

DOWNTOWN AKRON PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016



TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL: THROUGH VISION, VALUES AND VIBRANCY

OUR MISSION

The Downtown Akron Partnership's mission is to promote and build a vibrant and valuable Downtown.

WHO WE ARE

Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) has been a key contributor to the Downtown Akron Community since its inception in 1995. DAP has served as a catalyst for enhancing the downtown environment, a comprehensive source of information for all things related to Downtown Akron, a convener for stakeholder conversations and a comprehensive problem solver for downtown concerns.

Downtown Akron Partnership supports existing community programs, while also developing new, innovative programs designed to create interest, build investment and attract people to Downtown Akron.

Downtown Akron Partnership's members include property owners, business leaders, government officials, residents and stakeholders who want to improve the image of downtown as a safe, convenient location for businesses, working professionals and families. DAP manages downtown resources for the Downtown Akron Special Improvement District (SID) through a contract for services. DAP is governed by a board of directors with members representing the diverse downtown community.

OUR PROCESS

DAP staff and members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors met on an ongoing basis to provide input and leadership for the development of the Strategic Plan. A key driver for the strategic plan was to ensure the process was comprehensive, inclusive and transparent.

To accomplish this, an extensive outreach to a wide-range of stakeholders was a key component of the process. Focus groups and interviews included over 200 participants. SID members, Downtown CEO's and other leaders, city and county representatives, community ward meeting attendees, emerging leaders, downtown retailers, members of the art and business committees, board members, staff, and numerous other stakeholders provided input.

Additionally, the DAP annual survey that included 1,118 responders provided additional input into the plan. Lastly, several similar-sized cities around the US were researched to provide additional insight relative to best practices.



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STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

- To develop a fully aligned, comprehensive organizational strategy to increase DAP effectiveness and impact over the next three to five years
- To establish a performance dashboard to measure progress
- To initiate a working framework that supports the successful execution of the strategic planning process

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Stakeholder Leadership Engagement and Service

Clean, Safe and Welcoming

Marketing and Branding

Vibrancy and Economic Development

Member Outreach and Support

Organization and Operational Effectiveness



STRATEGIC FOCUS ACTIONS

Stakeholder Leadership Engagement and Service

- Serve as convener and facilitator to ensure consistent understanding and flow of information among stakeholders.
- Routinely convene stakeholders to share information, assess Downtown Akron progress, and identify successes and issues.
- Build relationship with new city leadership / share plans / recommendations.
- Serve as focal point, expert, and leader for all things associated with Downtown Akron.
- Identify two to three major issues and initiatives to address each year and also convene/facilitate conversation to address.
- Engage board to assist in providing service for high visibility and targeted initiatives.

Clean, Safe and Welcoming

- Keep clean and safe as a priority.
- Improve service levels of Ambassador program.
- Publish metrics and monitor to ensure ongoing success.
- Advocate and initiate needs be addressed: signage, green space management, public realm.
- Identify plan to improve safety of downtown as safe and active after hours.
- Assess progress routinely and determine future needs.
- Plan and execute effective events that support strategic initiatives.

Marketing and Branding

- Rebrand organization.
- Redesign website for easier access to information, prioritize district needs.
- Actively promote and market the Ambassador program.
- Develop a plan to assist members to market themselves.
- Establish regular communication processes for members and various stakeholders.
- Develop and execute a marketing plan to build DAP visibility and to promote Downtown Akron as clean, safe, and beautiful.

Vibrancy and Economic Development

- Play a role in downtown development / business planning and execution.
- Understand the current situation, needs, and opportunities.
- Convene stakeholders to ensure shared knowledge and information.
- Help to establish the vision for Downtown Akron.
- Work with new city administration to ensure consistency and alignment.
- Determine internal resource needs to accomplish this successfully.
- Understand the financial drivers.
- Advocate and initiate needs be addressed.

Member Outreach and Support

- Continue current efforts to work with and support established SID and business members.
- Develop a retention plan/template/assistance for members and affiliates.
- Regularly convene businesses or learning / supportive / networking events so that the local business can connect.
- Survey members annually to identify needs.
- Provide resources, information, suggestions, support, and promotion.
- Reach out to and engage residents.

Organization and Operational Effectiveness

- Organize staff to effectively execute DAP strategic and goals with operational excellence.
- Continue and expand points of contact for key strategies and initiatives.
- Establish core values, clarify roles and responsibilities, assess and address staffing capacity and structure.
- Actively engage, leverage, and retain board members to lead or participate in specific DAP initiatives or events.
- Evaluate current budget and seek outside funding to support capacity requirements.
- Be best practice and strategically focused.
- Implement a decision making model that supports mission and values and established criteria.
- Create and implement contact management, process efficiencies, IT efficiencies and a master calendar.



2016 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- Operationalize and execute on the strategic plan.
- Incorporate communications and resources that directly support SID member business success.
- Serve as a convener, facilitator and leader with key Akron stakeholders to establish a plan for Downtown Akron's future, including a focus on economic development.
- Implement plans to expand and promote Clean and Safe initiatives.
- Complete organizational capacity assessment, and organize to effectively and efficiently accomplish goals and responsibilities.
- Rebrand and execute a focused marketing plan that enhances Downtown Akron Partnership's visibility.
- Implement recommendations, process and structure to enhance board engagement and infrastructure.



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