***Downtown Dahlonega 2023 Strategic Work Plan***

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| **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 young professionals and families, university professionals and students, as well as visitors who are drawn to the local history, architecture, and friendly charming atmosphere. Everyone enjoys spending time in downtown because of the diverse entertainment, dining, and shopping options. Pedestrians enjoy moving with ease through an expansive network of sidewalks and crosswalks that are well -lit and connected to nearby residential streets, the* *University campus, and the reservoir trails. Streets are lined with new trees, flowering plants, and colorful banners throughout the shopping district. The historic integrity of the downtown area has been well maintained and preserved. 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 preservation-minded pride of its residents.* | |
| **Community Transformation Strategies**  1. *Community Serving*  2. *Beautification Initiatives and Design* | |
| **Rationale**  In 2021, the DDA-Main Street office conducted three surveys: 1) a Business Owner Survey, 2) a Community Input survey, and 3) a Downtown Leadership survey. Data showed local residents’ very strong commitment to the historic preservation of downtown buildings, their plea for more businesses to serve the community, and for more locally oriented entertainment and placemaking initiatives. Because of the desire to see more resident-based services, the DDA and Main Street team selected *Community Serving* and *Beautification Initiatives and Design* as their transformation strategies. These strategies are intended to spark business development and retention, and intentional design and placemaking projects to create a robust downtown area. Dahlonega is a leader in creating a climate for business success based on 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 the Dahlonega DDA-Main Street board and staff. | |
| ***Wildly Important Goals*** | |
| **Community Serving** | **Beautification Initiatives and Design** |
| **Goals**   1. Proactively work to enhance resident experiences in the categories of entertainment, shopping, dining, and service industries. 2. Retain, Expand, and Recruit (RER) businesses. | **Goals**   1. Repair and preserve downtown buildings and enhance public properties. |
| **Definition for Success**  1. Five new programs have been implemented to increase the quality of life for residents and enhance the experiences of visitors by December 2024.  2. Retain current businesses; help expand two current businesses; recruit six new businesses that provide a needed service to residents, by July 2025. | **Definition for Success**  1. 100% of public properties are cleaned and prepped for greenspace and pocket park projects by March 2025.  2. An education initiative has been implemented to bring blighted buildings, both historic and not, into compliance, by December 2023. |
| **Lead Board Member Amy** | **Lead Board Member Amy** |

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| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Community Serving*** | | | | |
| **Goal 1**  Proactively work to enhance resident experiences in the categories of entertainment, shopping, dining, and service industries. | | | **Definitions for Success**  Five new programs have been implemented to increase the quality of life of residents and enhance the experiences of visitors by December 2024. | |
| **Partners:**  Dahlonega City Council, Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce, Discover Dahlonega (Tourism), Downtown Dahlonega Business Association | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board Responsible** | **Due Date (Start & Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Educate on the importance of business hours that coincide with commuter metrics in the city and the county. | Skyler Alexander  Tony Owens | ASAP - continuous | DDBA, GDOT, Tourism | No cost |
| Plan and execute weeknight promotional events (ticketed events, crawls, etc.) once a month that incentivizes “after 5 p.m.” sales and provide entertainment for locals; advertise current local discounts and encourage more businesses to offer them. | Skyler Alexander  Deb Rowe | 4/2023 - continuous | DDBA, Tourism, Chamber of Commerce | Fund Balance, sponsorships |
| Maintain a downtown community calendar to share with city and county residents via, social media, email campaigns, and physical mail. | Skyler Alexander  Deb Rowe | 3/2023 - continuous | Tourism, DDBA, Chamber of Commerce, LCSS, UNG | $400.00 |
| Provide recommendations for alterations to the farmer’s market ordinance to allow a diversified market. Recruit live music and food vendors to create a lively environment; partner with Art in the Park when possible. | Skyler Alexander  Ryan Puckett | 3/2023 – 5/2023 (maintain after that) | Market vendors, Chestatee Artists, Dahlonega Arts Alliance, LCHS, UNG | $400 + additional sponsorships |
| Advocate for and recruit Downtown Dahlonega Program Sponsorships to not only add more dates for community events but enhance them as well: hire food trucks and allow for business pop-up sales. | Skyler Alexander  Amy Thrailkill | ASAP - continuous | DDBA, Chamber of Commerce | No cost |
| Purchase “giant games” to activate underutilized space to create fun centers for family activities. | Skyler Alexander  Wendi Huguley | 10/2023 - completion | City Public Works | $3,000.00 |
| Develop and maintain a downtown ambassador program: a group of community volunteers who are eager to share positive news about downtown and provide information to visitors. Create a Victorian costume rental program to coincide with this. | Ariel Alexander & Skyler Alexander  Awtrey Moore | 8/2023 – 10/2023 (maintain after that) | DDBA, Chamber of Commerce, Visitor’s Center | TPD: T-shirts,  Costumes.  $300 printing |
| Design and implement a mini bronze statue program: unique, bronze statues placed strategically around the downtown area as a walking tour/scavenger hunt for families: Miners on Main & Bears on the Square | Skyler Alexander  Wendi Huguley | 7/2023 - completion | Tourism, UNG, statue production company | TPD |

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| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Community Serving*** | | | | |
| **Goal 2**  Retain, Expand, and Recruit (RER) businesses. | | | **Definitions for Success**  Retain current businesses; help expand two current businesses; recruit six new businesses that provide a needed service to residents, by July 2025. | |
| **Partners:** 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, and the city’s planning and zoning department | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board Responsible** | **Due Date (Start Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Create a private Facebook for local merchants to receive updates from the DDA, Main Street, City, and fellow merchants. Send out bi-weekly email updates with this information also. | Skyler Alexander  Wendi Huguley | ASAP - continuous | DDBA, Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, City Staff | No cost |
| Hire a UNG intern to develop and maintain a comprehensive social media program, coordinating with all businesses as well as other advertising entities: Tourism, Chamber, etc. | Skyler Alexander  Wendi Huguley | 8/2023 – continuous  (Fall 2023 semester) | Tourism, DDBA, Chamber of Commerce, LCSS, UNG | Use FWS,  Intern Budget |
| Recruit a boutique grocery/beverage market w/tasting room, café)  (Ask existing area markets about expansion to downtown). | Ariel Alexander  Awtrey Moore | ASAP - completion | Targeted Prospects | No cost |
| Recruit a children’s clothing store. Ask existing area businesses about expansion to downtown. | Ariel Alexander  Awtrey Moore | ASAP - completion | Targeted Prospects | No cost |
| Advertise and share available vacant properties and meet with interested parties to educate them about the services Dahlonega is lacking. | Ariel Alexander  Amy Thrailkill | ASAP - continuous | Targeted Prospects | No cost |
| Continue to pursue a public art initiative and work to provide funding mechanisms for strategic murals and other art installations in the downtown area. | Ariel Alexander  Tony Owens | 3/2023 - continuous | UNG Art Department, GA Council for the Arts | TPD |
| Provide recommendations for “pro-business” alterations to city ordinances to streamline the process of opening a business downtown. | Ariel Alexander  Tony Owens | ASAP - completion | DDBA, City Council, Planning & Zoning, Parking Committee | No cost |
| Create and maintain a “Job Opportunities” page on dahlonegadda.org for downtown positions with contact information. | Skyler Alexander  Donna Logan | 3/2023 - continuous | Business Owners | No cost |
| Create and implement a Downtown Dollars program: a self-sufficient fund for gift certificates, managed by the DDA, to be used at participating businesses. | Skyler Alexander  Deb Rowe | 4/2023 - continuous | Business Owners, Tourism | $1,000 seed money |
| Connect business owners in need of trained staff with the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission WorkSource GA program. | Skyler Alexander  Donna Logan | 5/2023 - continuous | GMRC | No cost |

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| **Community Transformation Strategy: *Beautification Initiatives and Design*** | | | | |
| **Goal 1**  Repair and preserve downtown buildings and enhance public properties. | | **Definitions for Success**   1. 100% of public properties are cleaned and prepped for greenspace and pocket park projects by March 2025. 2. An education initiative has been implemented to bring blighted buildings, both historic and not, into compliance, by December 2023. | | |
| **Partners and Resources:** Dahlonega City Council, Historic Preservation Commission, city planning and zoning department, planning commission, property and business owners | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Staff & Board Responsible** | **Due Date (Start & Complete)** | **Partners** | **Budget** |
| Develop or sell the 147 North Park Street property. | Ariel Alexander  Amy Thrailkill | ASAP until completion | Interested developers, City Council | No cost |
| Install new “Dahlonega Stories” plaques, including one at the  Head House and incorporate them into a new and improved walking tour, to be distributed through paper copies as well as digitally. | Ariel Alexander  Ryan Puckett | 3/2023 - continuous | Historical Society, UNG History Department, business & property owners | $7,000 |
| Advocate for and support the installation of increased and diversified lighting downtown: streetlights at crosswalks, string lighting at storefronts and key streets, etc. | Skyler Alexander  Donna Logan | Spring 2023 – Spring 2024 | City Public Works Staff, GA Power, DDBA | As Needed |
| Identify possible land acquisitions for pocket parks and greenspace. | Ariel Alexander  Awtrey Moore | 4/2023 - continuous | DCA, property owners | As Needed |
| Further educate on the current incentives programs and contact business and property owners eligible for state incentives. | Ariel Alexander  Amy Thrailkill | ASAP - continuous | Property owners, volunteers | No cost |
| Perform a walk-through of the central business district to identify key project areas and create design recommendations for both private and public areas. | Ariel Alexander  Tony Owens | 5/2023 – 5/2023 | HPC, Planning and Zoning, City Council, | No cost |
| Begin a strategic plan for residential improvement projects in conjunction with council’s direction from housing study: to include code compliance, improvement zones, residential façade incentives, and legacy programs. | Ariel Alexander  Amy Thrailkill | 6/2023 - completion | Planning & Zoning, City Council, key stakeholders, Code Enforcement, DCA | As Needed |
| Continue to develop a comprehensive parking program and seek public-private partnerships to ease the burden on existing spaces. Research and develop a parking shuttle in conjunction with this effort. | Ariel Alexander  Wendi Huguley | ASAP - continuous | DOT, City Police, City Public Works Staff, property owners | As Needed |
| Inventory all current signage and consolidate, when possible, to clear the area for pedestrians and drivers. Purchase banners for light poles instead of on-street signage when possible. | Skyler Alexander  Deb Rowe | 3/2023 – 3/2024 | City Public Works Staff, outside vendors | $800.00 |