



## PENSACOLA DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT BOARD 2020 WORK PLAN

The Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) was established by a special act of the Florida Legislature in 1972, which intended that the new board would “guide and accomplish the coordinated, balanced and harmonious development of the downtown area in accordance with existing and future needs, to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the area and its inhabitants, visitors, property owners, and workers, to establish, maintain and preserve aesthetic values and preserve and foster the development and display of attractiveness, to prevent overcrowding and congestion, to improve auto traffic and provide pedestrian safety, and to provide a way of life which combines the conveniences and amenities of modern living with the traditions and pleasures of the past.”

Our bylaws lay out our purpose and objective: to correct downtown Pensacola commercial blight, preserve property values; to contribute to the progress and growth of Downtown Pensacola through promotion, manage parking in Downtown Pensacola, encourage economic development; attract commercial and residential re-investment into urban core, and beautify downtown Pensacola through proper maintenance, aesthetic and technical design and redevelopment measures.

In 2019, the DIB adopted a simple guiding mission statement intended to reflect the vision, intention and spirit of the founding principles: **To enhance and preserve the quality of life and economic success of downtown Pensacola.**

We continue to focus on a three-year vision for the downtown district created in 2016—a plan that establishes a set of goals designed to affect both the appearance and the experience of stakeholders and visitors in our 44-block district.

With the successful implementation, Downtown Pensacola will be:

- A vital, successful business core
- Clean and beautiful
- Walkable, with connected streets and alleyways
- Safe and inviting, day and evening
- A vibrant district seven days a week, with events and activities that are inclusive of diverse groups
- Growing with new and diverse residential options
- Cohesively connected to its waterfront

The DIB has established a set of goals for Downtown Pensacola within this work plan. They are outlined below and categorized by each program area funded by assessment dollars.

### USER EXPERIENCE



The downtown Pensacola User Experience is based upon exemplary customer service, and the DIB is focused on delivering exceptional service to all downtown customers: property owners, downtown residents and employees, government officials, vendors, locals, day trippers and tourists. As we identify and attack blight and eradicate unsafe conditions in walkways, streets and alleyways downtown, we are also engaging with downtown visitors, residents and businesses.

Success in 2020 will be:

- A highly visible and engaged ambassador team
- Reduced trash accumulation
- No weeds in sight
- Routinely power-washed sidewalks
- Graffiti and other forms of nuisance tags removed
- No build-up of leaves along streets
- CRA Dedicated Police Officers
- Public restrooms
- Elimination of 'Dark' spots

## MARKETING AND COLLABORATION

Marketing and Collaboration includes all the ways that the DIB communicates to stakeholders and promotes the amenities of Downtown. This program area includes market research, digital and social media activities, event production of Palafox Market, the First City Lights Festival and the annual DIB meeting. Marketing and Collaboration programs are funded by a combination of assessment revenue and event sponsorships.

Success in 2020 will show:

- Marketing and communication strategies are drawing more and more visitors to downtown Pensacola each year.
- Public education is successfully used to communicate important information to the community
- An annual marketing workshop is hosted for downtown merchants
- Events that highlight Downtown as a culturally diverse and vibrant destination are being held
- A follow-up Perceptions Study including a Net Promoter Score will measure district improvement since the original survey in 2016

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This area includes all programs designed to attract new investment, as well as the programs that retain existing economic impact in downtown. These programs include working with businesses to improve their opportunity for success downtown, along with outreach to potential businesses to invest in downtown. Included in this area is developing and implementing a cohesive parking management plan that accommodates existing commercial development, and builds in considerations for working with property owners, developers and potential investors to create new development in downtown. In this action plan, the DIB has established ambitious goals.





Success in 2020 will include:

- Distribution of retail establishments through the entire district
- More housing options to include single-family, townhouse, multi-family and artist live/work housing
- 1000 more housing units in downtown over 2016
- Readily available Wi-Fi access
- Partner with and support the City to ensure multi-modal transportation on downtown streets
- Multiple electric vehicle (EV) charging locations
- More public art throughout the downtown district

## DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY

Measurement of our ongoing success is necessary. To facilitate this, Majority Opinion Research should be retained to complete a follow-up Perceptions Report. The responses to this survey of Downtown Pensacola stakeholders and visitors will validate and refine our management plan. The following summarizes the original survey results.

Research completed by Majority Opinion in 2016 revealed several drivers that were most liked about Downtown Pensacola.

	<u>2016</u>
1. A place you feel comfortable	97%
2. A place to relax	96%
3. Having scenic beauty	96%
4. Good place to visit with children	88%
5. Historic offerings/attractions	88%
6. Shopping options you want	86%

This work plan was created to fulfill the and meet the goals of a successful downtown in 2020. The Plan works to reinforce the “most liked” elements in downtown while also addressing the “least liked” elements. The “most important” issues facing downtown will annually be addressed by the elements of the DIB Management Plan.

## ESTABLISHING THE ACTIVITY PLAN

Through regular board, committee and stakeholder meetings that began in December of 2016, and further defined during 2020 Planning sessions in May of 2019, it has been collectively determined the priority for improvements and activities to be delivered by the Downtown Improvement Board.

The activities and services of the business improvement district are adapted to meet the specific needs identified by the local business community that will continue funding the district. Among the benefits are:

- Creating a cleaner, safer, brighter and more attractive commercial core.
- Continued search for grant opportunities as a resource base to fund supplemental services and programs.



- Maintain / increase property values, actively market the district to drive increased sales and occupancy rates, and thereby increase the community's overall tax base.
- Provide innovative and politically neutral management for the betterment of the business district.
- Respond quickly to market changes and community needs.
- Develop a stable environment and distinct identity for the business district, making it more competitive with surrounding retail and business centers.
- Leverage partnerships and resources including money, services, and people.

## ACTIVITY PLAN AND BUDGET STRATEGY

In developing the Activity Plan and Budget Strategy, maintaining current investment in downtown while attracting new investment to downtown is the highest priority. All Downtown Improvement Board programs are calibrated to three broad areas:

1. User Experience
2. Economic Development
3. Marketing & Collaboration

Focusing on these three areas allows the DIB to have flexibility to react to issues that change from year to year.

### User Experience

User Experience is broader than just creating a clean and safe downtown and includes dedicated police officers, improved lighting, events, public art, wayfinding/signage, and everything that contributes to creating a positive downtown user experience. We will consider all of the elements that contribute to the user's downtown experience and develop programs that will proactively improve the appearance and experience of downtown Pensacola for our users.

### Economic Development

Economic Development encompasses programs that are needed to recruit and retain business investment in downtown. Economic Development is broad and includes projects such as a New Business Welcome Kit, a Downtown Welcome sheet for realtors, a robust website, partnerships and programs to attract new residential development downtown. Basically, anything that contributes to improving the economic vitality of downtown falls under Economic Development, and all programs that the DIB engages in impact this area. The DIB will invest 4% of the overall operating budget to economic development programs designed to recruit and retain investment in business core growth.

### Marketing and Collaboration

Marketing and Collaboration encompasses Communication and Marketing programs and a lot more. Downtown Pensacola has a story to tell and we use both high tech and low-tech methods to continue to spread the story. Marketing and Collaboration includes producing and facilitating diverse events in





downtown, generating regular original content about the downtown area and sharing it across multiple channels, partnering with Visit Florida, Visit Pensacola, Perdido Key Chamber and others to cross-promote our area, maintaining a robust website and social channels, and more. Marketing and Collaboration builds the foundation for continued and increased economic development in downtown.

## 2018-2019 BUDGET

The total DIB budget for fiscal year 2019-20 is projected at \$929,000. Private property assessment revenue is projected at \$405,531 of the DIB budget. The balance of the revenue is generated from CRA investment, Downtown Parking Management District agreement, earned income, and program revenue. Management staff expenses and support services are allocated to program costs depending on the position and the type of work performed. The budget is made up of the following components:

### USER EXPERIENCE

**\$412,245.00 (27%)**

#### Palafox Market

Palafox Market is successful event in Downtown Pensacola, a weekly farmers market that draws thousands downtown each Saturday to shop for ready to eat food items, artwork and crafts. For more than ten years the award-winning Palafox Market has been filling the pantries of shoppers, while supporting more than 200 local farmers and small businesses. The DIB will focus on continued growth and consistent participation with vendors to maximize revenue growth.

#### Downtown Cleaning Ambassador Program

The Downtown Cleaning Ambassadors will be responsible for the daily maintenance needs of the District, to present a consistently clean, orderly and beautiful appearance for residents and visitors. To effectively address the many maintenance issues in the business improvement district, a multi-dimensional approach will consist of the following elements:

**Sidewalk Maintenance:** Uniformed, radio-equipped Ambassadors will pick-up and sweep litter, debris and refuse from sidewalks and gutters of the district. Through an established sidewalk cleaning program, sidewalks will be routinely surface cleaned and maintained. Every effort will be placed on working with License to Use holders to encourage them to maintain the area based on the LTU requirements. If possible, the DIB will ask for access to the City LTU funds to supplement the expense of cleaning projects that benefit LTU holders.

**Graffiti Removal:** Ambassadors remove graffiti at the ground level by painting, using solvent and pressure washing. The district will maintain a zero-tolerance graffiti policy. The goal of the district is to remove graffiti tags within 24 hours of receiving approval from the property owner or other appropriate authority.

**Paper Sign and Handbill Removal:** Paper signs and handbills taped or glued on public property, utility boxes, poles and telephones are removed by hand or when necessary by high-pressure water.

**Landscape Services:** Weeds will be regularly controlled throughout the district and removed before they become unsightly. Seasonal plantings of colorful flowers supplemental to those



already planted will continue. All other landscape projects will be managed by the Cleaning Ambassadors with special attention to green spaces, parks, on and off-street parking facilities and areas within the public domain. Visual improvement is the mission. Landscape services could potentially be provided to private property owners as an additional source of recurring revenue for the program.

**Safety:** Alongside Cleaning Ambassadors, who provide a presence seven days a week downtown, two new police officers, funded by DIB and CRA, will provide highly visible neighborhood support to property owners and tenants in district, and assist in crime prevention by becoming an additional set of eyes and ears in the reduction of neighborhood disorder.

Through regular daily activities in the downtown core, the Ambassadors actively deter unsuitable behavior. Their presence is also a deterrent to theft and burglary from motor vehicles. They handle a myriad of quality of life problems including: public intoxication, urinating in public, indecent exposure, trespassing and loitering.

The Ambassadors respond when visitors need motorist aid or visitor information. They perform goodwill gestures such as helping with directions and escorting office workers to parking.

The Ambassadors patrol assigned routes evenly, covering property daily on assigned routes in the district. They are professional, assertive, friendly, courteous, people-oriented individuals in excellent physical condition. Employees complete customized classroom district training and field training.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**\$61,000.00 (4%)**

Building a rapport with existing stakeholders and their networks is critical to the success of downtown. The DIB team will develop programs that support professional real estate brokers in the attraction of new businesses and tenants to downtown. In concert with an active real estate support program, creating a vision of Downtown for the future is vital to long-term development. Working with the City, CRA and SCAPE, a master plan will be created that identifies and illustrates the potential of a complete streets concept plan for the DIB district.

**First City Lights Festival** also contributes to the economic development mission. The festival is a holiday celebration encompassing shopping, dining, history, music and art in historic downtown Pensacola, beginning the first week in November and concluding in mid- January. Anchored by Palafox Street, one of America's "Ten Great Streets," Downtown Pensacola comes alive with hundreds of thousands of dazzling holiday lights and a full season of family-friendly activities. The Friends of Downtown Pensacola, a 501c(3), serves as the lead coordinator in procuring and installing décor, coordinating or supporting events, and marketing everything within its boundaries during the ten-week festival. We sincerely hope to continue this successful tradition with the support of the City and Visit Pensacola. The DIB has committed to double its annual contribution to the cost of the festival and will continue to seek grant funding to help support this annual event that research shows draws tens of thousands to downtown Pensacola and drives millions of dollars in local spending each year.

## **MARKETING AND COLLABORATION**

**\$120,700.00 (8%)**

It is important to not only provide the services needed in the District, but to continue to share the Downtown Pensacola experience with potential visitors. Several of the communication/marketing





programs currently in place are produced with non-assessment funds but are developed and implemented by District personnel. These programs will continue and will be enhanced.

In addition, new programs and new methods will be developed to tell the rich story that is Downtown Pensacola. A main goal of Marketing and Collaboration is to reinforce the economic development work. To tell the story of why Downtown Pensacola is a good environment for investment, whether that investment is in a commercial building or residential property.

**GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DIB** **\$208,262.88 (14%)**

The G&A expense budget is for overhead expenses and includes salaries, rent, insurance, accounting, audit, legal fees and other office related expenses.

**GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DPMD** **\$327,407.32 (22%)**

**CRA AGREEMENT** **\$380,551.00 (25%)**

**CONCLUSION**

The Downtown Improvement Board is excited to make a consistent and highly visible impact to the continued growth of downtown. Programs such as the Downtown Ambassadors, contemporary parking management practices, Palafox Market and First City Holiday Lights have proven to invigorate downtown, create a unique and authentic sense of place.

The DIB staff, Board and committees will work to identify market changes quickly, and modify this plan as needed to provide the highest level of accountability and support the stakeholders and investors in Downtown Pensacola.

Respectfully submitted,

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