga. Power | No cost |
| Recruit a boutique grocery/beverage market w/tasting room, café) (ask existing area markets about expansion to downtown) | Mary Csukas & Amy Thrailkill | 4/2023-4/2024 | Targeted prospects | No cost |
| Get essential info on each vacant property from owners and use it to populate an up-to-date property inventory | Ariel Alexander & Donna Logan | 2/2022 – ongoing practice | Property owners | No cost |
| Maintain a “waiting list” of prospective businesses to hook up with owners | Skyler Alexander & Donna Logan | 2/2022 – ongoing practice | Prospects, property owners | No cost |
| Contract with parking management consultant to create a visitor-based parking education program including stronger signage & marking | Ariel Alexander & A.C. Moore | 4/2023 – 1/2024 | UNG, parking consultant, city staff, Tourism Office | Projected 2023 |
| Research and develop a parking shuttle for ease of access to downtown, use of university parking deck, city lots | Mary Csukas & Joel Cordle | 2/2023 – 5/2024 | Local business owners, UNG, city council & staff | Projected 2023/24 |