

DOWNTOWN ITHACA ALLIANCE

2018 WORK PLAN

WORK TASKS, ACTIVITIES, AND PROGRAMS

November 17, 2017

Each year the Downtown Ithaca Alliance undertakes a number of tasks, activities, and programs designed to advance and support downtown revitalization, management, and promotion. These actions comprise this 2018 Downtown Ithaca Alliance Annual Work Plan.

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance Work Plan follows the organizational calendar fiscal year (January to December). This work plan works in tandem with the annual budget to guide and direct the organization in its tasks and activities for the year. When creating an annual work plan, we outline recurring tasks and programs for continuation and we study the approved 2020 Strategic Plan, selecting elements from that plan for implementation or attention. Among the 2020 Strategic Plan topics to be covered in this 2018 Work Plan are:

- Ongoing Commons maintenance and repair
- Conference center development
- Housing development
- Cayuga Street and other secondary street improvement
- Transportation demand management
- Business retention, attraction and recruitment
- Facilitation of new development projects
- Tax abatement incentives for downtown projects
- Parking and parking policy
- Public Art
- Corridor connections between Downtown and CU, IC, and the waterfront

Each and every work program element is designed to reinforce and support the goals of the overall strategic plan. The programmatic work of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance has been organized by committee:

- Business Retention and Development
- Downtown Operations
- Special Events
- Marketing
- Transportation Demand Management

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Downtown Retention & Development

The DIA assumes a key role in understanding, monitoring, and assisting in the enhancement and growth of Downtown Ithaca. We work closely with the City and other business and development partners to plan and facilitate business and investment growth. We seek to advance and implement the aspects of the Downtown 2020 Strategic Plan pertaining to economic and business development. We are keenly interested in supporting and retaining our existing businesses. We are likewise interested in the growth and development of Downtown and serve as facilitators for projects, investment, and opportunities.

This work is overseen and monitored by the Downtown Business Retention & Development Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member John Guttridge and staffed by the DIA Executive Director Gary Ferguson.

Priority Recommendations

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. Construction period marketing and business support

With construction activity occurring in 2018 at four major sites and several smaller sites downtown, it will be important to undertake a program of focused activities to ensure that any construction work does not impact or impair downtown commerce. To address this concern, we will undertake the following:

- Both advocate for and provide additional signage (on and off the Commons);
- Both advocate for and create decorative fencing around the Harold's Square Commons frontage;
- Provide a steady message from the DIA that Downtown is open and readily assessable to all;
- Undertake a series of small programming activities;
- Advocate for and help create small play stations on the Commons to replace the mothballed playground.

Should a project emerge at the Green Garage (either public or private), we will explore additional actions, including:

- Investigating a possible construction shuttle.

2. Initiate an employee training program for customer service and downtown referrals

The DIA will lead a program to provide front line customer service training. We will prepare a modular program that can be accessed on-line, in hard copy, and in person. The program will feature a module on extending exemplary customer service and a module on educating front line workers about the offerings of downtown- so they can make smart referrals.

3. Retail Advisory Council

The DIA will convene a group of Downtown retailers comprising various sectors and goods. This group will meet three times a year (Q1, Q2, and Q3) to provide guidance and feedback to the DIA as well as become educated and informed about Downtown issues and opportunities. This Council will be staffed by the Retail Support person, with assistance from senior DIA staff.

4. Pedestrian counter project

For years, the DIA has received inquiries about pedestrian foot traffic, particularly on the Commons. In 2018, the DIA will work with a national vendor to install state of the art pedestrian counters that will provide us with electronic real time counts. This data will be used for business attraction, policy and planning decisions, and for special event crowds estimating.

5. District handbook (how to use DIA, City and DT resources)

In response to requests from both new and existing businesses, as well as property owners and residents, the DIA will draft a District handbook in 2018. This handbook will serve as a guide for navigating services and resources available in Downtown, ranging from City services, to emergency numbers, to information on living and running a business in Downtown. Trash, recycling, police safety, mental health and homelessness, and drugs will be addressed. DIA services will also be addressed. The printed (and electronic) guide will serve as a reference document for people who use Downtown on a regular basis. It will be distributed to all businesses and property owners and will be available on-line on the DIA web site.

Short Term Retail Strategy Tasks & Business Retention

These tasks will be undertaken in conjunction with the Marketing Oversight Committee and marketing staff.

6. Re-evaluate retail need categories

The changing retail environment, both locally and nationally, has sufficiently affected our own downtown retail landscape that it is now important to re-examine and re-evaluate our priority retail needs list. Historically, we determined a list of priority retail types that help drive our recruitment and attraction efforts. They also were used by the IURA to guide them in their downtown loan fund. This work will be done by DIA staff and the BRD Committee.

7. Offer a secret shopper program

In 2018 we are looking to resurrect a program the DIA implemented some 8+ years ago.... a secret shopper program. This program provides downtown businesses with the opportunity to obtain objective third

party assessments of their business and customer service. It requires the full consent and participation of the subject business. The DIA will organize the program and market the program. The program will also be able to help businesses analyze their ability to serve diverse populations.

8. Conduct retail visitations

The proposed new retail support staff person will take a lead role conducting routine visits to downtown retailers. The goal will be to visit each retail business at least once a calendar year.

9. Create a Downtown job board

We have heard from retailers that it is sometimes difficult to find employees. One way the DIA can help is by creating and promoting a Downtown on-line community job board where businesses can post openings for positions.

10. Highlighting minority owned businesses

Again borrowing from a DIA project undertaken a number of years ago, we will prepare and disseminate an on-line and hard copy guide to minority businesses in downtown.

11. Provide technical assistance to businesses regarding social media and the internet

The retail support specialists will also take a lead role in providing targeted technical assistance and advice to businesses in the area of social media and internet presence. We will prepare a check list to help businesses audit their on-line capacity and presence. We can provide some limited assistance with basic products such as Google, Facebook, and Instagram. The goal is to complete audit forms for 12 interested businesses.

12. Disseminate a guide to downtown parking tools

The DIA will prepare a guide summarizing the various parking tools and options available to businesses to assist both their patrons and their employees. This guide will be disseminated to all downtown businesses.

13. Launch a Downtown loyalty program

Utilizing our Store Financial platform, the DIA will work with retailers to create a downtown-wide customer loyalty program. This program will not replace individual store loyalty programs but will provide a new, extra incentive for downtown patrons.

14. Work to create more retail friendly special events

Working with the Special Events Committee, DIA staff will undertake an audit of our special events to determine how they can become more retail friendly.

15. Add a retail support specialist person

The DIA will add a half time position devoted to retail support. This position will focus on the retail sector, taking a lead role in visitations, the loyalty program, and on-line technical assistance.

16. Facilitate tourism marketing of Downtown and Downtown businesses

WE will augment our visitor guide program with a coordinated effort to attract more visitors to Downtown. We will do this in conjunction with the CVB/Chamber. The Marketing Director will prepare a report for the Board outlining various ways the DIA and CVB are working to bring visitors to Downtown.

17. Undertake a succession planning initiative

The DIA staff and BRD Committee will launch a program to assist businesses that could benefit from succession planning. We will be working with the Binghamton area SBDC and AFCU on the implementation of this program. The program's goal is to produce succession plans for approximately 10 businesses, as well as host a downtown-wide seminar on succession planning.

18. Host a networking programs for retailers/merchants

During 2018 the DIA will host six (6) alternating networking receptions and merchant workshops. The three (3) workshops will feature topics important to small retail/restaurant businesses and will be recorded for archiving on the DIA web site. This work will be coordinated with the Marketing Committee.

19. Fix and promote regular/standard hours

The DIA will take a lead role in working with merchants to create a set of preferred standard hours for promotion to the public. These hours would vary seasonally.

Recruitment

20. Work with Race for the Space prospects

In 2017 the DIA generated a roster of potential business leads from the Race for the Space program. We will spend part of 2018 working with these various prospects to help as many as possible find and secure downtown homes.

21. Work with the new major projects on retail options

We will work with the owners and developers of the larger new downtown projects to help them consider and locate possible retail tenants.

22. Upgrade our directories and rosters of available space

The DIA maintains hard copy and on-line directories of both office and retail space. In 2018, we will update these formats and institute a process that will regularize the periodic review of available space.

23. Overall recruitment/attraction goals for 2018- at least six (6) new businesses.

We will set an overall goal of at least six new downtown storefront businesses in 2017.

a. Outreach to key regional and local retail prospects.

Working with the City of Ithaca and the BRD Committee, the DIA will undertake a program to market and reach out to prospects both locally and regionally.

b. Organize recruitment/reconnaissance team visits to at least two (2) regional locations.

We will assemble teams from DIA and City staff and BRD Committee members to travel to regional destinations to elicit prospects and to tour and observe what other communities are doing in their downtowns.

c. Focus on the attraction of retail over food & beverage when possible.

The BRD Committee will carefully monitor the balance between food & beverage and retail to ensure that we maintain a dynamic marketplace that will successfully work for both sectors. Attraction efforts will focus on retail. Staff will provide updates to the committee on a quarterly basis.

d. Focus as possible on experiential and destination retail

Staff will work with the BRD Committee to construct a target list of candidate stores (both locally and regionally) for prospecting that reflect either or both of these characteristic traits.

Project Facilitation

24. Monitor and facilitate Green Garage repairs and/or redevelopment

The DIA will continue to monitor and act as a facilitator for the rebuild of the Green Garage, either as a private project or as a public garage. In either case, we will monitor and help shape the guidelines for public parking management.

25. Implement the Main Street Grant for 117 N. Cayuga (Grant funded)

The DIA has been working with Ithaca Renting Co. on the renovation for former masonic Temple building at 117 N. Cayuga utilizing the NYS Main Street grant awarded in late 2015. The DIA is responsible for administering the grant and monitoring the project on behalf of the State. A project extension is being sought and the project will be completed in 2018.

26. Moving forward other key projects.

The DIA will continue its facilitation and monitoring of the major downtown development projects under construction: Harold's Square, the Canopy by Hilton project, the old library site project, City Centre, and the TTC Headquarters. We will continue to pursue and seek out other development and investment opportunities.

27. Celebrate the opening of new major projects.

During 2018, the DIA will help coordinate celebrations to mark the opening and/or ground breaking of several new major downtown projects. These may include:

- 202 The Commons
- 117 N. Cayuga

28. Assist and facilitate additional new downtown development.

The DIA will continue to assist in facilitating additional new downtown development. Possible locations and sites that could be encouraged include, but are not limited to:

- The Piro lot
- The Gateway property
- The Green garage area

29. Coordinate a Visit to a Comparable City

Working with the Chamber of Commerce, the City, and others, we have selected Burlington, VT as a city for a community visit. This visit is tentatively planned for early spring.

30. Facilitate the Downtown Heritage Center project

The DIA will work with the History Center and the County on the development a Downtown Heritage Center that would be a significant destination attraction. Planning for this project is underway and occupancy is expected by the end of 2018.

31. Facilitate the development of a Downtown Conference/Meeting facility

Based on the findings of the Hunden Strategic Partners conference center study, the DIA will work with key stakeholders to facilitate the creation of a project for a Downtown conference/meeting center facility.

32. Pursue a coordinated State grant funding package for downtown

There are several Downtown projects that will need funding assistance. The DIA will work with the City, County, TCAD, Cornell, and others to fashion an omnibus coordinated grant proposal to the State for funding these key projects. This work will occur in the first half of 2018.

33. Work with the City and County on policy to advance housing development

During 2017 the DIA will collaborate with both the City and County on possible new programs and policies that can advance the development of housing in Downtown, the City, and the County. In particular, we will focus on efforts to streamline and simplify the entitlement process, on efforts to stimulate more middle market housing, and on efforts to stimulate more for-sale multi-family housing.

Other Recurring & Ongoing Annual Tasks

34. Nielsen Data Updates (ongoing)

We will purchase 2018 market data to assist the DIA in recruitment and in planning efforts.

35. Participation in New York Urban Council. (ongoing)

The DIA will participate in the New York Urban Council, the statewide organization devoted to providing networking and assistance to downtown organizations and programs across New York State. Gary Ferguson currently serves as the Urban Council's Board Past President.

36. Participation in International Downtown Association. (ongoing)

The DIA will continue its long standing participation in the International Downtown Association, attending the annual conference and using the organization for networking and information sharing.

37. Participation in International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) (ongoing)

The DIA will continue to participate in programs and activities of ICSC, including attendance at the NYC leasing conference in December 2018.

38. Fund for Business Recruitment marketing. (ongoing)

Funds are reserved for specific business recruitment and attraction activities.

39. Fund for Business Recruitment outreach. (ongoing)

Funds are reserved for more generic business outreach activities in the community.

DOWNTOWN OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Downtown Operations

Each year the DIA seeks to improve and enhance the Downtown environment by providing supplemental assistance and support that positively affects Downtown operations and infrastructure. The goal of this work is to create a more attractive, livable, and workable environment for the people who patronize, work, visit, and reside downtown. The DIA also works to ensure that public policy aligns with the needs and opportunities of a fully functional and enhanced Downtown environment.

This work is overseen and monitored by the Downtown Operations Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member Nicole Pagano and staffed by the DIA Director of Operations Kris Lewis.

Priority Recommendations

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. Pedestrian Counter Pilot program

Beginning in 2018, the DIA will contract with a national vendor to install and maintain pedestrian counters on the pedestrian mall. This effort will enable the DIA to compile pedestrian traffic data for use in business recruitment and in public policy evaluation. This project will also enable the DIA to better estimate attendance at major Downtown events.

2. Construction mitigation efforts (with BRD & Marketing committees)

During 2018, there will be four major construction projects underway in Downtown: The Tompkins Financial building, the Canopy Hotel, the Harold's Square project, and the City Centre project. The Harold's Square project will protrude into the Commons and will affect the supply of parking available in the Green Garage area. The DIA will work with the Harold's Square developer to create, install, and manage alternative play stations, as well as appropriate signage and fencing beautification. A program to enhance Downtown's image of easy accessibility will be undertaken in conjunction with the BRD and marketing committees.

Core Tasks and Activities

3. Promoting inclusiveness and diversity in downtown

The DIA recognizes that Downtown should be inclusive and diverse in all aspects; a place where all people can feel welcome, safe, and comfortable. In 2016 the DIA joined the Ithaca is Love initiative and promoted the program to downtown businesses. Moving forward, the DIA will explore other ways to encourage and promote inclusiveness and diversity. The Operations Committee will take a lead role in evaluating and monitoring this activity. This work will be undertaken in conjunction with other DIA committees, including the BRD, Special Events, and Marketing committees.

4. Downtown Clean Team Ambassador Program (Grant Funded)

Each year, the DIA receives funding from the Tompkins County Room Tax Program, TCAT, and the City of Ithaca Commons budget to provide supplement cleaning assistance to Downtown. We organize and manage a “clean team” ambassador program that provides year round supplemental support for Downtown streetscape and public way cleaning and beautification. Clean team tasks include litter patrols, planter bed watering and weeding, graffiti removal, and other jobs associated with environmental beautification. The clean team runs at full capacity May through October and reduced staffing the balance of the year. We maintain a clean team supervisor year round and add seasonal workers during the peak May to October months.

5. Downtown Hospitality Ambassador program (Grant Funded)

Each year, the DIA receives funding from the Tompkins County Room Tax program to provide hospitality ambassador services in Downtown. These services supplement and complement the efforts of the Downtown Visitor Center operated by the CVB. In 2017, the hospitality ambassadors were designated to be roving – seeking to assist and help visitors and guests, providing directions and advice and encouraging people to visit the Downtown Visitor Center for more detailed tourism assistance. We will continue with this model in 2018. Services will be provided between May and October.

6. Parking awareness program for businesses

During 2018 the DIA will work with the City Parking Director to educate downtown stakeholders about the parking products and tools available to them. We will also work with business and buildings through the TDM program to help manage the growing short term parking space deficit problem that is affecting downtown. Parking awareness will be done both with communications to stakeholders by the DIA as well as communications by the City and parking staff with existing patrons. Some funds for parking awareness can be accessed from the City’s Commons/parking budget.

7. Downtown Community Outreach Worker program (Grant funded)

The DIA, in partnership with the City and Tompkins County and other community entities, funds and monitors the Downtown Community Outreach Worker Program. This program, managed and administered by Family & Children’s Service Inc., provides a full time person (Tammy Baker) to work 9-5 Monday – Friday providing direct, on-the street outreach service and support to the homeless and to people in-need. In recognition of the success of the program and its need for funding to support continuation, the DIA will increase its 2018 contribution to \$15,000 and will actively participate in the oversight and monitoring of the program. This program will also provide the direct outreach for the DIA’s Pay It Forward Program.

8. Holiday Decorations

The DIA will continue its program of providing Downtown holiday decorations. In 2018, there will be an effort to expand the number of light poles illuminated. The intent is to expand onto Aurora Street. The decorating program includes the Commons and Cayuga Street. Expansions will occur as resources permit and where new light pole infrastructure is able to accommodate decorations. Decorations will be installed in mid/late November and would remain in place until March.

9. Commons Banner Program (Sponsor Funded)

The DIA will continue its seasonal banner program on the Commons, creating and installing new banners 3-4 times a year, including the Art in the Air exhibit/program (see below). Banners will be available for sponsorship.

10. Art in the Air Program

The DIA will host a special community competition called Art in the Air which will serve as an exhibition of community created artistic banners for the Commons. The competition will occur in spring and banner will be installed during the summer. A reception for participating artists will be undertaken in July as part of Gallery Night.

11. Support and participation in Downtown visitor center

The DIA will continue its ongoing support of the Downtown visitor center in conjunction with the Community Arts Partnership and the CVB. In return for its support, the DIA is provided ongoing access to the visitor center for downtown promotions and events, including Downtown Gift Card sales.

Infrastructure

12. Facilitate Federal funding for Cayuga Street area improvements (Grant funded)

The DIA will work with the City to advance a project in Cayuga Street area that will further provide streetscape improvements and enhancements, particularly additional lighting in dim areas (such as the 200 N. Cayuga block). Federal funding secured in 2106 remains available but requires a plan and strategy for expenditure in 2018.

13. Extending and Marketing Valet parking

After piloting a valet parking program in 2017, the DIA will extend this program in 2018 and provide additional marketing to expose both merchants and consumers to its availability.

14. Green garage rebuild monitoring

During 2018 a decision needs to be rendered on the rebuilding of the Green Garage, whether that be a private or a public route. In either case, the DIA will work with the City to sequence and phase the work and come up with approaches to mitigate the impact of the rebuilding on Downtown. We will also carefully review and monitor any agreements with a private developer to ensure that public parking terms and conditions will be appropriate to the needs of Downtown.

Public Policy

15. Seek to implement findings from the “entrances to downtown analysis”

The Operations Committee will work with DIA and City staff to conduct an audit of the entrances to Downtown, including the Commons entrances and garage entrances. Such an audit will detail the challenges and opportunities for improving these key community spaces. Thereafter, the DIA will prepare a finding report that will be shared with community leaders and used to help marshal resources required to make improvements.

16. Community Discussion regarding downtown development incentives

The DIA will take a leadership role in convening a workshop on incentives for downtown development (particularly the CIITAP program).

17. City/DIA MOU monitoring

The City and the DIA share a memorandum of understanding that spell out the base line services provided by the municipality and also summarizes the various roles and responsibilities of both the City and the DIA in Downtown. The DIA, through the Operations Committee, will periodically (at least annually) review this MOU and assess the ability of both the City and DIA in meeting their obligations.

18. IPD liaison and quarterly meetings

It is important for the DIA and the Ithaca Police Department (IPD) to maintain close and regular lines of communication. To that end, there will be quarterly meetings between the Operations Committee and the IPD representatives. One of these sessions should be a larger meeting open to the general downtown stakeholder population to meet with IPD leadership.

19. Two Housing workshops

The DIA will take a leadership role in convening two workshops/sessions on key downtown housing issues (one on the production of condominium housing and one addressing the issue of building middle market housing).

20. Role of Parking in Downtown (with the Transportation Committee)

The DIA will regularly participate in the City parking advisory committee and will independently monitor the role and impact of parking policy on Downtown. DIA staff will work regularly with City staff to review parking performance and assess options and opportunities for improved parking operations and management.

Other Environmental Enhancements

21. Pay it Forward grant and program promotion (Grant funded)

The Pay It Forward program launched in 2017 will continue in 2018. We will add additional participating businesses (we have a goal of 6 total businesses) and will unroll a marketing program to accompany to initiative. The Operations Committee will oversee and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this program.

22. Nighttime Economy

Emerging from the 2017 field visit to late night downtown, we have identified two initiatives for 2018 that are intended to improve and enhance the nighttime economy. We will undertake a late night

business training program that will address issues of safety and sexual harassment. We will also work with Uber/Lyft and area taxi companies on late night issues pertaining to availability and pricing. We will look to engage key board members and community members who are actively engaged in the late night economy in this process.

23. Begin a multi-year banner expansion program for areas beyond the Commons

Beginning in 2018, the DIA will start a phased expansion of its light pole banner program, taking advantage of new pedestrian scale light poles that can readily accommodate banners. In 2018, we will select about 10-12 poles for attention, and look to add incrementally to the banner inventory in subsequent years. The program can be accelerated if sponsorships can be obtained.

24. Mural art program

The DIA will look to add one new mural in 2018, by soliciting interest from property owners with locations for highly visible mural art. The DIA Operations Committee will select a preferred location and funds from the DIA budget used to help underwrite the cost of the art.

25. Commons interactive kiosks (Grant funded)

The DIA will work with the City to manage the Commons interactive kiosks, utilizing funds reserved for kiosk management. Both the City and DIA will explore options for improving the performance of the kiosks.

26. Pedestrian Signage

Funds have been set aside to provide additional pedestrian level signage and possible parking signage to assist with the flow of foot traffic between downtown destinations and to aid with parking garage issues.

27. Lighting for trees/pavilion on the Commons

Funds have been set aside to add year round lighting to the Bernie Milton pavilion, entrance arches, and possibly trees on the Commons.

MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Marketing & Member Services

A key goal of the DIA is to position and market Downtown Ithaca as a place to shop, dine, visit, and partake in entertainment offerings. It is also a place to market for people live and work. The DIA will undertake a program to accomplish this goal. Likewise, the DIA is charged with communicating with the various stakeholders of Downtown. The organization will plan and implement effective communications strategies that both reach Downtown stakeholders and the consumers/users of the business improvement district.

This work is overseen and monitored by the Downtown Marketing Oversight Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member Joseph Gaylord and staffed by the DIA Director of Marketing Allison Graffin.

Priority Recommendations

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Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. Formal Faces of Downtown social media marketing campaign

Downtown is distinguished by its diverse and eclectic collection of business owners and managers. These are your neighbors, the people you sit next to at church or PTA. Beginning in 2018, the DIA will launch a campaign to put a face onto downtown- the faces of our businesses. The campaign will be primarily on social media with limited poster and print support.

2. Webinars for merchants on business issues

Based on feedback from the Downtown merchant survey, we will be conducting four quarterly webinar style workshops for merchants during 2018 on key business topics. Workshops will be available for live audience but will be recorded for webinar style retrieval so that businesses can access them at any time. The recorded sessions will reside on the new DIA web site and links will be distributed via flyers and email notices. Possible topics are: using Google effectively; dealing with poor on-line reviews; window displays; and effective use of Facebook and other social media for retail businesses.

3. Gallery Night/First Friday Growth (grant funded)

While Gallery Night has been a long standing program of the DIA, we will use 2018 to ramp this event/program up to a new level of excitement and energy. We will seek corporate sponsorship for

Gallery Night and use the proceeds to increase both programming and visibility. Our goals will be to attract a more diverse and younger audience, to accent art and art buying, and to make first Fridays part of the community's "must do" vocabulary.

Marketing to Key Segments

4. Seniors: Working with others to engage senior citizens

In 2017, the DIA hosted a number of "Day Out Downtown" events for seniors. Attendance started strong but waned during the year. Other entities also began offering similar services. For 2018, we will continue to address senior citizens as a key market segment, but change our approach. We will host 1-2 event days for seniors organized by the DIA, but then rely on other organizations such as Lifelong to host activities and events that will draw people to Downtown. The DIA will work with Lifelong and Love Living at Home to provide them with Downtown content for their activities and events.

5. Students: CU & IC Student Weekend—Adding TC3

The success of our 2016 and 2017 student weekends has spurred us to continue this activity in 2018. In addition to a day for Cornell students, we will seek to expand the IC day and integrate TC3 into the IC day. These days are intended to be welcoming orientations to the community and Downtown for new students, providing them with an opportunity to learn how to navigate Downtown and how to access Downtown via TCAT. Key partners for these weekends will be TCAT, CU, IC, and TC3.

6. Students: Participation in the IC Summer Student Orientation

We will continue our tradition of participating in the six-week summer orientation program for new student organized on campus by Ithaca College, representing Downtown to both students and parents.

7. Conference Attendees: Working with Community Conferences (min of 6)

DIA staff will work with at least six (6) different conferences during 2018 to encourage attendees to visit and patronize downtown. We will work with Cornell, Ithaca College, and CVB staff to help fulfill this task.

8. Visitors: Working with non-downtown festivals or events (grant funded)

Utilizing our contract with the County STPB, we will work with at least six (6) non-downtown events or festivals to help attendees become more acquainted with downtown shopping, dining, and entertainment.

9. Visitors: Revise and Continue quarterly seasonal guides (Revenue Generating)

Each quarter DIA staff will produce seasonal visitor guides that highlight downtown attractions and offerings and provide a directory of downtown businesses. These guides will be supported by paid advertising. In 2017 we will seek to grow the advertising base.

10. Employee Appreciation week

In August, the DIA will host a multi-day downtown employee/office worker appreciation promotion. This event is designed to recognize downtown workers and educate them about the shopping, dining, and

entertainment opportunities to be found in downtown. We will consolidate from previous years- striving for 3 full days, rather than a week. We will seek a sponsor(s) to enable us to expand free offerings to employees. This event is also used as a venue to market employee discount cards (see below).

28. Cross promotions with attractions

29. Social media

Communications

11. New web site- launch, promotion, and tweaking

During 2017 the DIA worked with Ancient Wisdom Productions (AWP) to re-build the Downtown Ithaca web site. Funding support for this work came from the TC Room Tax Fund. For 2018, we will continue with promoting the launch of the site and work through the year on numerous tweaks and revisions to make the site as friendly and navigable as possible.

12. Launch a monthly meeting notices to all members (ongoing)

Each month, we will launch a monthly communication piece that outlines upcoming Board and committee meetings.

13. Manage a regular downtown blog

The DIA staff will maintain and populate a regular downtown blog, providing information and perspective on downtown to readers and the local community.

14. Quarterly e-newsletter with limited printed copies

Each quarter we will produce a newsletter summarizing pertinent downtown and DIA interested stakeholders. Limited paper copies will be available.

15. Consumer weekly e-news

Each week the DIA will produce a consumer oriented e-news bulletin that highlights downtown activities, events, and promotions. The e-news list currently has over 10,000 subscribers. Our goal in 2018 will be to grow subscribers to at least 10%.

16. Quarterly Merchant and business newsletter

Each quarter we will also produce a newsletter targeted specifically to downtown businesses that will feature key information relevant to downtown retailers.

17. Archived communication materials on web site – (ongoing)

In 2018, the DIA will update its on-line archives of Board agendas, minutes, financial reports, along with other notable press releases, reports, and other downtown relevant documents on the DIA web site.

18. Face Book management and updating

The DIA will continue its strong Face Book presence, providing regular Face Book updates and entries to encourage our 10,000+ viewers to stay connected. Our 2018 goal will be to grow our Facebook viewers to at least 10%.

19. Social media management

The DIA routinely uses YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat as additional tools for communication and marketing. We will continue this effort in 2018, with a special focus in enhancing Instagram and expanding our use of Snapchat to students. Social media has proven to be a cost effective, high targeted, and effective tool for communicating messages and events.

20. Database (ongoing)

The DIA staff will continue to refine and update its “Insightly” database and CRM system of businesses and buildings, to make it a more useful tool for the communications, research, and technical assistance.

21. Systematic public relations/press release program

Our half time in-house communications manager will prepare and then implement public relations/press release plan for 2018. This plan will be completed in early January and will serve as a blueprint for the entire year. We will prepare at least 24 press releases over the course of the year.

22. Ribbon cuttings and project celebrations (ongoing)

The DIA will work with the City, the Chamber and TCAD on ribbon cuttings, grand openings, and special project recognitions/celebrations.

Marketing Assistance for Retailers

23. Summer sale

The traditional summer sale promotion will be undertaken and promoted.

24. Downtown Fashion Days

To highlight our apparel/fashion businesses, the DIA will organize and promote a Downtown Fashion Days promotion in April. In 2018, we look to make this a multi-day promotion and include a fashion show as part of this initiative.

25. Downtown Networking events

The DIA will partner with Downtown businesses to host 4 quarterly networking events. These events will be held at Downtown business venues. Two will have business themes—working with community

attractions on cross promotions and social media assistance. We will use tabling to enable folks deliver information and advice to attendees. The other two networking dates will be strictly social.

26. Continue Electronic Gift Card program (Contractual)

The DIA will continue its electronic gift card program, utilizing the services of Store Financial for support and tracking.

27. Annual marketing plan

The DIA Director of Marketing will prepare an annual marketing plan in January 2018 that outlines the advertising and marketing strategy for the organization during the calendar year. The plan will be vetted and reviewed by the Marketing Oversight Committee.

28. Downtown Hours Initiative

The DIA will work with downtown merchants and restaurants to agree on and promote standard seasonal hours of operation, including evening hours. This effort will be led by the Marketing Oversight Committee.

29. Marketing Downtown Parking

Parking remains one of downtown's most discussed issues and one that receives considerable negative public comment. Working with the City Parking Director, the DIA will continue to assist in marketing the benefits of downtown parking to the community. This will include marketing the parking validation program, the shopper zones, and the Cayuga Garage.

30. Bite of Ithaca (Grant funded)

The DIA will organize and promote Bite of Ithaca, a summer promotion dedicated to highlighting and showcasing the restaurants of Ithaca. In 2018, we will look to enhance the promotion with possible food related activities.

31. Co-Produce and Promote Winter Recess

Partnering with the CVB and the Chamber, the DIA will continue the Winter Recess teacher recognition and marketing promotion undertaken each February.

32. Implement an ongoing seasonal advertising program

Through the year, the DIA marketing staff will create and manage a seasonal advertising program utilizing electronic, print, and social media as appropriate.

33. Employee discount card program

The DIA will continue the downtown employee discount program, distributing new cards during the office worker appreciation week. Our goal is to distribute at least 1,500 cards.

34. Annual meeting (ongoing)

During the month of April, the DIA will host the annual business meeting of the organization.

35. Annual dinner/awards (ongoing)

In February the DIA will organize and host an annual dinner and awards event for downtown stakeholders and interested community people.

36. Support for Downtown Visitor Center (ongoing)

The DIA will continue to work with the CVB and CAP to help support the downtown visitor center located in Center Ithaca on the Commons through the end of 2018. The DIA will utilize space in the center to promote parking tokens, gift cards, and other DIA programs.

SPECIAL EVENTS

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Special Events

For many people Downtown is associated with its special events. The DIA undertakes an annual special events program that is designed to attract people to Downtown. The goal of these events is to provide a fun, pleasant, and memorable experience in Downtown that will cause people to return. Events are targeted to both local residents and visitors. They tend to large, making use of the excellent venues and facilities available for special events in Downtown. Special events can also bolster the bottom lines of businesses and the DIA works to ensure that its events maximize opportunities for downtown businesses, to the greatest extent possible. The DIA is seen as a leader in event planning and manages the Tompkins County Festivals Program.

This work is overseen and monitored by the Downtown Special Events Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member Joseph Wetmore and staffed by the DIA Director of Special Events (TBD).

Priority Recommendations

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. Engaging downtown businesses into events

Our retail strategy calls for the DIA to examine our special events and investigate opportunities for engaging downtown businesses in more direct ways. In 2018, we will be preparing information for businesses on how to best utilize events. We will also audit our programs in conjunction with the Special Events Committee to determine ways to better integrate businesses into Downtown events.

2. Hiring a new special events director

In early 2018 we will conclude a national search for a new special events director. Early 2018 will be used to bring the new up to speed and integrate them into the DIA team and community.

3. Boosting Sponsorships

In 2018, we will expand our sponsorship offerings for Downtown special events and promotions. Special effort will be placed in recruiting additional sponsors in an effort to grow our special and promotions (sponsorships include marketing activities as well as special events). Opportunities for sponsorship in 2018 will include:

- Gallery Night
- Ice Fest/Chowder Fest
- Employee Appreciation Days
- Halloween

Generic Event Tasks

4. Administer the Tompkins County Festivals Program (Grant funded)

DIA staff will continue its contract work with the County STPB program to oversee and administer the Room Tax Festivals program, providing technical assistance, workshops, web site and handbook updates, and other support. The program also maintains and manages a lending library of event equipment, that is also used for DIA events. Room tax funds provide the resources to hire the DIA special event coordinator position.

5. Festival technical assistance for the City

The DIA will provide technical support to the City Clerk's office and to applicants for downtown event permits. The DIA Special Events Director also sits and participates on the City's Special Event Interdepartmental Review Committee.

Smaller Events

6. Halloween

The DIA will manage and organize Downtown community Halloween activities and treat-or-treating for area children. This will be undertaken in conjunction with GIAC.

7. Assist with Wizarding Weekend

The DIA will provide assistance and support to the growing Wizarding Weekend event that is organized by Press Bay Alley. In 2018 we plan to allocate staff time, but no funding to the event.

8. Assist with Tompkins County Agriculture Downtown (Ag Day) Event

The DIA will work with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) on a Downtown "Ag Day" event. CCE will provide the content and the DIA will assist with logistics.

Larger Events

9. Chili Cook-Off (Rev. Generating)

The DIA will continue its annual Chili Cook-Off Festival during February.

10. Ithaca Festival Craft Fair (Rev. Generating)

The DIA will continue to work with the Ithaca Festival organization on logistics for the downtown portion of the Festival. We will also oversee the craft fair portion of the festival, according to the MOU with the Ithaca Festival organization.

11. Summer concerts (sponsor funded)

During 2018 the DIA will continue its annual summer concert series, utilizing the Bernie Milton pavilion on the Commons. The DIA will continue its successful beer and wine sales during these concerts. If feasible, one national level concert will be included in the line-up.

12. Apple Harvest Festival (Rev. Generating)

The annual Apple Harvest Festival will continue in 2018.

13. Chowder Fest (Rev. Generating)

In December, the DIA will organize and host the Chowder Cook-Off event as part of its annual holiday package of activities.

14. Winter Festival/Holiday events (Grant funded)

We will host a holiday winter festival package that includes the national ice carving competition, as well as Santa's arrival and other holiday/seasonal activities and promotions. This package will be re-evaluated in 1st quarter 2018 and modified plans set thereafter.

TRANSPORTATION, PARKING & MOBILITY

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Transportation

Transportation has become a crucial part of the Downtown landscape. The DIA is particularly interested in three key aspects of transportation: parking infrastructure and management; transportation demand management; and transportation connections between Downtown and other key centers of commerce and activity.

This work is overseen and monitored by the Downtown Transportation Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member Fred Scheops and staffed by the DIA Director of Operations Kris Lewis.

Priority Recommendations

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. NYSERDA grant administration (Grant funded)

The DIA will administer the NYSERDA TDM/TMA grant in 2018. This will include managing the TDM plan program funded by the grant. Among the activities to be completed will be development of a mobile app for TDM, conducting outreach to businesses, buildings, and individuals, and preparing TDM plans. The DIA will work with partners, including but not limited to TCAT, Way to Go, Car Share, the City, the County, and Cornell University.

2. TMA development (grant funded)

One key component of the NYSERDA pilot project is the creation of an ongoing Transportation Management Association or TMA. This would be the entity that would continue beyond the grant period to provide TDM services to the Downtown community. During 2018 we will be researching options for structuring and funding such an entity.

3. Work with major new projects

The DIA will work closely with the City and new Downtown projects on devising and implementing TDM plans that will reduce their reliance on parking and automobiles.

Ongoing Activities

4. Emergency Ride Home

Part of the TDM program will include the creation of a downtown Ithaca emergency ride home program designed to reduce patron anxiety about using alternative transportation. This program was first conceived in 2016 and we will work to see it implemented in 2018 with the support of TCAT, Ithaca Carshare, and other transportation partners.

5. Remote Parking Program

Another tool that has been under development is a remote parking program for use by downtown residents. We are working with Cornell and others on a pilot program that we look to launch in 2018.

6. Work with TCAT and other stakeholders on transit corridor planning.

The DIA will continue to work with the City of Ithaca, TCAT, Tompkins County, IC, and Cornell on ongoing efforts to create transit corridors between downtown and South Hill, East Hill, and the Waterfront.

7. Finalize a Future of Downtown Mobility white paper

The DIA will complete a document that provides both analysis and recommendations to the City on the future of Downtown mobility—parking and transportation demand management (TDM). We will use the paper to help with promotion of new initiatives and/or policies.

8. Increase the Number of Downtown Bike Racks (Grant funded)

Working with the County and City and utilizing a grant received from a local foundation, we will assist in a program to increase the number of decorative bike racks in downtown in 2018.

ORGANIZATION GOVERNANCE

2018 Work Plan

November 17, 2017

The DIA and Organization Governance

The DIA is an organization comprised of stakeholders representing all aspects of the Downtown district. Like other nonprofits, the organization is governed by a Board of Directors elected from the Bid membership. Nurturing and fully utilizing this Board is a prerequisite for a successful and viable organization.

This work is overseen and monitored by the DIA Executive Committee. This committee is currently chaired by Board member Steve Headrick and staffed by the DIA Executive Director Gary Ferguson.

Priority Recommendations

Each task in the work plan has been ranked by the DIA Board of Directors on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest. The compiled mean rankings are listed and will be used by staff when issues of resource allocation arise. Every effort will be made to fulfill the highest ranked tasks. Lower ranked tasks would be the first to be postponed.

Work Tasks for 2018

New for 2018

1. Begin Planning for the 2030 Downtown Strategic Plan

One of the key initiatives of the DIA is to prepare and utilize Downtown Strategic Plans. In 2018, work will begin on the 2030 Downtown Strategic Plan. The early work will consist of planning for the year-long exercise. An ad hoc committee will work with the Executive Director to create an approach to the strategic planning process.

2. Hold a Board Retreat with Invited Resource People Regarding a 2030 Plan

During 2018, a special board retreat will be held to kick-off the strategic planning process. We will begin to frame the broad issues and opportunities that will be examined during the plan outreach and preparation process. The retreat will include invited community resource people who can add to and help shape this conversation.

3. Evaluate DIA Office Space Alternatives

During early 2018 we will convene an ad hoc committee of board and staff to research and investigate options for future DIA office space.

Ongoing

4. Report quarterly evaluation metrics.

Create and periodically report ongoing evaluation metrics for the organization in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

5. Institute annual evaluations of programs and activities. (ongoing)

A schedule for program evaluation will be prepared in January of each year. The Board of Directors will receive presentations/reports on key programs and activities throughout the year and each program should receive regular Board evaluation and assessment. This schedule would be set by the Executive Committee.

6. Organize a board meeting education program. (ongoing)

Each December the Executive Director will propose a roster of board education programs for the coming year, based on feedback and input from the Board.