



Lakeland Downtown Development Authority

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Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Goals & Objectives

Mission: To Improve and Stimulate the Environment for Economic Development in a People-Oriented Downtown Community

Vision Statement: An exceptional Downtown partnering with others to provide a business and residential environment featuring economic opportunity, quality public spaces, and cultural and educational enrichment, all in a diverse, safe and attractive setting.

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Goals & Objectives submitted by:

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Overview:

Downtown is the charming and vibrant heart of Lakeland that beautifully blends historic architecture with modern amenities. The district is known for its picturesque streets, well-preserved buildings, and a strong sense of community.

Key features include:

1. **Historic Architecture:** The downtown area boasts a variety of historic buildings, including Lakeland City Hall, Polk Theatre, Terrace Hotel and several old storefronts that give the area a unique character.
2. **Lakes and Parks:** Central to downtown is Lake Mirror, which offers scenic views, a lovely walking path, and the iconic Hollis Garden. The Frances Langford Promenade is a popular spot for relaxation, outdoor activities and community events.

3. **Shops and Dining:** Downtown Lakeland is home to an array of local shops, boutiques, and restaurants. From quaint coffee shops to upscale dining options, there's something for everyone.
4. **Cultural Attractions:** Downtown features cultural hotspots like the Polk Museum of Art, which showcases regional and national art exhibitions. There are also regular events, markets, and festivals that add to the lively atmosphere.
5. **Historic District:** The district is part of a larger historic preservation area that includes charming streets with vintage homes and well-maintained gardens.

Overall, Downtown Lakeland is known for its welcoming atmosphere and rich cultural heritage, making it a delightful place to visit or live.

Downtown Lakeland, like many urban centers, faces several economic challenges that impact its growth and development. Here are some key issues:

1. **Economic Disparities:** While Downtown Lakeland has a charming atmosphere and attracts visitors, there are economic disparities within the area. Some businesses and properties may struggle due to a lack of investment or support, affecting overall economic vitality.
2. **Retail Competition:** The rise of online shopping and larger retail centers outside of Downtown can divert customers away from local businesses. Small, independent retailers often face challenges competing with the convenience and pricing of larger, chain stores and e-commerce platforms.
3. **Infrastructure and Development Costs:** Maintaining and upgrading infrastructure in a historic district can be expensive. There may be additional costs associated with preserving historical features while modernizing facilities and services.
4. **Gentrification Risks:** As downtown areas become more popular, there's a risk of gentrification, which can drive up property values and rents. This can lead to displacement of long-standing residents and businesses, potentially altering the community's character.
5. **Economic Diversification:** Depending on the local economy's reliance on specific industries or business types, there may be a need for greater economic diversification. Relying heavily on a few sectors can make the area vulnerable to economic downturns.
6. **Funding and Investment:** Securing funding for development projects, infrastructure improvements, and public services can be challenging. There may be competition for grants, public investment, and private funding, which can impact the pace and scope of economic development.
7. **Parking and Accessibility:** Limited parking options and accessibility issues can deter visitors and potential customers. Addressing these challenges requires investment in better transportation solutions and infrastructure improvements.

Addressing these challenges involves a coordinated effort between local government, business owners, and community organizations to create a sustainable and thriving downtown environment.

The Lakeland Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) is a key organization focused on the revitalization and enhancement of Downtown Lakeland, Florida. Established to foster economic growth and improve the downtown area's appeal, the LDDA plays a central role in shaping the future of this vibrant district. Here are some of the main functions and objectives of the LDDA:

1. **Economic Development:** The LDDA works to attract and retain businesses in downtown Lakeland. This involves supporting local entrepreneurs, facilitating business development, and encouraging investment in the area.
2. **Urban Planning and Improvement:** The authority is involved in planning and executing projects that enhance the downtown environment. This includes improving infrastructure, beautifying public spaces, and preserving historic properties while accommodating modern needs.
3. **Marketing and Promotion:** The LDDA promotes downtown Lakeland as a destination for visitors, businesses, and residents. We organize events, markets, campaigns, and initiatives to raise the area's profile and attract foot traffic.
4. **Community Engagement:** The LDDA engages with local stakeholders, including business owners, residents, and community organizations, to gather input and foster collaboration. They work to ensure that development projects align with the community's vision and needs.
5. **Funding and Grants:** The authority may provide or facilitate access to funding and grants for development projects, improvements, and business incentives. This financial support helps drive the revitalization efforts and supports ongoing growth.
6. **Support for Local Initiatives:** The LDDA supports various local initiatives, such as festivals, markets, and cultural events, which contribute to the vibrancy and attractiveness of downtown Lakeland.

Overall, the Lakeland Downtown Development Authority is integral to the strategic planning and execution of projects that aim to enhance downtown Lakeland's economic health, aesthetic appeal, and community vitality.

Understanding the demographics and psychographics of visitors to Downtown Lakeland, Florida, can provide valuable insights into the area's appeal and help tailor experiences to meet their needs. Here's a general overview:

Demographics:

1. **Age:**
 - **Young Professionals:** Many visitors are likely young professionals seeking vibrant social and cultural experiences.
 - **Families:** Families visit for community events, parks, and family-friendly activities.
 - **Retirees:** The area attracts retirees and older adults who enjoy the historic charm and relaxed pace of downtown.
2. **Income Level:**
 - **Middle to Upper-Middle Class:** Downtown Lakeland's mix of boutique shopping, dining, and cultural attractions tends to draw individuals with a moderate to upper-middle income level.
3. **Education:**
 - **Higher Education:** Visitors often have higher levels of education, with many holding college degrees or higher. This is reflected in the area's cultural and artistic offerings, which appeal to an educated audience.
4. **Occupation:**
 - **Professionals and Entrepreneurs:** Many visitors are professionals, including those working in creative industries, business, and education. The area also attracts entrepreneurs and those interested in starting or growing businesses.

Psychographics:

1. **Lifestyle:**
 - **Urban and Socially Engaged:** Visitors are often engaged in urban lifestyles, valuing social interactions, cultural experiences, and community events. They may enjoy exploring local art, dining out, and participating in festivals or markets.
 - **Health-Conscious:** Many visitors are health-conscious, appreciating the outdoor spaces, parks, and wellness-oriented businesses in the area.
2. **Values and Interests:**
 - **Cultural Appreciation:** A significant number of visitors value cultural experiences and historical preservation. They are likely interested in art, history, and local heritage.
 - **Support for Local Business:** There is a strong interest in supporting local businesses and artisans, which aligns with the area's emphasis on independent shops and local dining.
 - **Community-Oriented:** Many visitors value community and are drawn to events and activities that foster a sense of local connection and participation.
3. **Attitudes:**
 - **Experience-Seeking:** Visitors often seek enriching and unique experiences, whether through dining, entertainment, or cultural events. They appreciate areas that offer a mix of activities and a distinctive local flavor.

- **Eco-Conscious:** There is a growing awareness of sustainability and eco-friendliness, influencing preferences for businesses and practices that align with these values.

By understanding these demographic and psychographic characteristics, Downtown Lakeland can better tailor its offerings to attract and retain its diverse visitor base, enhancing the overall appeal and effectiveness of its marketing and development strategies.

LDDA Contributions

The Lakeland Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) plays a crucial role in supporting the economic growth of Downtown Lakeland through a variety of projects and programs. These initiatives are designed to enhance the area's appeal, foster business development, and improve the overall economic vitality of the downtown district. Here's how our projects and programs contribute to economic growth:

1. Business Attraction and Retention:

- **Incentive Programs:** The LDDA may offer various incentives to attract new businesses and support existing ones. This can include grants, loans, or incentives aimed at reducing startup costs and encouraging investment.
- **Business Support Services:** The authority provides resources such as business development meetings, networking events, and one-on-one consultations to help local entrepreneurs and businesses thrive.

2. Infrastructure and Urban Improvement:

- **Downtown Revitalization Projects:** The LDDA invests in infrastructure improvements such as street upgrades, enhanced lighting, and beautification projects. These improvements create a more attractive and functional environment, encouraging foot traffic and making downtown a more appealing place for both visitors and businesses.
- **Historic Preservation:** By supporting the maintenance and restoration of historic buildings, the LDDA helps preserve the unique character of Downtown Lakeland, which in turn attracts tourists and adds to the area's charm.

3. Public Spaces and Amenities:

- **Parks and Recreational Areas:** Projects to enhance public spaces, such as parks and plazas, improve the quality of life for residents and create inviting areas for visitors. This can include upgrades to amenities, new landscaping, and the addition of public art.

- **Event Spaces:** Developing and maintaining spaces for events, such as festivals, farmers markets, and concerts, helps drive foot traffic and local spending while fostering community engagement.

4. Marketing and Promotion:

- **Downtown Branding:** The LDDA works on branding and promoting Downtown Lakeland through marketing campaigns, social media, and partnerships with local media. These efforts help raise awareness and attract visitors.
- **Event Organization:** By organizing and supporting events, the LDDA helps draw visitors to the area, creating opportunities for local businesses and enhancing the downtown's reputation as a vibrant and lively place.

5. Community Engagement and Collaboration:

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** The LDDA collaborates with local businesses, property owners, and community organizations to align projects with the needs and desires of the community. This inclusive approach helps ensure that development efforts are effective and well-received.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Regular engagement with the community through surveys, meetings, and public forums helps the LDDA understand local needs and preferences, guiding the development of projects that benefit the entire area.

6. Economic Development Planning:

- **Strategic Planning:** The LDDA develops long-term strategic plans to guide the growth and development of Downtown Lakeland. These plans outline key priorities, goals, and action steps to ensure sustainable and balanced economic growth.
- **Market Research:** Conducting market research and analyzing economic trends helps the LDDA make informed decisions about where to focus efforts and resources, ensuring that initiatives are aligned with current and future market demands.

Overall, the Lakeland Downtown Development Authority's projects and programs are designed to create a vibrant, attractive, and economically prosperous downtown area. By improving infrastructure, supporting local businesses, enhancing public spaces, and promoting the area effectively, the LDDA contributes significantly to the economic growth and success of Downtown Lakeland.

Goals & Objectives

Goal: Enhance Downtown security services by reducing the incidence of crime and undesirable behaviors and increasing public safety awareness.

Specific Goal: By the end of the fiscal year, decrease the number of reported incidents of crime/undesirable behaviors Downtown by 15% compared to the previous year, increase community engagement in safety programs by 15%.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Crime Reduction:

- Track and compare the number of reported property crimes (e.g., theft, vandalism) and violent crimes (e.g., assault) in Downtown through local police reports and crime statistics.
- Aim for a 15% reduction in these incidents compared to the previous year's data.
- Track and compare the number and kind of incident reports generated by Safety Ambassadors.
- Aim for a 20% reduction in number of incidents by end of fiscal year.

2. Community Engagement:

- Increase participation in safety programs, such as neighborhood watch programs, safety workshops, and community patrols, by 25%.
- Measure engagement through sign-ups, attendance records, and feedback surveys from participants.

3. Improved Response Times:

- Reduce average response times for emergency services in Downtown by 10% by optimizing coordination and communication among local law enforcement and emergency responders.

4. Visibility of Security Measures:

- Maintain security cameras and increase the visibility of security personnel or patrols in high-traffic areas.

Goal: Enhance the aesthetic appeal of Downtown through targeted beautification efforts.

Specific Goal: By the end of the fiscal year, improve the overall visual appeal of Downtown by implementing a series of beautification projects that increase pedestrian satisfaction by 20% and achieve a 90% completion rate of planned enhancements.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Project Implementation:

- **Number of Projects Completed:** Complete at least 8 specific curb appeal improvement projects, such as banner projects, mural installations, and streetscape improvements.
- **Project Timeline Adherence:** Achieve a 90% on-time completion rate for these projects according to the scheduled timeline.

2. Pedestrian Satisfaction:

- **Satisfaction Surveys:** Conduct bi-annual surveys of Downtown visitors and residents to assess satisfaction with the area's aesthetics. Aim for a 20% increase in positive feedback regarding the visual appeal and overall cleanliness of Downtown.

3. Public Space Enhancements:

- **Street Furniture:** Upgrade or add new street furniture (e.g., benches, trash bins, bike racks) with a target of installing at least 15 new or refurbished pieces.

4. Maintenance and Upkeep:

- **Maintenance Frequency:** Increase the frequency of routine maintenance tasks, such as litter removal and graffiti cleaning, by 25%.
- **Condition Ratings:** Achieve a 95% or higher satisfaction rating from maintenance inspections and community feedback on the cleanliness and upkeep of beautified areas.

By establishing these measurable objectives, the goal ensures that beautification efforts are effectively tracked and assessed, leading to a more attractive and inviting Downtown environment.

Goal: Increase public engagement in Downtown by expanding and enhancing events and activities.

Specific Goal: By the end of the fiscal year, boost public engagement by 25% through the implementation of new and diverse events and activities, and achieve a 15% increase in event participation compared to the previous year.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Event Quantity and Diversity:

- **Number of Events:** Host at least 20 new or expanded events throughout the year, including cultural festivals, farmers markets, music concerts, and community fairs.
- **Event Diversity:** Ensure that at least 40% of the events cater to a range of interests and demographics (e.g., family-friendly, arts and culture, health and wellness).

2. **Event Participation:**
 - **Attendance Metrics:** Increase overall event attendance by 30% compared to the previous year. Track attendance numbers for each event to measure growth.
3. **Community Involvement:**
 - **Local Partnerships:** Collaborate with at least 15 local businesses, organizations, or community groups to sponsor or participate in events.
4. **Feedback and Satisfaction:**
 - **Event Surveys:** Conduct post-event surveys to gather feedback from attendees, aiming for a 90% satisfaction rate regarding the quality and variety of events.
 - **Engagement Metrics:** Measure engagement through social media interactions, event-related hashtags, and online feedback, targeting a 25% increase in social media mentions and positive interactions.

By setting these measurable objectives, the goal ensures a structured approach to enhancing public engagement through a variety of events and activities, with clear targets for attendance, diversity, and community involvement.

Goal: Maintain and grow ridership on the free shuttle service to enhance accessibility and increase transportation options for Downtown visitors.

Specific Goal: By the end of the fiscal year, increase ridership on the free shuttle service by 15% and achieves a minimum of 500 rides per week.

Measurable Objectives:

1. **Service Implementation:**
 - **Operations:** Promote the free shuttle service with defined routes and schedules that cover key Downtown destinations and high-traffic areas.
 - **Shuttle Fleet:** Ensure a minimum of 2 shuttles are operational and deployed according to the planned routes.
2. **Ridership:**
 - **Weekly Rides:** Achieve an average of 500 rides per week by the end of the fiscal year.
 - **Monthly Growth:** Increase monthly ridership by 10% from the beginning to the end of the fiscal year.
3. **Foot Traffic Increase:**
 - **Visitor Surveys:** Conduct surveys and analyze data to measure a 10% increase in Downtown foot traffic and business patronage linked to the shuttle service.
 - **Business Feedback:** Collect feedback from local businesses to assess the impact of the shuttle service on customer traffic and sales, targeting a 15% increase in reported foot traffic.

4. Service Efficiency:

- **On-Time Performance:** Maintain a 95% on-time performance rate for shuttle departures and arrivals according to the published schedule.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** Achieve a customer satisfaction rating of 85% or higher, based on surveys and feedback from shuttle users regarding service quality and convenience.

5. Promotion and Awareness:

- **Marketing Campaign:** Implement a marketing campaign to promote the shuttle service, including social media, flyers, and local media, aiming for a 20% increase in awareness and ridership within the first three months.

By establishing these measurable objectives, the goal ensures that the free shuttle service is effectively implemented, widely used, and contributes to increased accessibility and vibrancy in Downtown.

Goal: Increase social media engagement for Downtown by enhancing content strategies and interaction.

Specific Goal: By the end of the fiscal year, achieve a 10% increase in social media engagement metrics, including likes, shares, comments, and overall reach, through targeted content and community interaction.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Content Production:

- **Post Frequency:** Increase the number of social media posts about Downtown events, activities, and highlights by 25% compared to the previous year.
- **Content Variety:** Develop and share at least 4 types of content per month, including event promotions, local business spotlights, and community stories.

2. Engagement Metrics:

- **Likes and Shares:** Achieve a 30% increase in the total number of likes and shares across all social media platforms by the end of the year.
- **Comments and Interactions:** Increase the average number of comments and direct interactions (e.g., replies to posts, messages) by 30% compared to the previous year.
- **Reach and Impressions:** Expand the total reach and impressions of social media posts by 30% through improved content strategies and targeted promotions.

3. Community Involvement:

- **User-Generated Content:** Encourage and share at least 20 pieces of user-generated content related to Downtown, such as photos or testimonials, to foster community engagement.
- **Contests and Campaigns:** Run at least 3 social media contests or campaigns throughout the year to drive interaction and user participation.

4. Analytics and Monitoring:

- **Monthly Reports:** Track and analyze social media engagement metrics monthly to assess progress and adjust strategies as needed.
- **Benchmarking:** Compare engagement metrics with previous years and industry standards to ensure a 30% improvement and identify best practices.

5. Promotion and Collaboration:

- **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborate with at least 5 local influencers or community figures to promote Downtown and increase visibility, aiming for a 20% increase in engagement from their followers.
- **Paid Promotions:** Invest in targeted social media ads to reach a broader audience, aiming for a 15% increase in overall engagement from paid promotional efforts.

By setting these measurable objectives, the goal ensures a structured approach to boosting social media engagement, enhancing the visibility and vibrancy of Downtown through effective content and interaction strategies.