



Annual Report

**Downtown
Lincoln**

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Hi. I'm Todd.

I'm convinced nobody reads these mundane (yet enthusiastic) introductory narratives, so I'll offer up a few brief points:

- Covid has sped up several urban trends, and we are ready!
- Downtown is quickly transitioning from an 8-5 to 24/7 atmosphere.
- Downtown's living options continue to rapidly grow at a pace that could net 10,000 residents in the next few years.
- We must continue to adapt to a new hybrid workforce that values flexibility, community and people.
- I'm an ELF. To clarify, I am part of the International Downtown Association Emerging Leaders Fellowship (ELF), and working with these brilliant and diverse colleagues around the country has reaffirmed how lucky we are to have a community that utilizes cooperative and effective public/private partnerships.
- Downtown Lincoln should continue to solidify the area as a place where everyone feels welcome.
- We must nurture innovation, as it forges our unique identity.
- My goal is to meet with at least one of our 1,300 business and property owners every day this year, so if I haven't talked with you, call my cell anytime at 402.450.4828.
- Did I mention our staff and crew are amazing? I am so proud of what they have achieved.
- My family ♥ Downtown Lincoln, and I can't wait to see the area grow right along with them!

If you read this far, you'll love what else is inside. Without further ado, here is our 2021 annual report.



Jim Pokorny driving the Green Machine | 2019



Maintenance

DLA's Green Team devotes hours of hard work to keep Downtown Lincoln clean, safe and beautiful. We take great pride in acknowledging the fact that the beauty and cleanliness of our downtown receives compliments from both local admirers and tourists from around the globe. Last year, the Green Team spent 3,530 hours picking up trash and litter while emptying 400 trash cans each day. Our two green machines spent 2,660 hours sweeping the sidewalks, and after last winter's record breaking snowstorms, it's no surprise that our team removed snow from the corners and crosswalk ramps for a shivering 670 hours!



Plant beds on N Street | Re-edited 2021

Maintenance Continued

Another thing to marvel at is the area's horticulture that is thoughtfully curated by DLA Maintenance Director, Brian Munk. The Green Team takes pride in their work to maintain these beautiful blooms. The team spent 285 hours installing over 949 plants last spring. In the heat of the summer, they spent 5,060 hours maintaining plants, beds and bowls by means of weeding, mulching, watering, fertilizing, trimming, pruning and mowing.

We were so excited for the opportunity to expand the DLA Maintenance office and workshop this year! The square footage of the shop and office almost doubled from 7,470 square feet to 13,970 square feet.





Events

Although the pandemic was a major obstacle in organizing many of our events in our traditional format, we were able to pull together many successful events in a safe way. A handful of new events intended to weather the adversities of the pandemic were added to the calendar, including the Midwinter Market, Right Up Your Alley and Shop Where Your Heart Is. All of our signature events, with the exception of Halloween in the Haymarket, returned, and we even took on a lead role in organizing Lincoln Unites.



Shopping at Ruby Begonia's at Shop the Blocks | 2021

2020 Shop the Blocks

November 5 - November 19, 2020

We took a new approach with 2020's Shop the Blocks by dividing the event into three nights over the month of November and capping the ticket sales at 80 tickets per night. This decision was made as an effort to reduce the number of shoppers in a store at one time. Each night sold out; however, due to growing health and safety concerns, the third night pivoted to a virtual experience. Twelve businesses offered a variety of discounts for the event, and seven bars and restaurants provided food and drink specials.



Haymarket train wrapped in Christmas lights | Re-edited 2021

Haymarket Unwrapped

December 4 - December 6, 2020

Our second holiday season shopping event, Haymarket Unwrapped, followed a similar format to Shop the Blocks. The event took place over three days and required shoppers to present their free digital ticket for access to discounts and prizes. We added three new features to this event including a VIP Pass, a golden ticket, and reusable Haymarket Unwrapped shopping bags. Ten Haymarket retailers and four Haymarket bars and restaurants offered special deals and discounts to Haymarket Unwrapped shoppers.



Resident boxes ready to be delivered for Right Up Your Alley | 2020

Right Up Your Alley

January 22 - January 24, 2021

Right Up Your Alley, a new event, was created to foster camaraderie between the residents, shops and restaurants in the Downtown Lincoln neighborhood. Before the event, DLA prepared and delivered hundreds of resident welcome boxes packed full of local coupons and Downtown Lincoln swag. Residents received Right Up Your Alley bingo cards that highlighted 32 participating downtown businesses. A bingo entered shoppers into a drawing to win a Downtown Lincoln gift card, and four winners were selected.



**SHOP
WHERE
YOUR
HEART
IS**

Shop Where Your Heart Is

February 11 - February 13, 2021

Following these winter holiday events, DLA staff continued to meet with downtown retailers to brainstorm ways of inviting shoppers downtown after the rush of the holiday season ended. Thus, Shop Where Your Heart Is was born! Shop Where Your Heart Is began as a campaign to remind shoppers to support the downtown businesses that they love, especially during the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. As Valentine's Day approached, it was clear that "Shop Where Your Heart Is" would make the perfect name for the February event. This event offered shoppers the opportunity to create mini photo books of themselves and their valentines while supporting local businesses and spreading the love.



The Corner Kitchen food truck serving Afghan cuisine at Lincoln Unites | 2021

Lincoln Unites

August 1, 2021

DLA took on the leading role in organizing 2021's Lincoln Unites. The multi-cultural celebration took place in early August as opposed to its usual late-October date which resulted in a collaboration with the Lincoln Crossroads Festival. And instead of having a citizenship ceremony at the Nebraska History Museum, the festivities took place outdoors in Tower Square with live entertainment, booths, screen printing and food provided by local food trucks.



Downtown 101 attendees dancing | 2021

Downtown 101

August 27, 2021

Our student welcome event, Downtown 101, returned to Tower Square this year with downtown businesses and booths set up for new students and the community to discover. Attendees were able to take home lots of free things including our Downtown 101 Shop Quiz. DT101 featured 24 businesses that participants could visit and share on social media for the opportunity to earn a \$50 Downtown Lincoln Gift Card. Fifteen completed Shop Quizzes were turned in and each submission completed all 24 of their assignments!



Tower Square's new patio furniture | 2021



Growth

Once again, construction and renovation downtown has not slowed down. With a total of \$67,770,321 spent on projects in the area, this marks an increase of nearly \$5 million since the last fiscal year. While Haymarket projects accounted for the majority of all construction last year, this time, a whopping \$60,660,320 was spent in the downtown core.



CenterPointe's Cole Dickes walks railroad | 2020



Homeless Outreach

Since 2016, DLA has partnered with CenterPointe to provide homeless outreach in the area. Last year, CenterPointe was able to reach 83 people in the downtown area, enrolling 20 in addition to the 38 individuals already enrolled in their programs to help with housing, mental health, substance abuse, employment and fulfilling other basic needs. DLA also began participating in a new Downtown Systems Outreach and Response group in order to more effectively communicate with downtown stakeholders and community partners working to end homelessness.





Social Media

Downtown Lincoln's social media, spread across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, has been smashing its goals each year. We reached a milestone of 10k followers on Instagram in May 2018, and the account is currently sitting at well over 15k followers. This averages out to nearly 1,500 new followers per year and four new followers per day. We like to think these achievements are due to our creative and engaging social media campaigns such as our Instagram Takeovers (where a business can “take over downtown” with access to our Instagram for a day), Virtual First Fridays and Gift Card Giveaways. One thing is for sure: the Lincoln community loves seeing what's going on downtown, and hey — we don't blame them!



Haymarket Water Tower | Re-edited 2021

Facebook

September 01, 2020 -
August 31, 2021

Facebook leads the Downtown Lincoln social media accounts in popularity with a following of over 20K and serves as our main source of promoting events, newsletter stories and new businesses. It's also a great tool to explore fun campaigns such as our 2021 March Madness Downtown Lincoln Restaurant Tournament, the Midwinter virtual Market and the pre-Shop the Blocks weekly retailer highlights. Let's take a look at some of the statistics from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021. Our most popular post reached 20.9k viewers and received 539 reactions, 85 comments and 52 shares. We featured 11 new businesses with an average reach of nearly 7.8k viewers per new business shared and a total reach of over 85.5k viewers. And we featured 92 events with an average reach of 1,313 viewers per event shared and a total reach extending over 180,000 viewers.



Instagram

September 01, 2020 -
August 31, 2021

Downtown Lincoln's Instagram is our fastest growing account. It has been our most versatile tool for sharing unique perspectives of downtown Lincoln's beauty and excitement from both the outdoors and inside the businesses. The new Instagram reel feature has allowed us to explore new and exciting ways to better reach our most prominent audience (ages 24- 35) through this popular social media experience. Of our 72 feed posts, we've reached over 330.6k people and seen over 14.5k likes consistently averaging over 200 likes per post.



Children playing in Capitol Fountain | Re-edited 2021

Twitter

September 01, 2020 -
August 31, 2021

While our Downtown Lincoln Twitter continues to grow, it plays a pivotal role in sharing the latest #DTLNK news and reaching unique followers.

We use Twitter to share downtown businesses' brands, directing the community to useful websites and survey links, all the while keeping our fans informed with what's new in downtown Lincoln!



Flowering trees in the Haymarket | 2021



Website

Downtown Lincoln's website, DowntownLincoln.org saw nearly 140,000 users and just over 314,500 page views in 2020. It not only serves the Downtown community as a convenient tool to access places to shop, eat and live, it also gives people a place to find events, gifts, information on local news and other updates. The list of services DowntownLincoln.org provides keeps on growing.

DowntownLincoln.org extended its collection of webpages in 2020 with the addition of a Downtown Specials page and a Downtown Lincoln Job Board. The top 5 most visited pages on the site last year were: Home Page, Living Guide, Dining, Events and Shopping



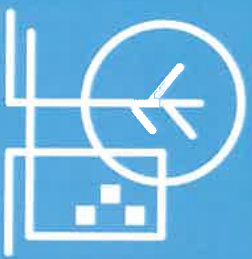


Gift Card

In its 10th year, the Downtown Lincoln Gift Card program continues to grow, with 1,172 gift cards sold totaling \$51,360. The gift cards are accepted at 200+ locations throughout downtown including last year's 11 most popular gift card destinations: Canopy Street Market, Chipotle, Lincoln Running Company, The Mill, Lazlo's, Threads, Coffee House, Mellow Mushroom, Cookie Company, Buzzard Billy's and Vincenzo's.

Strategic Plan Update

The DLA Strategic Plan that was adopted in 2017 concluded with the end of 2020, and a new Strategic Plan through 2023 was formed. The Strategic Plan Committee, consisting of 11 board members and two staff members, met over the course of several weeks to discuss how DLA should focus its time and resources over the next several years. Much of the 2020 Strategic Plan is still relevant, with a few new strategies added to each objective for the 2023 plan. The updated plan, with the new strategies highlighted, can be found on the next page.



DOWNTOWN
LINCOLN

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Provide leadership to ensure a vibrant downtown.”

OUR VISION:

“A thriving and cohesive downtown.”

Objectives

Strengthen the quality of life characteristics of Downtown Lincoln.

Seek opportunities to nurture new and energetic downtown initiatives.

Guide downtown's long-term evolution as the vibrant community hub.

Strategies

◆ Ensure a clean, safe, sustainable, and inviting downtown.

◆ Invest in amenities and placemaking improvements that make downtown more livable, walkable and bikeable.

◆ Enhance communications with downtown stakeholders.

◆ Continue to enhance downtown's position as Lincoln's “event & entertainment center.”

◆ Broaden the retail experience in downtown Lincoln.

◆ Continue to advocate for a downtown environment that is socioeconomically diverse.

◆ Support new and existing businesses.

◆ Encourage an active downtown street level environment.

◆ Position downtown as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship.

◆ Address the transportation and parking needs relating to downtown.

◆ Advocate for a growing retail, residential, service and office mix.

◆ Assist in researching the impact of a downtown convention center.

◆ Re-establish activity downtown, post-pandemic, through promotion of safety protocols and best practices.

◆ Advocate downtown's role as the driver for Lincoln's future prosperity.

◆ Support the city in the implementation of Downtown Master Plan Initiatives.

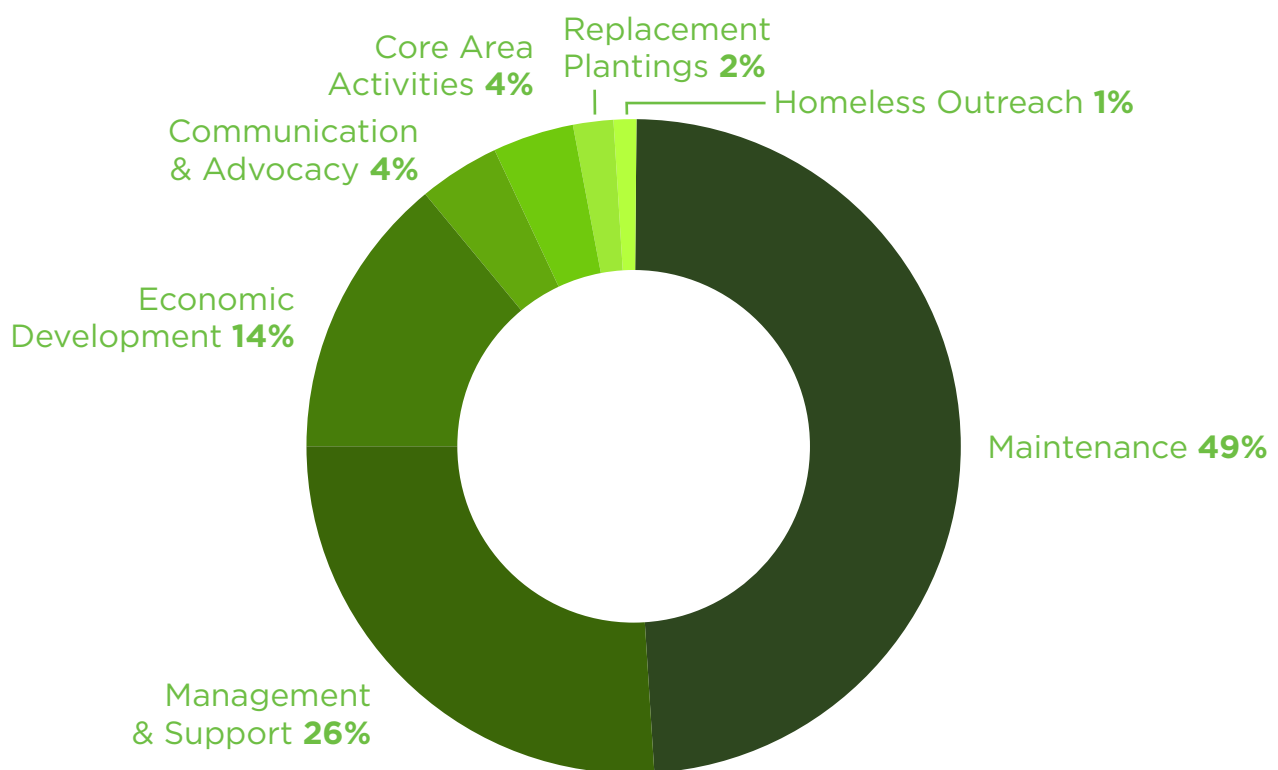
◆ Creatively explore opportunities to expand downtown's boundaries.

◆ Strengthen partnership with UNL and State stakeholders.

◆ Unite downtown's identity, while defining the unique “districts” within downtown.

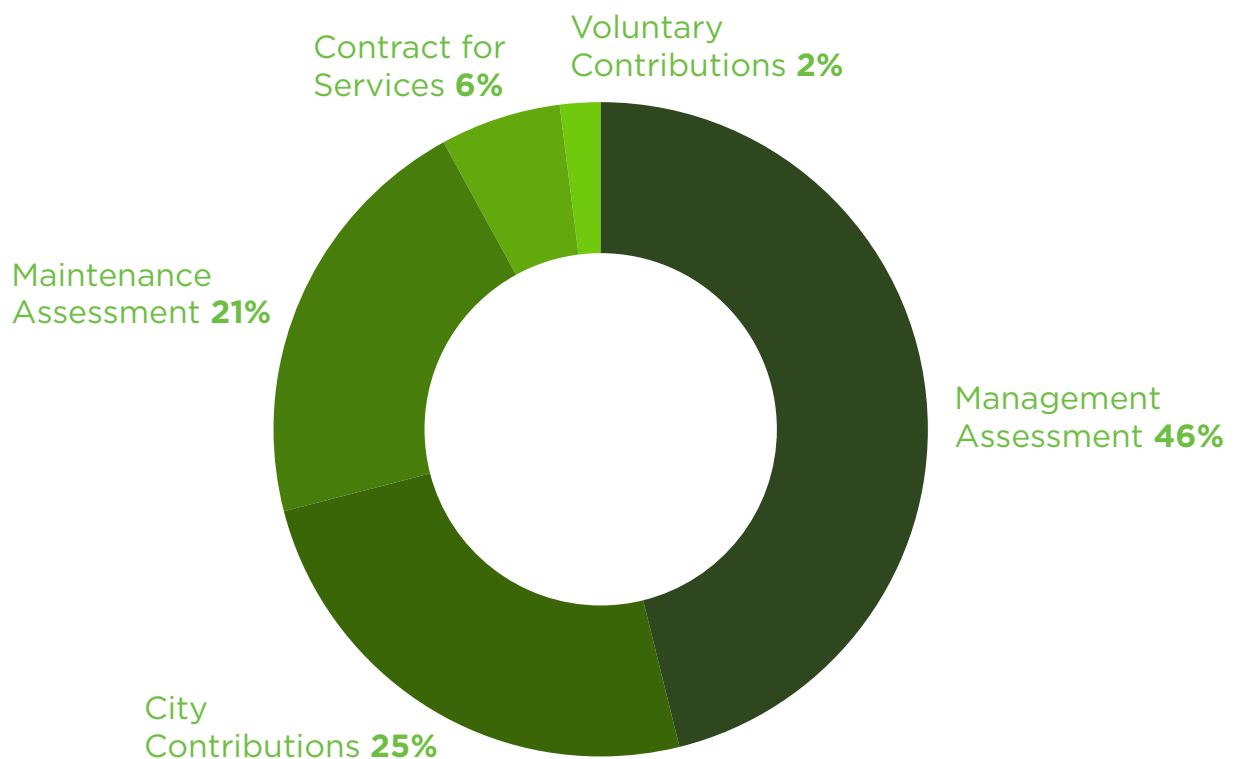
◆ Serve as thought leaders around broad urban trends.

Allocation of Budget to Priorities



Budget Breakdown

Revenue Sources



DLA BID BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

Members

Susan Madsen	Cornhusker Marriott
Jack Abel	NEBCO
Ken Fougeron	Speedway Properties
Lynette Nelson	Pinnacle Bank
Kaylen Akert	Woods & Aitken
Dave Meagher	WRK LLC
Bryant Bone	Hudl
Stephanie Jarrett	Bulu Box
Bob Hinrichs	Fuse Coworking
Angie Tucci	Telesis, Inc
Lauren Pugliese	Ameritas
Ben Kiser	Nelnet
Tom Klein	Downtown Resident
Lisa Froehlich	US Property
Ann Ringlein	Lincoln Running Co.
Tim Schlegelmilch	Farmers Mutual Insurance
Bryan Sullivan	Embassy Suites
Michelle Waite	UNL
John Kay	Sinclair Hille Architects

Chair's Appointments

Debby Brehm	Center Associates, LLC
Jill Moline	Canopy Street Market
Brett West	Assurity
Brian Schweiger	US Bank
Aaron Stitt	Courtyard Marriott
Jeff McPeak	Olsson

Liaisons

Jon Carlson	Mayor of Lincoln designees
Dallas McGee	Mayor of Lincoln designees
Tammy Ward	City Council
Richard Meginnis	City Council
Collin Christopher	Planning Department
Kerin Peterson	Public Building Commission
Amber Brannigan	State of Nebraska
Shawn Ryba	South of Downtown
Adam Petersen	LHDC
Bob Campbell	Downtown Civic Ventures
Pat Haverty	LPED

