

Executive Summary

This work plan provides strategic operational priorities for the Downtown Association for Fiscal Year 2012 and describes the activities, which the organization will pursue to accomplish its 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 engaged in a strategic planning process and established short term priorities that shall serve as a focal point for the development of this work plan. The priorities are as follows:

- **Organizational Development** – The DTA is committed continually evaluate and strengthen systems of operation to insure that the mission is being carried out with as much diligence, integrity and transparency as possible.
- **Public Relations and Identity** – The DTA will continue to explore creative ways to attract and retain visitors to Downtown Santa Cruz and to position it as a world-class destination.
- **Advocacy & Collaboration** – The DTA will expand and strengthening partnerships and collaborations with City of Santa Cruz administrators and City Council representatives as well as other like minded community groups and organizations to maintain and improve Downtown beautification and safety efforts.
- **Downtown Environment** – The Built environment of Downtown is an area in need of constant attention and care. The Downtown Association will employ its influence to encourage ongoing efforts in this area.

Building on our existing programs we will use the conclusions from our strategic planning process to fine tune our focus and prioritize our resources in the year to come. The Downtown Association is governed by a Board of Directors, which is comprised of eleven business members. The Board of Directors represents the membership as a whole, sets goals, priorities and policies. In order to execute and manage the programs of the Downtown Association, the Board of Directors has engaged a professional full time Executive Director. The Executive Director shall utilize the resources of the Downtown Association to implement this work plan.

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.

This Work plan has been developed as a result of an in-depth strategic planning process. Working with the consulting firm of Giant Creative Services the Downtown Association has employed focus groups, study sessions and substantial internal assessment to help understand the greatest short-term priorities for the organization. The results of this process have provided a strong direction and clear understanding of focus for the upcoming year and beyond.

Entering into Fiscal Year 2012 the Downtown Association is acutely aware of the many challenges its members are facing. General economic conditions, unfavorable neighborhood perceptions, increased local taxes and fees are among many qualities which make operating a business in Downtown Santa Cruz very challenging.

This fiscal year the Downtown Association will leverage our influence and resources to continue to inform and enhance the Identity of Downtown Santa Cruz, through effective promotions and thoughtful public relations.

The Downtown Association will actively advocating for the business environment Downtown. Membership participation is crucial to this effort and will be a major area of focus.

Collaborations with like-minded agencies will be continuously pursued, identifying organizations and agencies working to achieve similar results as those of the Downtown Association. From Event producers to business advocacy groups to neighborhood associations, creating partnerships provides an opportunity to maximize our own efforts.

And finally, the Downtown Association shall continue to find ways to improve the built environment and the maintenance thereof.

Strategy and Actions

Public Relations and Identity

Promoting Downtown as a premier retail and entertainment district continues to be a high priority for the Downtown Association. Over the past several years, The Downtown Association has been reinforcing a brand identity featuring “It’s All Right Here” as a tag line and a retro style look and feel. Without departing from the style or reinventing the brand the DTA now has an opportunity to focus our marketing efforts and design strategies that attract specific audiences. We will continue to invest and support strategies to bring more families and students Downtown. The Downtown Association will continue our numerous year round and seasonal promotions.

Downtown Tuesdays - The Downtown Tuesday promotion gives the Downtown an annual presence with the local community. By creating an umbrella to market specials and special events, businesses in the district can develop promotions that work for them while we provide on going marketing support.

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.

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. We will increase marketing for the Downtown Dollars program during Graduation and the winter gift giving holiday season.

Downtown Directory – The popular Business Directory will be redesigned this year to allow for more content and higher distribution. Producing and distributing an up to date directory of all of the stores, restaurants and professional services is an extremely valuable service to Businesses and visitors alike.

Halloween Trick or Treat – A popular event with families and Children, The DTA will encourage businesses to welcome trick or treaters and provide a fun and memorable experience for young visitors to Downtown, while working with the City to ensure a safe event in the evening.

Holiday Events - December

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

Advertising - The ongoing advertising vehicles include a print campaign in the Good Times newspaper, periodic radio advertising, aggressive web marketing, social media 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.

Advocacy and Collaboration

Providing a strong and unified voice for the businesses community is an essential function of the Downtown Association. Businesses operating in the Downtown Face more challenges than ever before. The Downtown Association will continue to work as an advocate in supporting individual businesses as well as the district as a whole.

Strengthening and maintaining the relationship that the Association has with City leadership, and like-minded organizations, while expanding the mechanisms for communicating with our business members will help us successfully serve the best interest of the district.

Downtown Environment

The perception of the built environment is foundational to the success of the Downtown. The Downtown Association will provide leadership in finding creative means to uphold a level of standard in the Public Spaces Downtown.

Membership Support

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, weekly email newsletter updates, 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.

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. We will continue to make available our orientation program for any Downtown employee to 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 Redevelopment Agency 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.

Annual Event

In 2009, the Downtown Association presented the return of the Annual Event. In an effort to connect with the larger community, The Annual event will continue this year with the goal of reaching out to and connecting with our membership.

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.

Website and Members' Site

DowntownSantaCruz.com shall continue to be utilized as a resource for our members, both as a means to promote activities downtown as well as a source of resources and information for business owners in the district.

Appendices

Budget

Calendar