

2021-2023 Long Range Plan

8/3/2021

Report #4

Downtown Management Corporation Strategic Plan

Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan

August 3, 2021

Partner Organizations Strategic Plans

The Village has operating agreements with Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC) and Downtown Management Corporation (DMC). The organizations work together on a variety of items.

The Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation is the official agency for economic development and tourism for the Village of Downers Grove. Since its founding in 2006, the DGEDC has been the economic engine of Downers Grove. The DGEDC is a public/private partnership that promotes Downers Grove as a location for commercial, industrial and office projects. In addition, DGEDC promotes tourism through the Downers Grove Visitors Bureau.

The Downtown Management Corporation works on creating a diverse retail, shopping and service business environment which will increase activity within this area.

The Village works cooperatively with these organizations to achieve goals related to economic development and downtown related items. Alignment of the Village’s Long Range Plan with the DGEDC and DMC Strategic Plans will help ensure the success of all three organizations to the benefit of the entire community. Over the past several years, many of the Village’s Priority Actions have focused on topics and issues under the purview of these organizations. The Village has worked together with DGEDC and DMC to complete these actions.

Both entities recently completed their Strategic Plans. These plans (attached) are presented for Village Council review and discussion within the context of preparing the Village’s Long Range Plan.

Considering EDC and DMC Strategic Plans when Identifying Priority Action Items

The DMC and DGEDC Strategic Plans include goals, action items and work plans. The Village Council should be aware of these organizations’ goals, priority actions and work plans when preparing the 2021-23 Priority Action Items. Priorities and actions of all three organizations should be coordinated to avoid overlapping, duplicative work and to ensure that priority actions are not missed.

Attachments

Downtown Management Corporation Strategic Plan
Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

JULY 2021

**Downers Grove Downtown
Management Corporation**

www.downtowndg.org

630-725-0991



Board of Directors & Staff

2021 Board of Directors

Phil Stromberg, Commercial Property Owner at 1011 Curtiss, Chairman

Theresa Schulz, Commercial Property Owner at 947 Maple Avenue, Vice Chairman

Geoff Anderman, Commercial Property Owner at 5117 Main Street, Secretary

Kathy Burns, Business Owner, My Special Toy Store, Treasurer

Sam Vlahos, Business Owner, Pierce Tavern & Bar Chido

Eric Brezina, Business Owner, Fair Game Store

Todd Davies, Business Owner, Cadence Kitchen & Co. & The Foxtail

Ron Rocco, Commercial Property Owner at 5127 Main Street

Ex-Officio

Michael J. Philipp, Philipp Law Office, Legal Counsel

Mike Baker, Deputy Village Manager, Village of Downers Grove

Andy Sikich, Director of Public Works, Village of Downers Grove

Michael Cassa, President & CEO, Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation

Laura Crawford, President & CEO, Chamber630

Bill Rzasa, Resident Representative

Staff

Erin Venezia, Executive Director

Ann Hattan, Office Manager

Executive Summary

Writing a strategic plan requires relying on assumptions. Writing a strategic plan during a pandemic requires relying on assumptions and a healthy dose of optimism. Like a newly planted flower in the spring this strategic plan will require care, feeding and maintenance. Revisions will be necessary. Continued development of the Aesthetics Plan and Finances lend themselves to one, three and five year goals and objectives. Marketing is much more fluid. This plan accommodates that fluidity.

Before we look forward to the future it is appropriate to provide some historical context.

Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) is an independent not-for-profit organization (501c(6)) formed in 1997. The mission was to promote the development and expansion of business and to increase the property values within the Special Service Area (SSA). The organization is supported by property owners within the SSA with what effectively is a self-imposed tax. In partnership with the Village of Downers Grove and in conjunction with the TIF the past two decades has seen major infrastructure redevelopment, new street scaping, a 791 space parking deck, 282 owner occupied residences, 210 luxury apartments and increased available first floor space. The SSA expired at the end of 2020 with its mission accomplished.

The Downtown TIF was also put in to place with SSA #2. The TIF will expire at the end of 2021 and is not being renewed. The TIF was successful in supporting approximately \$45 million of public investment in the downtown since 1997. The assessed value of property within the TIF district increased from \$16.1 to \$83.9 million (421% increase) between 1996 and 2020. This remarkable return on investment will allow all outstanding debt service to be fully paid by the TIF generated revenue. Downtown Management played a critical role to ensure this economic tool was applied successfully.

Under the direction of the Board of Directors and staff, the organization has spearheaded a variety of events, cooperative advertising opportunities and marketing endeavors. In addition, staff works to recruit new businesses, to help maintain a vibrant downtown.

The organization was able to accelerate their long term aesthetics plans for the downtown during the last two years of SSA #2. 30 planters were placed around the downtown and are changed four times a year with seasonal flowers. In addition, they have updated seasonal pole banners and purchased the barricade covers for the extended outdoor dining.

After a multiyear Future of the Downtown process, SSA #11 was formed to provide a sustainable, long-term funding source to DMC. SSA #11 lowers the tax rate from SSA #2. SSA #11 has the same boundaries as SSA #2 and includes only commercial properties and is in place for 10 years. SSA #11 mission is simple; continue to enhance and support a vibrant and authentic downtown.



The COVID-19 Pandemic caused substantial disruption, created unique opportunities and revealed the resilience of Downtown Downers Grove.

Like everyone, in March 2020, the DMC flipped their operations. Switching from planning events to learning more about what our businesses needed to know regarding COVID-19 and what resources were out there.

The DMC communicated to business owners information and details about the evolving recommendations from the CDC.

The DMC communicated various grants, incentives and loans at the federal, state levels.

The DMC worked with a local business in designing and printing signs that were provided to business owners to promote social distancing and to let patrons know “We Are Open” & to “Support Local”.

The DMC worked with the Village to identify additional temporary 15 minute parking spaces around the downtown to adapt to the curbside pickups for retailers.

The DMC designed and provided barricade covers to enhance the aesthetics of outdoor dining. The covers have received rave reviews from near and far. Questions and compliments came from multiple surrounding communities and we are proud our work was able to assist our neighboring Villages with their outdoor dining efforts.

The DMC reworked events, advertising and press releases to continue to keep downtown Downers Grove in the front of the minds of the patrons. Ensuring there were ways to bring people to the downtown safely to support their favorite businesses.

The Downtown Management Corporation has worked and will continue to work independently and in partnership with Village of Downers Grove & Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation. We look forward to continuing to grow the vibrancy of our downtown.



Who We Are

The Downtown Management Corporation Board is staffed with one full-time Executive Director and one part-time Office Manager. Their Board of Directors is made up of four Commercial Property Owners & four Business Owners. In addition, there are 6 ex-officio members, Deputy Village Manager, Director of Public Works, President of Chamber630, President of Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation, a representative from the Owner Occupied Residential Units from SSA #2, as well as legal counsel.

Process

For this Strategic Plan, we had each committee meet and discuss to identify their one, three and five year goals for the organization. These were then presented to the Board of Directors, discussed and agreed upon.

Mission Statement

The Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation is a non-profit organization established to enhance and support business in an authentic and vibrant Downtown Downers Grove.

Vision Statement

The Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation will build and sustain a vibrant downtown Downers Grove.

Core Values:

1. Downtown Management Corp. believes in the heritage of downtown as an authentic destination site.
2. Downtown Management Corp. is a proactive advocate of businesses in the Central Business District.
3. Downtown Management Corp. continues to serve as a unified voice for its members.
3. Downtown Management Corp. is an open, impartial and fair organization.
4. Downtown Management Corp. consists of members who are committed to the future growth of downtown Downers Grove.

Understanding our Mission and identifying the changes in our vibrant downtown, our organization has identified the following areas as priorities for the next five years:

- 1. Attraction & Retention**
- 2. Marketing & Events**
- 3. Aesthetics**
- 4. Finance & Staffing**

Attraction & Retention

We continue to focus on creating an atmosphere that new and old businesses, as well as residents want to call home. Identifying businesses that are an ideal fit for the downtown. While coordinating with marketing, understanding this is a large component. As part of the coordinating efforts, on this staff works on co-op advertising as well as prints a yearly business directory.

The dynamic of a small business lends itself to being highly sensitive to family and other life events that can effect whether or not they remain open. This is the case pre, during and will be post pandemic. We did see approximately 10 businesses close in our downtown during the pandemic. Not all were due to the COVID 19 impact, some were due to life changes such as retiring & moving out of state. Since the pandemic began in March 2020, downtown Downers Grove has had 16 new first floor businesses that have opened or are opening in the near future. This continues to show the resiliency of our downtown.

Goal: To continue all efforts to help our businesses as the world begins to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Objective: Continue to communicate opportunities to our businesses and adapt to the changing environment. Encourage people to spend money locally while working with the Village on maintaining a business friendly atmosphere post pandemic.

Goal: Maintain a pulse on the changes in the business environment as well as businesses that our customer base would like to see in our downtown.

Objective: Continue open dialogue with customers and businesses for suggestions of businesses they would like to see in the downtown.

Goal: Aid in identifying ideal uses for their buildings.

Objective: Maintain a list of leads for when a space becomes available.

Goal: Maintain an environment that brings people to the downtown for many reasons.

Objective: Continue to try and connect the right businesses with the right spaces, while also understanding it is a free market.



Marketing & Events

The Marketing Committee is tasked with evaluating the current programs and events in place. Evaluating our events to ensure that they stay relevant to our audience and continue to draw shoppers and diners to the downtown. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, DMC coordinated 12 events a year. These were the Ice Festival, Staycation Education, Wine Walk, Summer Nights Classic Car Show, Sidewalk Sale, Fine Arts Festival, Girls Day Out, Halloween Window Painting, Trick or Treating, Gingerbread Festival, Visits with Santa & Merry Madness. Mid 2020-Early 2021 our events shifted. We hosted an Easter Scavenger Hunt, similar to our Gingerbread Man Hunt. We added a pumpkin decorating contest. These events were to encourage people to walk around outside safely while being able to maintain social distance. For the Holiday Season we introduced Candy Cane Cash Rewards. Through this program we distributed \$1,800 in rewards to be used in January & February of 2021. \$1,100 of these have been redeemed to date. We also successfully found a way to have socially distanced visits with Santa in his Gingerbread House. In looking towards the future, the committee came up with the following goals and objectives.

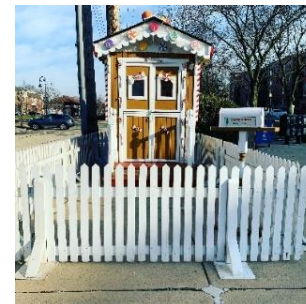


Goal: Create a year round support local program.

Objective: Encourage residents to support their downtown Downers Grove businesses year round.

Goal: Continue to incorporate the local students in downtown events.

Objective: Increase the sense of community with the students and to highlight the talent we have here in Downers Grove.



Goal: Increase the presence of art in the downtown.

Objective: To expand our reach in maintaining downtown Downers Grove as a destination.



Goal: Continue to evaluate events and explore new ones.

Objective: To host events that are beneficial to the downtown business environment and community.

Goal: Encourage cross promotions between retail and restaurants.

Objective: To maintain a diverse business environment.



Aesthetics

The Aesthetics committee is tasked with implementing the balance of the SSA #2 budget. As well as continuing to enhance the downtown in years to come. The downtown is the heart of the Village and should have a welcoming and safe ambiance for businesses, residents and patrons.

Goal: Finalize implementation of SSA #2 Aesthetics Plan.

Objective: Enhance overall downtown appeal as a public gathering space while maintaining historic heritage by taking inventory of what we have, what needs to be added or replaced and what elements can be quickly added or replaced.

Goal: Maintain a safe and welcoming downtown.

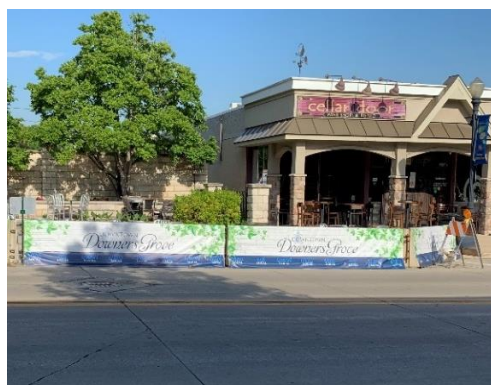
Objective: Enhance the seasonal ambiance in the downtown while continuing to evaluate downtown aesthetic appeal to walkers, cyclists and drivers while maintaining historic heritage, amongst all boundaries of the downtown.

Goal: To work in partnership with the Village to maintain the beauty of downtown.

Objective: To coordinate with the Village the best economical plan for added aesthetic elements to the downtown.

Goal: Identify the gateway to downtown noting it is a destination.

Objective: In partnership with the Village look at increasing wayfinding signs for the downtown.



Finance & Staffing

The financial committee is tasked with continuing to be fiscally responsible while also understanding the needs of the organization and its members, while always maintaining a balanced budget.

Goal: Identify financial priorities for a successful and sustainable organization while understanding there will be an increase in revenue with the creation of SSA #11.

Objective: Allocate portion anticipated revenue in excess of prior level to reserves, to replenish the reserves that needed to be depleted from SSA #2.

Goal: Identify staffing requirements and increase when possible.

Objective: Allow staff to allocate more specific time on marketing, promoting, business recruitment, business retention and day to day operations. Staff can continue to operate a successful organization and serve the downtown in the best ways possible.

Goal: To have a healthy reserve.

Objective: Continue to review budget and identify possible reductions of expenses while building for the future.

Goal: Remain conscious of the SSA #11 expiration date while maintaining a fiscally responsible organization.

Objective: Deliver maximum value to visitors, Village of Downers Grove, Business Owners and Property Owners.



Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation has identified these six priority action items for the organization through 2022.

Priority Action Item	Description
Create a formal year round support local program.	<p>This project will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A marketing campaign to support Downtown DG. • Enhance the vibrancy of our downtown businesses by encouraging shopping & dining. • Encouraging a strong recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic.
Increase local student engagement in downtown events.	<p>This project will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with District 99 to encourage student participation in our events. • Highlighting the talent of high schoolers in Downers Grove while inspiring them to be involved in their community.
Finalize the implementation of the initial aesthetics plan initialized in 2019.	<p>This project will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the downtown as a welcoming place for businesses and visitors.
Develop a plan to increase the downtown holiday décor.	<p>This project will entail partnering with the Village in creating a plan for the best way to economically increase holiday decorations. Creating a more festive destination for holiday shopping & dining.</p>
Increase staffing for the organization.	<p>This project will result in a plan to most effectively continue to run a successful organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the area of staffing need. • Analysis of contract vs. hiring on staff.
Maintain a balanced budget while building the depleted reserves.	<p>This project will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued fiscal responsibility to continue to run an effective organization. • Begin building a reserve that was depleted due to end of SSA #2 and the accelerated implementation of the aesthetics plan.

Roles and Responsibilities re: Downtown Downers Grove

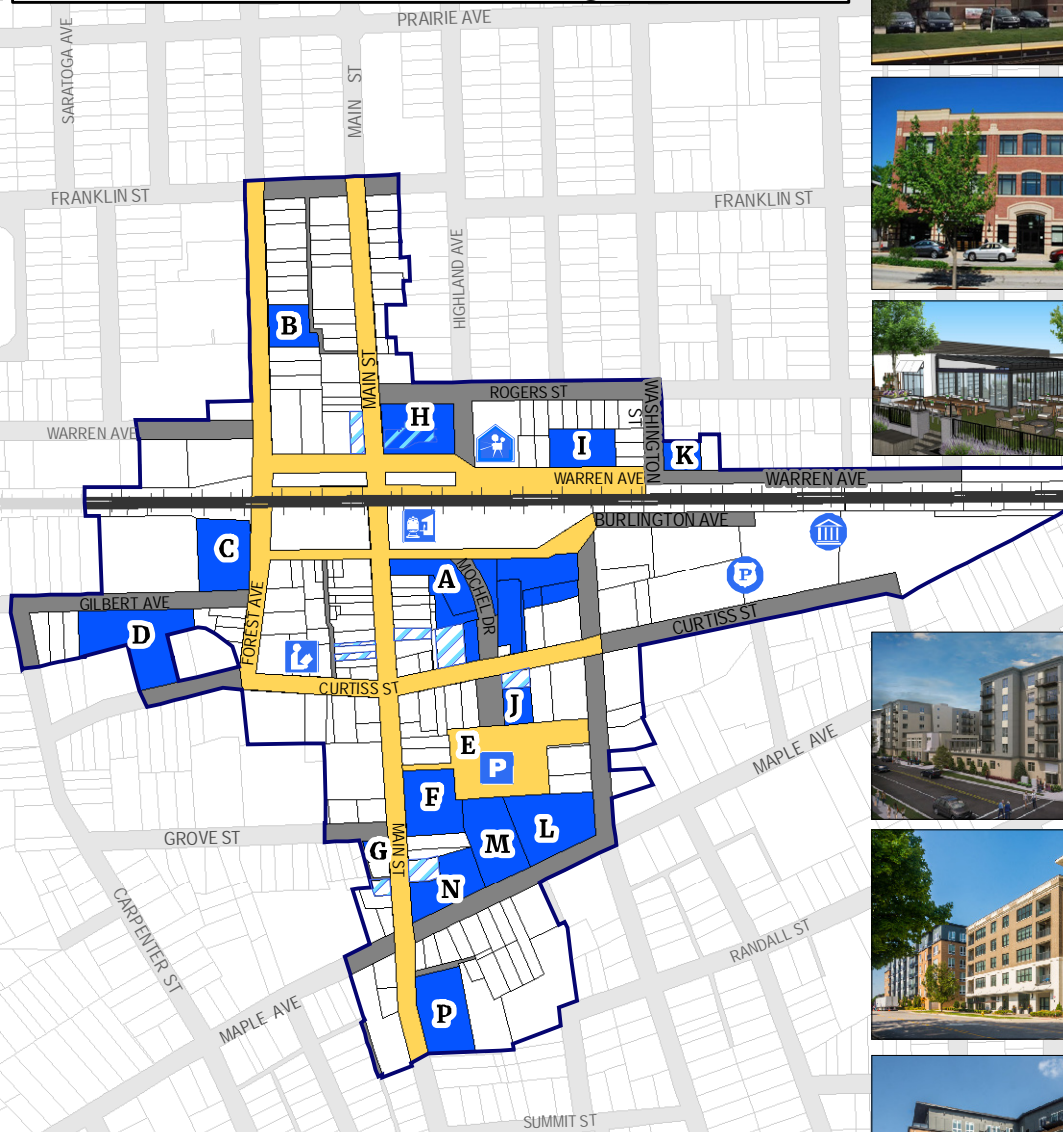
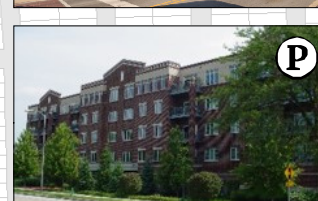
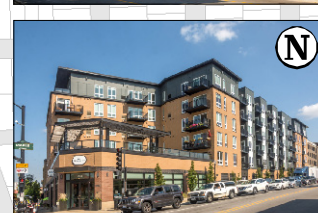
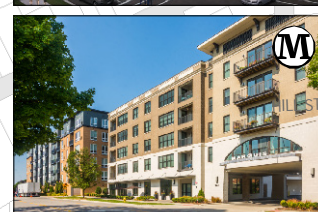
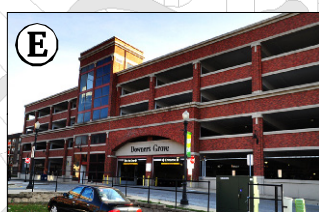
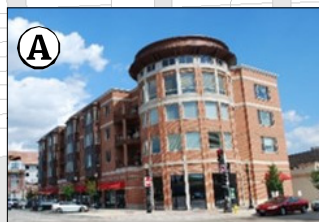
Village of Downers Grove (VoDG), Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) & Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Function	VoDG	DMC	EDC
Zoning / Bulk Rules	X		
Public Parking System	X		
Authorize Primary Funding for DMC/EDC	X		
Infrastructure Planning and Maintenance	X		
Aesthetics Plans and Strategies	X	X	
Events Planning, Coordination and/or Permitting	X	X	
Business Attraction and Retention		X	
Promotion and Marketing of the Downtown		X	
Strategies for Facilitating Redevelopment			X
Attracting & Facilitating Development Projects			X



Downtown Downers Grove Redevelopment / Public Improvements

Property Listing	
A - Acadia on the Green	H - Station Crossing
B - 4929 Forest Ave	I - 922-930 Warren Twnhms
C - Burlington Station Apts	J - Charles Place Office Bldg
D - Georgian Courts Twnhms	K - 844 Warren Ave
E - Parking Deck	L - Maple & Washington Apts
F - DuPage Medical Bldg	M - Marquis on Maple Condos
G - Oakley/Spenga Bldg	N - Maple & Main Apts
	P - Morningside Condos



- Library
- Parking Deck
- Police Station
- Train Station
- Tivoli Theater
- Village Hall

- TIF District
- Railroad
- Facade Improvements
- Public Development
- Private Development

Downers Grove Downtown Tax Increment Financing District Total Assessed Valuation (1996-2020)

