

# 2022 to 2025

2023 Update

## Downtown Boise Strategic Plan



Initially adopted by the Downtown Boise Association  
Board of Directors at its October 19, 2021 Meeting.  
Updated and adopted June 20, 2023.

# Downtown Boise – Strategic Plan

Downtown Boise Association (DBA) launched its Strategic Planning process in June 2021 at a pivotal moment. The past year and a half of pandemic operations were behind us and the upcoming 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization was just months before us in 2022. Through our facilitator, downtown firm Agnew::Beck, we utilized a focused project team, DBA staff and Board, and a multitude of stakeholders. Stakeholders were engaged in this process including through a survey launched in July 2021 where over 2,700 respondents supplied their feedback.

We would like to thank everyone involved in this process, especially the project team who gave their time and voice over the three-month period, DBA staff who jumped in and contributed throughout this process, and the DBA Board who was excited to boldly look toward the future of our downtown and organization.

The following plan is a result of this extensive work formally adopted by the DBA Board in October 2021, in place for the three-year period: **Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025**.

This document reflects subsequent updates by DBA staff and Board and Downtown Boise Foundation (DBF) Board members between a board retreat in April 2023, and adoption at a DBA board meeting on June 20, 2023 – at the halfway point of the three-year plan.

*Throughout you will see Downtown Boise (DB) referenced reflecting both organizations DBA and DBF.*

## Our Vision

Downtown Boise is a place to explore. Find a new adventure, spark creativity, make connections, and be a part of Boise's vibrant culture where all are welcome.

## Our Values

Downtown Boise is a place to...

- celebrate
- find an adventure
- boost your business
- spark your next big idea
- listen to every voice
- honor our cultural heritage
- play
- work for a healthy and inclusive home

## Our Downtown Focus Areas

1. Downtown identity (who, what, why, where, and how)
2. Activate downtown
3. Expand the boundaries of downtown (BID expansion)
4. DBA awareness and communication
5. Events and entertainment

6. Cultural vibrancy
7. Engagement with expanded audience (arts; youth; downtown residents; service workers)
8. Growing smart and staying unique
9. Resources (identifying new resources to support downtown)
10. Affordability (from housing to space to activities)
11. Transportation

## Our Key Stakeholder Groups

- General public
  - Treasure Valley Residents
  - Tourists
- Members/Potential Members – Business Owners, Property Owners, & Developers
- Downtown Workforce
  - Service Workers
  - “Upper Floor”
  - Government Workers
- Downtown Residents
- Partner Agencies
- Cultural Community

## Our Mission Screen

### All Our Decisions are Made Through the Lens of:

Equity and Inclusion. Accessibility. Safety. Relationships with Stakeholders.

### Strategic Focus:

1. Does the activity align with our vision, values, and goals?
2. Will it activate downtown in a unique and creative way?
3. Will it engage one of our key stakeholders? Will it engage a stakeholder that is currently underserved by downtown activities?
4. Is the activity inclusive and accessible? Is it beneficial to the community?
5. Do we trust the activity to be high quality?

### Mission Screen

*This is our tool to decide if an activity, action, event, or program fits with our vision and strategy.*

### DBA Capacity

1. What is DBA's investment into this activity? Staff time? Finances?
2. Does the potential impact justify the investment?
3. Will this increase awareness of DBA and its mission? Is that important for this?
4. Is this activity supported by partners? Are members engaged?

## Our Goals

**Goal Area 1 – Downtown Ecosystem** Downtown Boise is the center of Boise’s personality and vibrancy, supported by unique placemaking, active gathering spaces, and a wide array of events and activities where everyone is welcome.

**Goal Area 2 – Financial Sustainability** Downtown Boise is financially supported through a diversity of revenue streams and sustainably manages its financial performance to meet the needs of a growing downtown.

**Goal Area 3 – Community Engagement** Downtown Boise creates meaningful engagement with all who interact with downtown, with a renewed and special focus on marginalized communities, service workers, and business owners. DB regularly and consistently communicates about events and activities taking place in Downtown Boise, creates feedback loops with members, stakeholders, and partners and regularly evaluates activities to be equitable and inclusive.

**Goal Area 4 – Partnership** Downtown Boise is a key partner in the happenings of downtown (development, advocacy, public space activation, and business development.)

**Goal Area 5 – Internal Processes** Downtown Boise is committed to evaluating and improving its internal processes and business decisions to continuously enhance its operations and ability to deliver on its mission.

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## 2023 Update

### Top Priorities at the Half-way Point

These top priorities, in ranked order, were developed to guide us through the last half of this three-year plan.

1. Skate Rink
2. **Goal Area 3: Community Engagement** Have board members bring non-board members to DB events and activities to help educate the community on the role of the organizations.
3. **Goal Area 3: Community Engagement** Regularly schedule (and create) “educational” posts or newsletter items showing the public and members what we do. (i.e. how to find events calendar, what it takes to plant and maintain flowerpots, how to park downtown overnight, information on Downtown Maintenance Team.)
4. **Goal Area 2: Financial Sustainability** Increase the number of revenue possibilities within events or events with fee-based entry (DBF only), adjust events between DBA and DBF as applicable; promote current revenue sources to increase usage and income.
5. **Goal Area 4: Partnership** Work with partners to promote policies that ensure the long-term health and sustainability of Downtown Boise.
6. **Goal Area 1: Downtown Ecosystem** Complete BID research and necessary outreach by 2025. Establish a BID expansion working group with DBA board members and partners; move forward with BID expansion.
7. **Goal Area 1: Downtown Ecosystem** Create a communications plan regarding BID expansion and member recruitment.
8. **Goal Area 5: Internal Processes** Hire dedicated staff to ensure that community engagement and activation goals are achievable.
9. **Goal Area 1: Downtown Ecosystem** Support/host a variety of cultural related events and activities including art contests, live music and entertainment, and history and cultural appreciation events.
10. **Goal Area 1: Downtown Ecosystem** Evaluate the quality of current events and activities and adjust to address feedback and metrics.



## DBA Goals and Implementation Tables

### Goal Area 1: Downtown Ecosystem

**Downtown Boise is the center of Boise’s personality and vibrancy, supported by unique placemaking, active gathering spaces, and a wide array of events and activities where everyone is welcome.**

1. Develop, operate, and enhance events downtown that are fun, well attended, and serve a variety of groups, demographics, days and times, and specific interests.
2. Convene, assist, and promote programming that addresses and recognizes the cultural vibrancy and rich history of downtown.
3. Increase the number of associate members of DBA by 25% by 2025, with the intention of these businesses becoming full members under an expanded business improvement district.
4. Serve a broader group of downtown stakeholders, especially service workers and members of the cultural community, by developing and supporting targeted events and activations at a variety of scales and times within DB and with other organization and partner events.
5. Connect with different “zones” of the downtown area, hold one annual activity/event in each zone by 2024.

#### Implementation Tables: Top Priority - Downtown Ecosystem

##### Project or Action

**Goal 1** Evaluate the quality of current activities and events and adjust programming to address stakeholder feedback. Evaluation metrics to include attendance, revenue (if applicable), public/stakeholder awareness and support, and variety of audiences reached.

**Goal 1** Create post-event survey process applicable to each event or activity and a formal internal post-event reporting process. Continually evaluate all events and activities.

**Goal 1** Create “How-to” guides for existing businesses to host their own events (alone or in conjunction with larger community events.)

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| <b>Goal 2</b> Support/host a variety of cultural related events and activities, including art contests, live music and entertainment, history/cultural appreciation events.            |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Assist or lead in the creation and implementation of additional public art, permanent and temporary, in key downtown locations.  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Complete the research and necessary outreach around expanding the boundaries of the business improvement district by 2025. Move forward with BID Expansion and approval. |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Evaluate current membership and participation rates, encourage members and their employees to become more involved.  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Create a communications plan regarding BID expansion and member recruitment.   |
| <b>Goal 5</b> Host branded events or activities in different zones of downtown.  |

## Implementation Tables: Lesser Priority - Downtown Ecosystem

| Project or Action  |
|--|
| <b>Goal 2</b> Hold sector meetings with artists and cultural institutions to look for partnerships and learn what their long-term goals and plans are.   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Evaluate the range of cultural diversity that exists in current downtown programming and events. Identify which communities (if any) are underrepresented and reach out to explore potential opportunities for events and programming in Downtown Boise. |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Refine informational packets, both BID members and associate members, to be distributed to new or potential members that outline the benefits of membership.   |
| <b>Goal 4</b> Continue to advocate for programming that supports tourism in Downtown Boise.  |
| <b>Goal 4</b> Conduct a regular downtown user survey to better understand how individuals from a variety of stakeholder groups interact with downtown currently and what they would like to see improved.  |
| <b>Goal 5</b> Work to intentionally create a “flow” of Downtown Boise that directs people to stay downtown and explore all that downtown has to offer.   |

## Goal Area 2 – Financial Sustainability

**Downtown Boise is financially supported through a diversity of revenue streams and sustainably manages its financial performance to meet the needs of a growing Downtown Boise.**

1. Increase the financial sustainability of DB by increasing annual non-assessment revenue by 15% by 2025 (about \$65k) and by realizing an annual net income of at least 5%.
2. DBA/DBF will continue to build sustainable revenue streams that are less reliant on partners and sponsorship with a target goal of 25% of non-assessment revenues coming from revenue sources independent from partners by 2025.

### Implementation Tables: Top Priority - Financial Sustainability

#### Project or Action

**Goal 1** Increase the number of revenue possibilities within events or events with fee-based entry (Capitol Table, etc.), adjust events between DBA and DBF as applicable.

**Goal 2** Promote current earned revenue sources like the banner program and stage rentals to increase usage and income.

### Implementation Tables: Lesser Priority - Financial Sustainability

#### Project or Action

**Goal 2** Research the possibility of reusable DBA gift cards, upgrades to existing gift card program.

**Goal 2** Evaluate current sponsorship offerings and item sale prices, identify new or increased sources of funds; reevaluate on a regular basis.



## Goal Area 3 – Community Engagement

**Downtown Boise creates meaningful engagement with all who interact with downtown, with a renewed and special focus on marginalized communities, service workers, and business owners. DB regularly and consistently communicates about events and activities taking place in Downtown Boise, creates feedback loops with members, stakeholders and partners and regularly evaluates activities to be equitable and inclusive.**

1. Evaluate all DB communications, events, and activities using a framework of equity, inclusion, and identity.
2. Create a communications and marketing plan that is updated annually to reflect new goals and strategies with measurable performance metrics that are evaluated every 2-4 years.
3. Increase the number of touchpoints with DBA members by 25% annually, including email communication, business visits, and other relationship management tactics. Assess what is working and what could be done better to support the member base.
4. Increase DB board participation in engagement efforts with targeted work groups, volunteerism, and programming.

### Implementation Tables: Top Priority – Community Engagement

| Project or Action   |
|---|
| <b>Goal 1</b> Evaluate communications and marketing outreach channels to ensure that DB is adapting to new trends in technology such as new social media platforms, QR codes, etc.  |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Create DB marketing materials that better introduce people to the role of DB in creating an active and vibrant downtown.  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Create and promote surveys to specific targeted groups that DBA would like to better understand.  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Refine standard onboarding toolkits for BID members and associate memberships.  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Regularly schedule “educational” posts or newsletter items showing public/members what we do i.e., how to find the events calendar, what it takes to plant/maintain flowerpots, how to park downtown overnight. |
| <b>Goal 4</b> Have Board members bring non-board members to our events and activities to learn about DB processes and roles.  |
| <b>Goal 4</b> Outreach to BIPOC and LGBTQ organizations to help build events focused on inclusivity.  |

## Implementation Tables: Lesser Priority – Community Engagement

### Project or Action

**Goal 3** Reach new businesses and engage the community and DBA Members to learn about DBA, DBF, Downtown Boise, and how to get involved.

**Goal 3** Share reports with members that highlight expected ROI and member benefits.

**Goal 4** Create standardized materials for onboarding new board members.

**Goal 4** Promote events and activities that celebrate and highlight specific aspects of cultural diversity in Boise or integrate elements into existing activities.

## Goal Area 4 – Partnership

**Downtown Boise is a key partner in the happenings of downtown (development, advocacy, public space activation, and business development.)**

1. Work with partners to encourage and develop a wider breadth of placemaking and passive activation, including events, promotions, murals, artwork, seating, enhanced alleyways, parklets, green space, cultural assets, and more.
2. Serve as an information hub for DBA members and partner organizations and be a voice in planning and development activities including cultural planning and economic development in Downtown Boise.
3. Identify opportunities for expanded partnership with businesses and organizations that have not empirically been involved with DB.

### Implementation Tables: Top Priority – Partnership

#### Project or Action

**Goal 2** Work with partners to promote policies that ensure the long-term health and sustainability of Downtown Boise.

**Goal 3** Look outside of Boise to engage with advocates and potential new partners.

### Implementation Tables: Lesser Priority – Partnership

#### Project or Action

**Goal 1** Leverage partner events to coalesce and coordinate various activities that build and support a greater downtown theme.

**Goal 1** Advocate for increased transportation options to downtown – rideshare promotion codes, public transportation funding, increase range and rate of existing bus infrastructure, etc.

**Goal 2 (Financial Sustainability)** Research “Downtown Ambassador” program.

## Goal Area 5 – Internal Processes

**Downtown Boise is committed to evaluating and improving its internal processes and business decisions to continuously enhance its operations and ability to deliver on its mission.**

1. Continuously evaluate the success of programming, staff training and professional development, and community engagement/stakeholder engagement efforts.
2. Recruit a board and staff membership that more accurately represents the community we support. This includes maintaining a balanced representation of sectors while also increasing diversity and equity.
3. Increase staff capacity by 25% to achieve the goals stated in this document.

### Implementation Tables: Top Priority – Internal Processes

| Project or Action  |
|--|
| <b>Goal 1</b> Create ‘standard operating procedures’ for each of DB’s functions and continue to update and refine documentation.                                     |
| <b>Goal 1</b> Create a post-event/activity reporting process for staff use and board reporting capturing follow-up requirements, appreciation, and ideas to improve. |
| <b>Goal 3</b> Hire dedicated staff to ensure that community engagement and activation goals are achievable.  |
| <b>Goal 3 (Partnership)</b> Provide additional professional development and outreach opportunities for staff.  |

### Implementation Tables: Lesser Priority – Internal Processes

| Project or Action   |
|---|
| <b>Goal 1</b> Create an easy-to-use portal for volunteers to sign-up and register to volunteer at events/activities. Utilize a volunteer database and automatic emails to notify interested individuals of opportunities to volunteer; send out regular communication to keep volunteers engaged. |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Incorporate annual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility training for all staff and board members.  |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Recruit a board membership that represents all aspects of Boise’s cultural diversity.   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> Continue participation in city-wide Antiracism Coalition; develop and adopt an organization antiracism statement.   |

## Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

### Strategic Planning Dashboard and Review

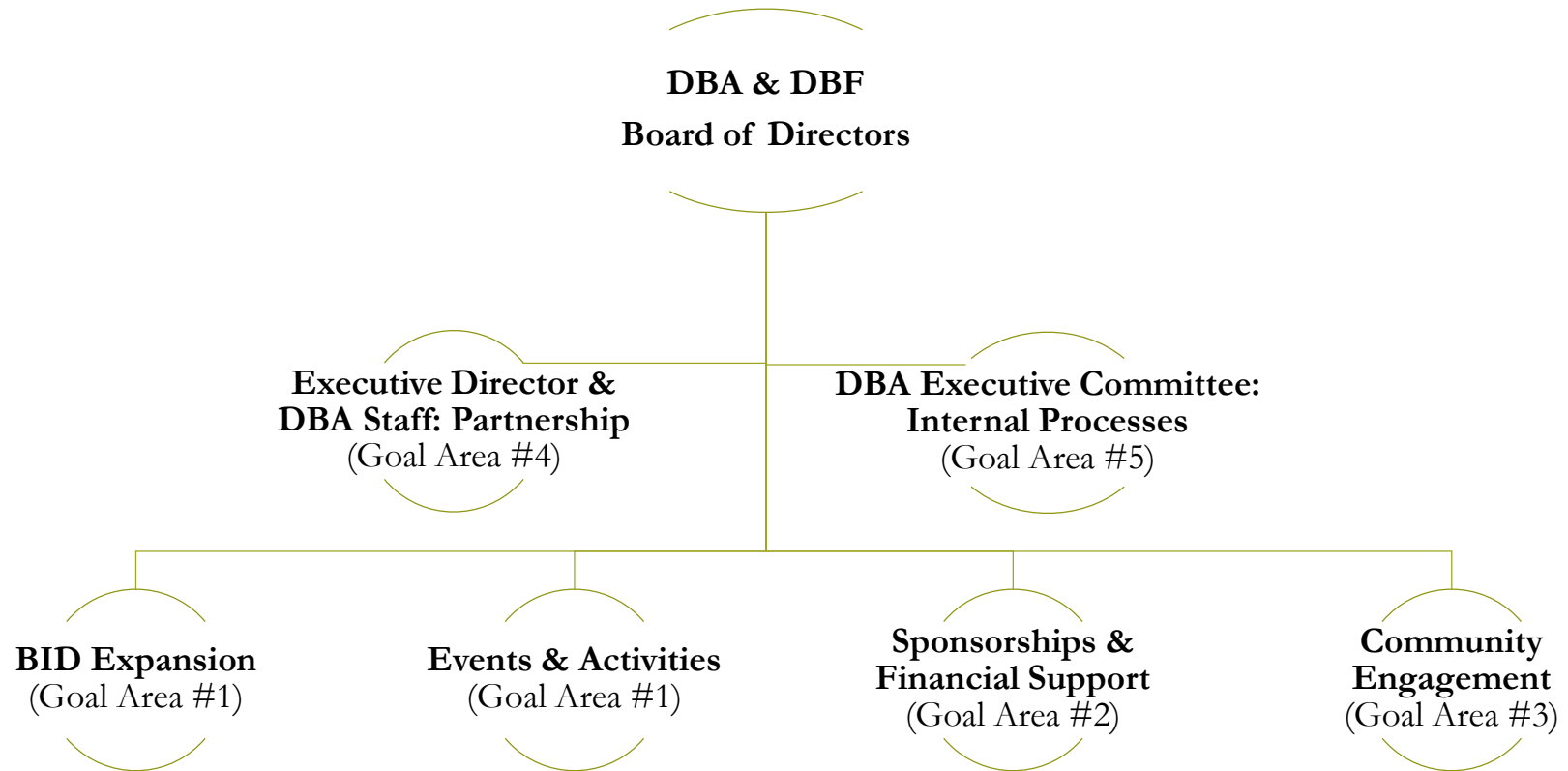
Upon implementing the strategic plan, the Board and DBA staff commit to regular tracking and review of the goals, activities, and outcomes to ensure that the plan remains adaptive to changing conditions. To be adaptive, DB will implement these tracking and review mechanisms:

**Working Groups** – a dedicated taskforce of board members will meet on a regular basis to review the progress on their assigned goal area. Facilitated by DBA staff, the working groups will suggest continuous improvement ideas on how to adapt to changing circumstances. Updates to the strategic plan encouraged!

| Feedback Tool                | Function   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Dashboard          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tracking sheet for progress on top priorities</li><li>• Updated by DBA staff</li><li>• Reviewed by Executive Committee of Board</li></ul>  |
| Staff Reporting              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reporting progress to DBA and DBF Board of Directors via working groups</li><li>• DBA staff reports out relevant updates at each DBA and DBF Board meeting</li></ul>   |
| Board Continuous Improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board members sign up to serve on a working group to be responsible for each strategic goal breakout area as available</li><li>• Working groups drive progress forward and (facilitated by DBA staff) offer any improvements to the strategic plan and its goals</li><li>• DBA and DBF Boards hold a collective retreat around every 1.5 years to review progress and update strategic plan.</li></ul> |
| Surveying                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surveying of key stakeholder groups every 2-3 years to gather input on needs, DB goals, downtown activities, and perceptions</li><li>• Every 5-6 years, conduct a robust stakeholder survey to understand the needs and improvements in Downtown Boise</li></ul>   |

## Board of Directors Structure

To monitor the progress and continuous improvement of the Downtown Boise Strategic Plan, the Boards will structure themselves to review the plan and its implementation.



**Goal Areas** 1: Downtown Ecosystem; 2: Financial Sustainability; 3: Community Engagement; 4: Partnership; 5: Internal Processes