

Executive Summary

This Work Plan provides strategic operational priorities for the Downtown Association for Fiscal Year 2010 and describes the activities which the organization will pursue to accomplish its stated goals. In achieving the mission set forth in the Bylaws to provide effective leadership in order to create, promote and sustain Downtown as a unique and economically viable business, entertainment, social and cultural center, the Board of Directors, working with the Executive Director, has established a set of goals as a focal point for the development of the work plan. The goals are as follows:

- **A consistently clean, safe and friendly Downtown**
- **An identity as a premier retail and entertainment district in the region**
- **A strong Downtown business community**
- **A sustainable organizational structure**

The strategic priorities for the year are as follows:

Marketing

At the writing of this work plan, we are finalizing a marketing plan that will be implemented through the strategies listed herein. While event production and general advertising continue to be the main focus of the marketing efforts, specific marketing programs will be developed and evaluated to meet criteria as determined by our marketing study.

Community Relations

The perception of Downtown is singularly significant to the success of the Downtown Business district and paramount to the work of the Downtown Association. Creating new programs and expanding upon existing programs that manage those perceptions is an area of focus in this work plan.

Member Services

Connecting the business members to the programs of the Downtown Association and striving to be as responsive to the membership as possible is an on going challenge. Creating forums and avenues to communicate with and encourage participation from the members will be a significant priority.

Introduction and Background

The Downtown Association's mission is to provide effective leadership in order to create, promote and sustain Downtown as a unique and economically viable business, entertainment, social and cultural center. In order to achieve that mission, the Board of Directors has developed the following annual work plan, derived from a strategic planning process.

In the time since the FY09 work plan was created and approved, many variables have changed that directly affect the impact as well as the effectiveness and priority of the Downtown Association's programs. These variables have been taken into account and have been a factor in the development of the current objectives.

On an organizational level, the Downtown Association has experienced significant transition in leadership, both on an executive as well as governance level, with a new Executive Director as well as a significant rotation of Board Directors. Such a transition has inspired a desire for increased level of institutionalized systems and policy documentation.

Locally, the Downtown environment has suffered an increase in challenges relating to social behaviors, which has supported ongoing negative attention and an unfavorable perception of Downtown as a safe and comfortable district.

Of course, recent economic changes have placed extra challenges on businesses, creating a need for more support and new kinds of collaborative actions.

The Board of Directors has established the following goals and objectives in an effort to address the current conditions of the Business District while working to achieve the mission.

Goals and Objectives

A consistently clean, safe and friendly Downtown

- Clean sidewalks
- Year round events

An identity as a premier retail and entertainment district in the region

- Develop and execute effective marketing strategies and evaluate results regularly
- Promote positive perception among members, public, media and government agencies
- Encourage a diverse and comprehensive community of retail dining and entertainment and professional offerings
- Identify and promote Downtown's unique assets
- Promote benefits of business to the greater community
- Assess economic impacts of nightlife

A strong Downtown business community

- Membership well represented, informed and engaged on board and at meetings
- DTA Responsive to membership
- Collaborations among businesses encouraged and supported
- Economic health of businesses supported
- Events and promotions designed to support businesses
- Strong partnership with other like minded agencies

A sustainable organizational structure

- Institutionalized organizational calendars
- Implement systems for measuring success
- Develop renewable Board participation
- Document systems of operations

Resources and Constraints

Perhaps the greatest asset in achieving the goals of the Downtown Association is the shared vision and relative alignment with the goals and objectives of many other organizations in the area. We continue to work with the many City agencies and social service organizations toward the goal of creating a consistently clean, safe and friendly Downtown.

The Department of Economic Development and Redevelopment as well as the Conference and Visitors Council plus the Good Times, Metro Newspaper, local radio and other local media outlets, all provide great assistance in furthering the promotional goals of the Downtown Association.

While staffing is limited, execution of the work plan is greatly aided through an ongoing internship program as well as volunteer committees, comprised primarily of members of the Board of Directors.

Revenue sources remain generally consistent, with 90% from a Business Improvement Assessment. Changes in revenue for this year include \$15,000 less from not continuing the Contract to administer the host program, partially offset by increases in Associate Membership program, sponsorship revenue and other sources. (See Appendix I - Budget)

Strategy and Actions

Marketing

Promoting Downtown continues to be a high priority for the Downtown Association as it is foundational to our core purpose. This Year **The Promotions and Marketing Committee** will be implementing a new marketing plan, deepening the brand identity of Downtown and expanding on the message that “It’s All Right Here”, showcasing the diversity and broad appeal of the Downtown.

Events

The Downtown Association has historically produced a wide range of events as a means to attract visitors to the area, reinforce the brand of Downtown and enhance the experience of the Downtown community. As there are many variables Downtown that are constantly changing, the Promotions Committee of the Downtown Association is continually refining and amending the focus of our events.

Our current position aims to limit the number of events we produce, allowing more resources to be directed to expand the production quality and marketing impact of a few key events. Additionally, the Downtown Association is exploring ways to support other Downtown events through sponsorship, in kind support, joint marketing and other collaborations.

Downtown Association event calendar for FY10

Culinary Expo - September

Working with the numerous Downtown restaurants, the Downtown Association will produce an event that showcases the district’s culinary offerings.

20/20 Vision – Loma Prieta Earthquake commemoration - October

The Downtown Association will present a series of events to mark the twentieth anniversary of the 1989 Earthquake. The events will commemorate the quake and the impact it had on the community, as well as honor the many community members who help shape the rebuilding and lead us into the future.

Halloween Trick or Treat - October

Holiday Events - December

The Downtown Association will continue to produce The Annual Holiday Parade and the popular Snow Night. We will also provide support for the Downtown Carriage Rides as well as Santa at Marini’s.

National Dance Week - April

The Downtown Association shall continue to partner with NDWSC to produce a Dance event in spring. The Downtown Association will promote this event regionally, and work to expand opportunities to bring events into businesses and throughout the district.

Sidewalk Sale – March-September

On the last weekend of each month from March through September, Pacific Avenue and the side streets become a shopping bazaar as the stores bring their wares onto the sidewalk. The Downtown Association secures permits and provides marketing to ensure these sales are successful events for the businesses and fun for the community.

Advertising

The Promotions and Marketing Committee continues to explore ways to deliver the messages of the Downtown business community. The ongoing advertising vehicles include a print campaign in the GoodTimes newspaper, periodic radio advertising, aggressive web marketing and a growing weekly e-mail newsletter promoting a wide range of Downtown activities and special events. All advertising directs back to www.DowntownSantaCruz.com, where we maintain an up-to-date listing of business in the district as well as an in-depth calendar of events.

Community Relations

The Social and Legislative Committee of the Downtown Association meets regularly to discuss and advise the Board on such issues that affect the quality of life Downtown. This year, the Downtown Association will be implementing programs born from this committee's work and recommendations.

Ambassador program

Downtown has been described as the community's living room. The greater Santa Cruz community has a collective investment in and a shared adoration for our Downtown. The Social and Legislative Committee is implementing an ambassador program designed to engage members of the community in the management of Downtown quality of life issues.

Social Services awareness campaign

As Downtown continues to attract more and more people seeking various kinds of support, the Downtown Association is launching a public campaign designed to bring awareness and financial support to the myriad of local Social Service organizations.

Membership Support

The Membership Committee is charged with maintaining effective communication with the members of the Business Improvement District. This objective is achieved through numerous initiatives.

Member Communications

The Downtown Association represents approximately 600 businesses in the Business Improvement District. Ongoing communication with and among these businesses is paramount to understanding how to fulfill our mission. Monthly member e-mails, quarterly print newsletters, and periodic, time sensitive flyering are some of the methods engaged to distribute information to our members. Understanding that communication also includes listening, we will continue to host forums, conduct surveys and solicit information from the members in any manner that becomes available.

New Member Welcome Program

Opening a new business in any location is a huge task. Locating Downtown brings an additional set of issues and challenges. The Downtown Association has developed a welcoming packet for new members introducing them to the services provided by the Downtown Association as well as many other useful resources.

Block meetings

In an effort to be responsive to and representative of our constituency, the Downtown Association is engaging in many efforts to encourage communication with and among the businesses in the district. Understanding that the issues and opportunities Downtown vary greatly from block to block, just as the needs of our members vary for different types of businesses and at different times of day, the Membership Committee is coordinating localized meetings designed to impart, gather and share information and ideas with our business neighbors.

Employee Orientation

In addition to all of the particularities of each business, there is a lot of information to impart to employees specific to operating a business Downtown. The Social and Legislative Committee is introducing an orientation program available for any Downtown employee that will address how to respond to various social issues, from nuisances to emergencies, graffiti and other vandalism, and other Downtown issues.

Workshops

Continuing our partnership with the Small Business Development Center, The Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce and the Library, the Downtown Association will continue to provide Small Business Survival Skills workshops for our members. Additionally, we will present relevant training seminars and workshops throughout the year to better equip our members to be successful in their business.

DTA Mixers

Our quarterly mixers have been a great opportunity to introduce the businesses to their neighbors, showcase new enterprises and promote the programs of the Downtown Association, as well as other exciting Downtown attractions. This year we will look for ways to increase attendance.

Annual Dinner

This fall, the Downtown Association will present the return of the Annual Dinner. In an effort to connect with the larger community, the Annual Dinner will provide a forum to introduce the new Board members, acknowledge many of the people who have contributed significantly to Downtown and create a sense of community among Downtown businesses and their allies.

Ribbon Cuttings

This is a service we continue to offer to new business in the neighborhood.

Associate Membership Program

The Downtown Association will offer a special Associate Membership to businesses and organizations outside of the District who would like to be engaged in Downtown. Benefits will include special rates on Downtown Association Sponsorship programs and events as well as promotional opportunities.

Economic Stimulation

Downtown Dollars

The Downtown Association will continue to administer the Downtown Dollars gift certificate program and seek new innovative ways to promote and expand the impact of the program.

Occupancy issues

With continued vacancies in many buildings Downtown, the Downtown Association is committed to working with City agencies and property owners to help reduce the negative impact of vacant storefronts.

Appendices

Budget

Calendar