



ALPENA DOWNTOWN Development Authority

Strategic Plan

Prepared by POW! Strategies, Inc.

2024



STRATEGIC PLAN BEST PRACTICES

A good strategic plan starts with knowing your community's vision and your organization's role in helping to achieve it.

Next:

- Assess your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and key assets; as well as the four forces of value.
- Evaluate what's completed and still on the docket.
- **Prioritize – Prioritize – Prioritize**
- Establish metrics and timelines

A strategic plan is generally good for three (3) – five (5) years.



MISSION

CURRENT: ***To promote positive economic, physical and aesthetic changes in Downtown Alpena.***

NEW:
Short - ***Building a vibrant Downtown Alpena for all.***

Long - ***The Alpena DDA cultivates economic vitality in Downtown Alpena by bringing people together to create a thriving community for businesses, residents, property owners and visitors.***



CORE VALUES

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORE VALUES

- Defines Culture & Identity
- Sets Expectations
- Guides Behavior
- Helps Decision-Making
- Key in Developing the Vision

Use these core values to evaluate future needs, goals, deliverables and decision-making. Any action, project or program should have a minimum of one of these core values.

ALPENA DDA CORE VALUES

Ask yourself, “Is this project, program, action _____”



VISIONARY/ FORWARD
THINKING/
PROGRESSIVE



POSITIVE IMPACT



INVITING/
WELCOMING



RESULTS-ORIENTED



LOCAL



ACCESS TO
NATURE/ WATER

VISION PILLARS



VISION

Downtown Alpena: a year-round cultural destination in Northern Michigan, blending historic charm with authenticity and unique waterfront experiences.



**ALPENA
DOWNTOWN**
Development Authority



DDA ROLE

- Improve the quality of life
- Create a sense of place
- Attract and retain residents, businesses and talent
- Spur private reinvestment
- Increase property value in and around the area

The Work a DDA Does or Can Do

- Infrastructure improvements to streets, sidewalks, lighting, sewer and water
- Design of public gathering places and parks
- Revitalization of vacant and underutilized properties
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings, assets and facades
- Mixed-use and middle-housing infill developments
- Business recruitment and retention programs
- Safety, security and maintenance programs
- Marketing, special events and promotions



ROLE IN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT



- Identify Locations
- Target What You Need



- Bring Tools & Resources
- Remove Barriers



- Build Partnerships
- Connect With & Bring In Developers
- Support Other Organizations
- Serve on Housing Task Force



SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Key Assets
Location Near Water	Insufficient Population & Visitors	Riverfront Revitalizations	Aging & Declining Population	NOAA/Shipwreck Tours
Natural Resource/Recreational Assets	Lack of Housing	Influence on Vacant or Abandoned Properties	Fear of Growth	Dining
City/DDA Relationship	Enough Staff	Marina	Stagnant Local Incomes/Job Loss	Downtown Housing
Willingness to Grow/Supportive	Lack of Maximizing Key Assets	Attract Strong Retailers	Shortsightedness	Water (Lake Huron-Thunder Bay-Riverfront-Marina)
Proactive People (businesses/stakeholders)	DDA/Organization Vs. Everybody	Leverage State Funding	Vacant Spaces	Quality of Life - Where Vacationers Go & We Live
Organization	Lack of Anchors		Major Employer Exited/Site Cost Prohibitive	Art/Murals
				Historic Buildings

Listed above is the primary SWOT analysis voted by the DDA Board. For a full list, please refer to the notes in attachments.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Physical	Economic	Social	Organizational
Marina Development	Mixed-Use Development	More activities for younger demographics	Pool Organization Resources
Blight/Vacant Properties	Grow Entrepreneurial Pool	Welcoming to diverse community	Volunteer #s Needed
Street Trees	Marina Development	More events during slower months	Diversified Funding
Chisholm St. Walkability	Finished Projects	Events that put Alpena on the map	Board Training
Snow/Ice Removal	Greater Variety of Businesses	Business to Business Communications	Additional Help for Staff
Trash Cans	Full Storefronts	Include social events in new district area	
Walkability in heart of downtown	Industry/Office/Higher Paying Jobs	Eliminate/Reduce "Old Boys Club"	
Façade Improvements	Moderate/High Level Housing	Promotion of Social District	

Listed above is the primary needs assessment voted by the DDA Board. For a full list, please refer to the notes in attachments.
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NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Top Goals	Chisholm Street	Businesses Desired	More Of/Less Of
Revitalize Expanded Areas	Walkability/Bike Friendly	Restaurants (quality, elevated, variety, craft)	Collaborations
Walkability/Intersections	Blight Enforcement	Co-Working Space	Recruit Businesses/Prospect Other Markets
Housing	Revitalize North Side	Boutique Hotel	Façade Improvements
Riverfront	Aesthetics (Plantings)	Office/Tech	Delegation
Beautification	Signage/Welcome Sign	Distillery	Volunteers/Event Team
Fill Storefronts		Specialty Food/Grocery	Conduct Events Analysis/Not the Sole Source Event Producer
Large Scale Festival			Less Free Events
Trash Cans/Recycling			

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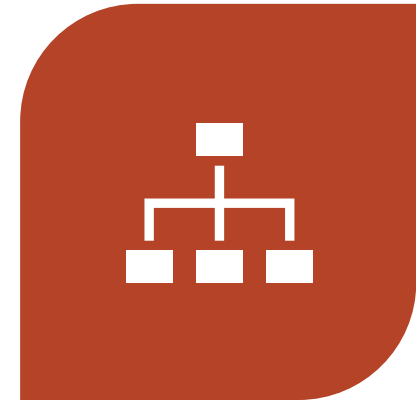
KEY STRATEGIES



ACTIVATE ASSETS



GROW LOCAL



**CULTIVATE
ORGANIZATION**



ACTIVATE ASSETS



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Build & Leverage Waterfront Connections



Promote Assets that Set Alpena Apart



Improve Walkability



Increase Visual Appeal



ACTIVATE ASSETS



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Build & Leverage Waterfront Connections

- Capital Improvements to Marina and Riverfront
- Recruit Businesses that Build Water Connectivity
- Waterfront Living
- Incorporate Water-centric Events



Promote Assets that Set Alpena Apart

- Collect Visitor Data
- Create Communications, Marketing & Brand Strategy
- Implement Seasonal Marketing Campaigns
- Promotional Storytelling/Message: “Life is a Vacation. All the amenities, without the headaches/congestion”, ie: Social District, History, Art, Dining/Unique Purveyors, Sites, Recreation, Shipwreck Tours, Waterfront View & Access
- Conduct Event Analysis, and Explore New Events/Promotions or Modifications to Existing that play off of the above themes/amenities seasonally



ACTIVATE ASSETS



Improve Walkability

Establish a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Following:

- Marina Development
- Downtown Walkability & Intersections
- Connect Expansion Areas (walking and biking)
- Trash Cans/Recycling
- Develop and Implement Tree Plan
- Riverfront Development
- Chisholm Street and North Side Beautification – plants and blight enforcement
- Wayfinding Signage (gateway, vehicular and pedestrian to and from waterfront and expanded areas)
- Snow & Ice Removal Plan



Increase Visual Appeal

- Façade Improvements
- Promote & Educate on Historic Preservation Benefits
- Develop Downtown Design Guidelines for an Overlay District or Form-Based Code



CIP PRIORITIES



When establishing a Capital Improvement Plan, include a projected timeframe, estimated budget, priority level and rationale aligning with core values.

Don't ignore low-hanging fruit!
Medium-to-low priority actions that could produce quick results. It is always good to have small things happening while working on the big picture.

1

First Priorities & Short-Term Opps

- Marina Development
- Downtown & Chisholm St. Walkability & Intersections
- Connect Expansion Areas (walking and biking)
- Trash Cans/Recycling
- Develop and Implement Tree Plan

2

Next Priorities & Long-Term Gains

- Wayfinding/Gateways
- Chisholm Street and North Side Beautification – plants and blight enforcement
- Riverfront Development
- Snow & Ice Removal Plan



ACTIVATE ASSETS



- A communications and marketing strategy will help define your audiences, key issues/needs, messaging and ways to reach them. It should also identify metrics of success and time for re-evaluation.
 - A Volunteer Outreach & Recruitment Plan should be part of your communications strategy.
- In conjunction, a refined brand strategy will help to align your voice for messaging, stories, position statement, personality, and style and imagery guidelines.



ACTIVATE ASSETS



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Metrics of Success

- Riverfront and Marina Activation Completed
- # of New Niche Businesses that Connect to Water Life/Activity
- # of New Housing Units along/near Waterfront Downtown
- Marketing & Brand Strategy Completed
- Increase in Tourism & Regional Consumers
- Increase in Off-season Visitorship
- # of Historic Preservation Projects
- # of Attendees at Historic Preservation Educational Sessions
- Downtown Design Guidelines/Overlay District/ Form-Based Code
- CIP & Completed Projects



HISTORIC PRESERVATION NEXT STEPS



Marketing and Education on Tax Credits



Façade Program

Zoning/Design Standards (Resources Needed/Samples)



MORE TREES PLEASE!



STEP 1: Create an Inventory of Needs

Consult a Landscape Architect & Conduct
a Tree Canopy Analysis



STEP 2: Identify the Right Type & Right Size

Consult a landscape architect, arborist,
DNR



TREE RESOURCES

VIBRANT CITIES LAB

RESEARCH, CASE STUDIES, GUIDES URBAN FORESTRY TOOLKIT RESOURCES LOGIN

U.S. Forest Service American Forests

Urban Forestry Toolkit

The U.S. Forest Service Step-by-Step Guide to Implementing Urban Forestry in Your Community

Assess | Prioritize | Organize | Plan | Build | Protect | Sustain

Tree Planting Guide

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/forestry/urban/recommended-trees>

Urban Forestry Toolkit

www.vibrantcitieslab.com/tookit

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/buy-and-apply/grants/forestry>

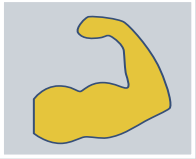
- Community Forestry Grants – Up to \$10-\$50,000
Applications Due October (typically – 2024 not posted yet)
For tree inventories, management plans, planting, workshops, training materials & Arbor Day activities
- DTE Energy Tree Planting Grant - Up to \$4,000
Applications Due August (annually)



GROW LOCAL



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Mixed-Use & Housing Development



Diverse Retail Attraction



Talent Attraction



GROW LOCAL



Mixed-Use & Housing Development

- Work with Housing Study Committee to Conduct Housing Study & Define Needs
- Identify & Prioritize Mixed-Use Development Sites
- Create Market Profile, Build Online Presence & Target Developers
- Build Strong Relationship with Existing Developers to Speed Up Development Pipeline



Diverse Retail Attraction

- Refine market analysis and develop a recruitment strategy
- Identify key sites/vacancies for potential anchors and entrepreneurial niches
- Actively Recruit Businesses
- Start an Entrepreneur Network & Business Assistance Program
- Prioritize incentives to existing buildings and entrepreneurs to meet market demand and visual/repair needs



Talent Attraction

- Activities for Next Gen
- Support Co-Working Space/Office/Tech
- Recruit Natural Resource Type Offices/Industry



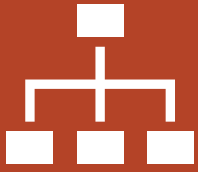
GROW LOCAL



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Metrics of Success

- Housing Study Completed
- Market Analysis & Recruitment Strategy Completed
- # of New Housing Units
- # and Square Footage of New Mixed-Use Developments
- Vacancy Reduction
- # of Key Target Businesses Recruited
- 1 New Board Member from Mixed-Use Development Pipeline



CULTIVATE ORGANIZATION



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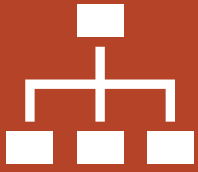
Activate Collaborations with Key Partners to Grow Pool of Volunteers and Resources



Build Capacity



Grow DDA Business Engagement



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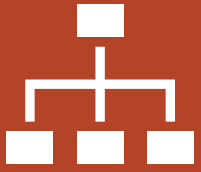
Activate Collaborations with Key Partners to Grow Pool of Volunteers and Resources

- Establish a Collaborative Task Force to identify partnerships
- Assess and define volunteer needs
- Develop and implement a volunteer outreach and management plan



Build Capacity

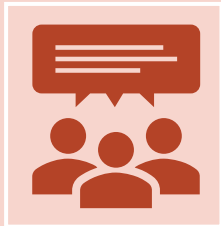
- Align staffing and resource needs with strategic plan
- Diversify funding
- Assess Board and committee needs, including trainings, toolkits and people
- Evaluate annual event schedule to align with market audience, strategy and staff capacity



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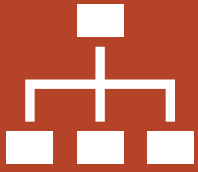


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Grow DDA Business Engagement

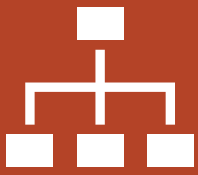
- Establish a Business Outreach Plan
- Educate on DDA resources and downtown strategy (PA57 info meeting opportunity)



CULTIVATE ORGANIZATION



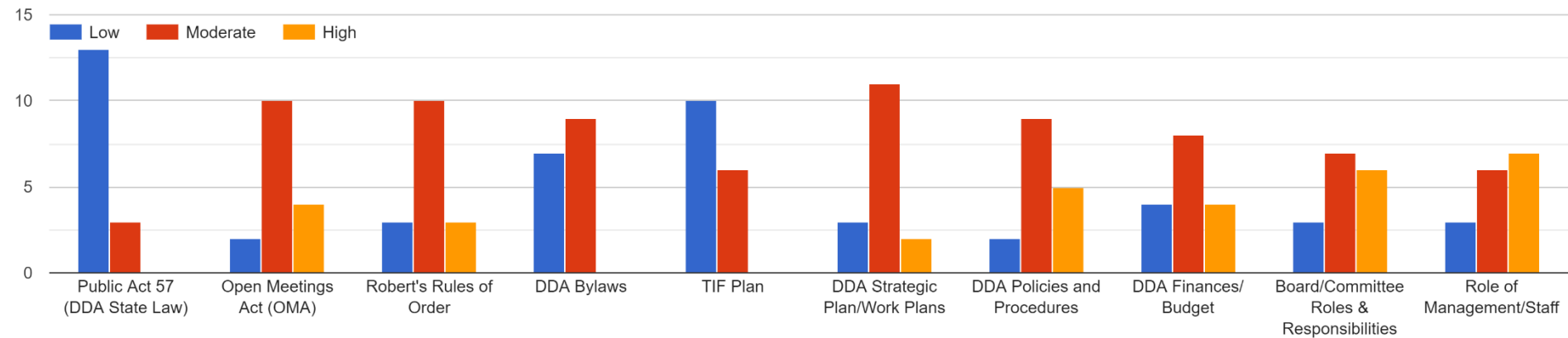
- Look at skills, interests and diverse representation when assessing Board and committee needs.
 - Current Needs:
 - Property Owners with Significant % of Downtown Properties
 - Wealth
 - Legal/Public Policy
 - Technology
 - Grant Writing
- Arm volunteers with resources to understand their role, expectations and needs.



BOARD TRAINING & EDUCATIONAL OPPS

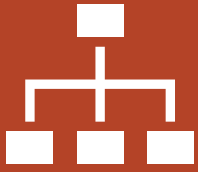


FOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS ONLY: Please rank your level of proficiency, familiarity or comfort with the following topics?



Top Areas of Additional Training/Resources:

- Public Act 57
- DDA Bylaws
- TIF Plan



KEY PARTNERS

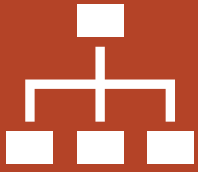


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Below is a list of potential key partners to collaborate with on multiple levels. The DDA should take time to discuss any other partnerships that will help across all aspects of the organization and strategic plan.

Target Alpena
City of Alpena
Thunder Bay Arts
Sunset Project
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Huron Pines
Alpena CVB
Alpena Area Chamber

Others to Engage:
Financial Institutions
Medical Community/Institutions
Neighborhood Associations/Groups
Religious/Community Organizations
Student Council
Public Schools

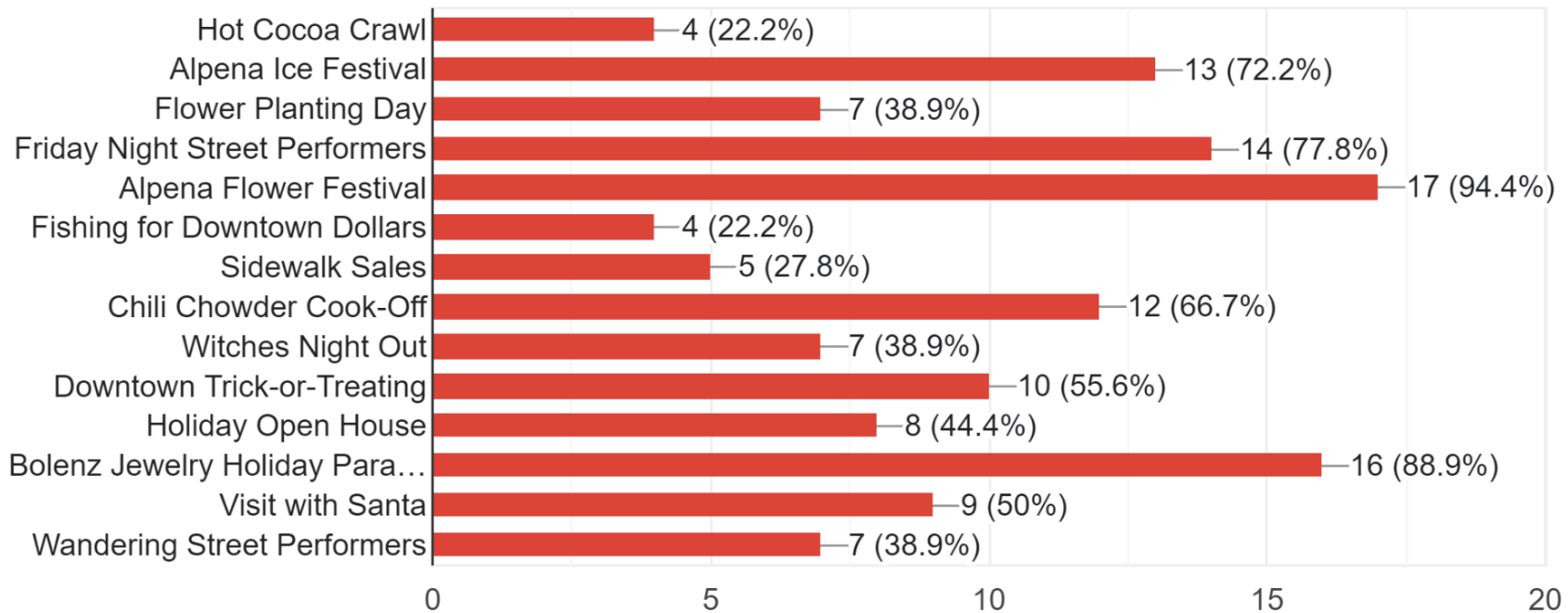


EVENT ASSESSMENT



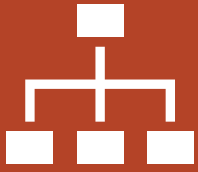
What events hosted by the DDA do you feel are the most important to the community? Select all that apply.

18 responses



Events and promotions should have one of the following purposes:

- Build community awareness/brand recognition
- Ring registers
- Community goodwill and engagement



EVENT ASSESSMENT



- Define the Goal of the Event
(Signature, Community/Goodwill, Retail Sales or Educational)
- Target Audience
- Vision, Mission & Core Value Alignment
- Set Goals & Track Metrics
 - Calculate Expense and Income
Actuals/Ratio
 - Track Social Media Reach/
Engagement
 - News Media/Organic Reach
 - Track Advertising Spend and Impact
 - Business Participation
 - Business Impact/Sales
 - Attendance
 - Local vs. Visitor Attendance %
 - SWOT
 - Community Impressions/
Economic Impacts



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Metrics of Success

- # of New Volunteers
- Staffing Analysis & Fulfillment
- Fund Development Strategy
- Board Trainings & Manuals
- More Working Committee Members
- Event Analysis
- # of Business Outreach Attempts
- # of Businesses Engaged in Programs/Projects/Discussions



NEXT STEPS

- Refer to the attached strategic action plan worksheet to plan, track and monitor your achievements.
- Refine:
 - Timelines
 - Metrics of success
 - Responsible parties (individuals, committees)
 - Resources (partners, funding or tools needed)
- Annually assess the Strategic Plan for the next 3 years at a dedicated meeting.
- Stay focused on the **Key 3 Strategies!**
- POW! Strategies to provide the Alpena DDA with final Strategic Plan, including a trackable “Action Plan” spreadsheet, CIP sample plan, event assessment tool, and design guidelines/ordinance samples.



ACTION PLAN SAMPLE



Goal	Objective	Activity/ Task	Start Date	Deadline/ Timeline	Assigned To	Volunteers Needed	Budget	Completed	Metrics	Core Values
Business Growth	Increase Retention	Conduct Retention Visits	April	June	Jane Smith	5	\$0			Progressive
		Create a Business Resource Self-Help Guide	February	April	John Doe	2	\$500			Resourceful
		Create a Micro-Loan for Expansions	May	September	Bill Johnson	3	\$25,000			Future Driven
Total						7	\$25,500			



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024



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