



Downtown Boulder Community Advisory Board Summary of Recommendations - 2021

*“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody,
only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”*

-Jane Jacobs-

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In fall of 2020 Downtown Boulder Community Initiatives (DBCI) (501c3) established a “Community Advisory Board” (CAB) to explore ways that the organization could leverage its own leadership and resources to achieve greater inclusivity in Downtown Boulder. Through a process of ongoing meetings, the CAB conversation moved into areas of diversity, access, racial equity and justice. The acronym JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) was adopted to express the encapsulation of conversation.

The recommendations in this document have been organized in 5 sections, reflecting the intended audience for each set of recommendations.

As the CAB was established by the Downtown Boulder Community Initiatives, the first section addresses recommendations to and for the DBCI board of directors, as well as the staff and the boards of DBCI’s partner organizations, Downtown Boulder Partnership (DBP) and Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District (BID).

These recommendations span from long range strategic and policy directions to immediate tactical opportunities. Implementation for some of the recommendations has already begun, while others will require a more strategic approach. All of the recommendations are born from an effort to co-create a more inclusive and equitable downtown.

This set of recommendations is not exhaustive, nor does the CAB board suffice in fully expanding Downtown Boulder’s representation among the greater community. What this document represents is the beginning of a conversation. There are still many absent voices, and with that even more education for all of us to benefit from in continuing this work.

Subsequent sections address steps that can be taken by, and in partnership with the City of Boulder and other partners organizations, the business community, individually and collectively, and finally an inward focus identifying ways that the CAB itself could function more effectively towards its goals.

The City of Boulder’s [Racial Equity Plan \(REP\)](#) is referenced throughout the document as it provides important guidance for this work and opportunities for collaborations.

Downtown Boulder Community Initiative

Policy Recommendations

Much of the CAB's focus for 2021 has been around programming, and specifically, events. However, there is an understanding that integrating Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) systems and perspectives throughout the Downtown Boulder family of organizations is necessary in order to address systemic exclusionary and inequitable policies. Below are a set of recommendations based on the CAB's observations of the organization through a programming cycle, albeit a unique cycle. These include very specific programmatic changes as well as organizational policy and strategic recommendations.

Organizational Policy



Center EQUITY as an organizational principle (DBP Family of Organizations)

- Own the responsibility of being at the center of a community
- Position the equity work of the CAB & DBCI to better achieve stated mission and vision - expectation set with businesses and community.
- Develop a culture of giving back to the community.

Support the integration of CAB into all aspects of DBP's family of organizations & programming

- Improve upon bilateral communication channels between the CAB and the various segments of the Downtown Boulder Organization so that feedback can be incorporated effectively and strategically.
- Create a working group to assess and decide upon internal equity goals and their associated KPI's.

Prioritize diverse board member representation on governing boards and diversity in hiring DBP Staff.

Create space for staff and board members to fully commit to and become community **champions of JEDI.**

- This requires dedicated time and effort.
 - Commitment should be demonstrated by those who are empowered among the Downtown Boulder organizations (board and committee leadership, DB staff leadership, leadership figures at the City of Boulder and with other community partner organizations - Chamber, CVB, etc).
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Programming Policy



DBP and CAB can and should use REP to guide us as a resource with which to align our respective and collaborative programming efforts as well as organizational/operational policies.

- Have the right people at the table during discussions about programming development.
- Apply REPMatrix tools on every event in its development and utilize **REP** as a guide in developing internal KPIs - we acknowledge the REP is not comprehensive when addressing Downtown equity.
- Begin to track the success of events and communication efforts in terms of the REP's logic model and tool implementation.
- Remain mindful of inclusion and exclusion of every gathering - "The Art of Gathering: How we meet and why it matters" (Priya Parker)
- Continue to seek resources to provide inclusivity and equity for marginalized groups.
- Identify barriers to accessibility for additional marginalized groups in the Boulder community, i.e. extend hours of munchkin masquerade into the evening so that more community members can join.
- Use [Community Foundation Trends Report](#) to identify marginalized populations to support in the first 1-3 years.

The annual event load should be lessened to allow staff to focus on the additional work of programming equitably.

- Spend a larger proportion of the event work cycle on intentional event outreach, NOT just developing programming and event logistics - this may require that the DBCI board make the decision to alleviate the overall load of events.

Further-develop the events task force to create a working committee to take on more of the events related work that is beyond staff capacity.

- Translation and interpretation.
- Outreach (particularly to communities that have not been traditionally engaged).
- Communication tactics.
- Maintaining community engagement in the downtown space.

Better incorporate the CAB in event outreach for event/program promotion.

Language access is a must for each and every event.

Partner Relationships and Coordination

DBP plays a unique role in the community, in partnership with the City of Boulder (CoB), as a de facto curator of our city center's public space; arbitrating the shared needs of the public space, while simultaneously serving the needs of private investment. Is a role that DBP must, and has embraced. It is also an effort that requires collaboration and alignment with the public sector.

The City of Boulder has done remarkable work in codifying JEDI efforts through the REP and other initiatives. The recommendations below highlight ways that the CAB and DBP can leverage the partnerships to further mutual goals.

Partnership Recommendations



Develop a relationship with REP staff at the CoB

Create a session with staff, DBCI, and CAB to cover the REP in order to identify resources, set priorities, and to eventually position the CAB as a resource to the City of Boulder and community at large.

- Pilot collaboration program with the City of Boulder to integrate REP.
- Explore opportunities for support & outreach through established City of Boulder departments and programs (i.e. HRC funding).
- Clarify and underscore data points to track progress .
- Engage with various city staff regarding CAB initiatives to explore areas for growth and collaboration - we don't need to reinvent the wheel.
- Work to close a feedback loop for the City with performance against equity standards.

Work closely with Community Vitality Department (at CoB) to support access to Downtown community resources - like hosting events, pearl street mall food carts, etc .

Develop and strengthen partnerships with community organizations that are doing work with and on behalf of diverse communities within Boulder to draw connections to downtown for these organizations.

- Elevate access to resources and calls for entry within the Downtown Area to make sure that these opportunities are widely publicized and accessible to the whole community - this will require developing a more robust community outreach plan surrounding such opportunities (see also in Resources).

Stakeholder Education and Resources

Downtown is affected, not only by the efforts of DBP and the City of Boulder. Businesses of every size have the ability to shape an experience of Downtown Boulder. This section suggests initiatives that could provide resources and training to the business community with the goal of creating increased awareness of the role our businesses have, or could have, in the JEDI work.

Resources



Equip the business community with information and resources by investing in DEI.

- Community/culture
- Hiring/retention
- Have a CAB session to gather information for and to prepare this document
- Business DEI “program” or checklist - need to develop
- Relay inclusivity best practices to businesses in their external communications

Create a “task list” for businesses to demonstrate their commitment to DEI.

- “Seal” of performance according to a set of equity standards - represented with a window decal, a feature on the DBP website indicating they have received a certain level of training and have implemented policies that promote equity concerns in their space - “CAB approved”

Develop a set of resources for future entrepreneurs in downtown OR elevate opportunities to engage with partner resources - Chamber, small business development for all. Reflect topics like:

- DEI
- Business “mentors” in the community
- Chambers and partner resources (Latino, Boulder, LGBTQ+) and CU Resources
- Small business development
- Example: food carts - what is the process? Where are these resources available? Can DBP help elevate and shed light on these city processes to increase access?

Identify businesses that are already doing well on accessibility/equity initiatives in the downtown area and develop a “best practices” case study to showcase benefits for others in the downtown.

- Collect data through an interview process
 - Address successes, struggles, and how barriers were overcome
 - Make available to the broader community
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Create a (paid) liaison type of program/position to increase access to information about how the public might engage in downtown (performing music, participating as a mall cart, developing event programming in the downtown space as an independent org, etc) “Cultural broker”

Training

Facilitate and incentivise training and resources for the business community.

- Make available microaggression, microinvalidations, and bias training (either basing the training on the community foundation or the CoB’s model):
- Downtown Boulder staff
- Boards
- CAB board (explore a train the trainer model)

Businesses should additionally invest in microaggression, microinvalidation, and bias training for their staff, as often they are the first to interact with the general public, this will help to create a culture of inclusion within the business that will be reflected both internally and externally. This adds added value for employees (professional development credential) and thus supports employer staffing goals

Amplify Community Foundation Trends report within the business community.

Create opportunities to build empathy in context for leaders

Community Engagement

The CAB Board was initiated from the belief that for a downtown to be successful for the whole community, participation from the whole community is required. The final set of recommendations addresses ways that CAB and DBP can enhance community outreach, engagement, and ultimately participation.

Community needs assessment: Who are we missing Downtown?



- Build out a CAB working group to develop a community intercept survey to get a better sense of community impressions of downtown/events/programming - make sure to highlight transparency in data collection and eventual presentation of data.
- Done on a regular cadence utilize a formal annual process to interface with the community to address needs and strengths to advise programming.
- Leverage current sources of data (ambassador contacts + RCC data) to answer equity questions and inform decision-making? Who is here? Who is not? Why?
 - How to incentivize survey participation?
 - Buttons
 - QR codes
 - Mask/swag
 - Enter to win coupons
 - Discounts

Better utilize the downtown visitor information center for creative, multicultural group take-overs.

Cultural center/hub - Add immense social value, offer services like translation, remove stigma, cafe, etc.

Increase opportunities for city-wide organizations to engage in downtown (Pearl Street is a city park) by elevating - through clear communication- the event application process, increase opportunities for small, community-built events in our city center.

Create more opportunities to integrate the Community Advisory board with the "Downtown Boulder" community. Make sure that CAB members have the opportunity to attend the annual luncheon, receive all communications regarding member/board events.



Community Advisory Board

The CAB is a group of Boulder community members dedicated to advancing a vision of Downtown Boulder that is welcoming to all. In its inaugural year, the group learned many lessons in seeking to determine the best means by which to organize internally to garner the biggest impact in Downtown Boulder. Approximately halfway through the cohort's first year of working together, the group redeveloped their guiding charter, establishing a structure and set of principles to guide this cohort as well as future cohorts.

Beyond this restructuring, the Community Advisory Board has established several operational goals for the 2022 - 2023 cohort of board members to focus their attention and implement as practices within CAB organization to better achieve their vision of Downtown.

CAB Structure and Operational Practices

- Structure CAB agendas in advance - plan at least 6 months of agendas and their corresponding outcomes in advance.
- Create space to give recommendations and feedback on behalf of communities during regular meeting times.
- Establish channels by which to regularly advise board(s) and staff to increase the ability of the organization to achieve the stated mission and vision of DBCI.
- Enhance internal accountability - develop a set of quantifiable goals and corresponding KPI's to define and further communicate CAB successes.
 - Define what success looks like for the CAB within the larger construct of the organization (ties into Success)
 - CAB to judge their own performance utilizing REP framework
 - Acknowledge the butterfly effect of CAB work (as well as community events that don't have an immediate economic benefit) - although the work might not be immediately quantifiable in the same ways that we measure different programmatic efforts.
- Develop exit interview/survey in order to iterate for future cohorts, better communicate expectations to future members, refine the scope.
- Tap into the strengths of each board member (both professionally and as community organizers) to support CAB goals

