



DCBA Board of Directors 2025 Business Planning Session

The DCBA Board of Directors held their 2025 Year Planning Session on Tuesday January 7, 2025. The meeting took place at the Hotel Diamond as part of the Board's first board meeting of the year. Following the regular Board Agenda, the Board convened to reviewing, commenting and adjusting the 2025 Focus Area plans staff had created.

The meeting was facilitated by Audrey Taylor, volunteer. In addition to Board Directors in attendance, Debbie LaPlant Moseley and Lucia Mercado were in attendance.

2025 Annual Planning Session Purpose

This first meeting of the year is dedicated to a Board Planning Session with the following purpose:

1. Confirm Focus Area Work Scopes (drafted by staff) as foundation for 2025.
2. Review critical issues facing DCBA in 2025
3. Engage the leadership (Board) in participating in work scopes and strategic solutions for critical issues.
4. Confirming 2025 Priorities.

Priorities & Critical Issues for DCBA Board during 2025

After review of the four Focus Areas – Marketing, Events, Placemaking and Organization – the Board discussed key priorities the Board must focus on to create a sustainable organization. After robust discussion and reference back to the Downtown Business Survey the Board identified, Board consensus reflected three priorities (in addition to the Focus Area work plans) that the Board need to take action and be active advocates:

1. Funding Challenges. Address the annual funding for DCBA by completing the Assessment increase process with the City of Chico. The goal is to increase the current business assessment from the 1975 original assessment value (which has not be increased) to 2025 value. The current assessment funding is \$20,000+ per year.
2. Downtown Presence. Per the downtown business survey businesses ranked safety and cleanliness as top priority. The Board also felt the following advocacy regarding the downtown environment was equally as important:
 - a. Lighting
 - b. Vacancies
3. Message Narrative. Several board members felt it was extremely important to have a clear DCBA messaging narrative to engage stakeholders and help with advocacy in initiatives.



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DCBA Principles

A short discussion and review of 2024 identify priorities that were more suited as principles. These principles guide the DCBA as it navigates the challenges and opportunities of 2025, ensure it remains a strong advocate and resource for the Downtown Chico community.

- Promote long-term financial health for both the DCBA and its members through prudent fiscal management and sustainable revenue generation.
- Commit to initiatives that improve downtown's safety and overall aesthetics, addressing both the perception and reality of these issues.
- Foster partnerships with the City of Chico, Chico State University, cultural and community organizations, and local businesses.
- Act as a unified voice for downtown businesses, advocating for policies and initiatives that address critical issues.
- Innovate with marketing strategies and events to draw in diverse audiences and make Downtown Chico a destination.
- Regularly measure and assess the impact of initiatives, using data to inform decisions and demonstrate value to stakeholders.

Review & Feedback to Work Plan Focus Areas

Focus Area 1: Marketing 2025 Proposed Work Plan

Greg Scott commented on how could we encouraged all businesses downtown to feature in their stores something on Chico State & Butte College. Help promote both institutions to visitors, raise the awareness of the importance of those two institution to our economy, but also show parents and visitors we celebrate and support these institutions. Greg is personally starting a Wildcat room at the Hotel.

Audrey shared re Chico State and vulnerability of enrollment to the Downtown Economy. Chico (as most of Ca) is up against an ever looming “enrollment cliff” that will greatly affect our businesses and economy as a whole. Tying in the students to our businesses show our relationship between the school and downtown.

1. Marty Harley commented it was in important to have boots on the ground, someone in meeting with the businesses establishing relationships.
2. Nicole Hill commented she really like the work and depth of the Planning binder. Her concern is with Social Media – staffing. She indicated that businesses have concern with Jasmine’s leaving.
 - Staff Response: looking at contracting with Melissa Theide, handed out proposal received.



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- Nicole Hill commented on Melissa Theide (contracted services) - The loss of Jasmine's position and the way that she managed the platforms can affect our marketing efforts. Although Melissa is great and she brings on a lot of value, long term a full time marketing-social media person dedicated to communications and social media should be brought on board.
 - Greg response - Correct, we need someone who is on staff to be able to run over when needed. Unfortunately, without the assessments we cannot budget something like that YET. For now, we need to focus on assessments and then reconsider bringing someone on board. Greg is asking Nicole Hill to help with messaging and sales package with businesses on value businesses will receive with an increase in assessments.
3. General Advertising, PR & CoBranding i.e., Billboards
 - Liza Q: How do you go about a ROI? How do you know that the money spent on advertising is being used effectively?
 - Debbie A: We know the analytics around how many people saw the ads, heard them, etc.
 - Dale A: It's impossible to create a ROI in marketing.
 - Staff to look at metrics to measure DCBA work.
 4. Website
 - Liza Q: I did not see a website cost, will there be a budget?
 - Audrey A: It would be staff timing.
 - Liza R: How much time would that take and what would the staff cost be? Because there should be a budget for that.
 5. Liza Q: On Small Business Saturday work sheet - How do we bring more business, foot traffic downtown – what is the metrics?
 6. Page 40 - Liza Comment: Do not include that something was successful when you don't have metrics that prove the statement made that "everything went well and was successful." **Change what is written to better reflect actual.**



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Focus Area 2 - Events 2025 Proposed Work Plan– Signature Events

Thursday Night Market

- Overall Question – How do we get businesses to go into the stores.
 - Mary Hartley - It was a challenge to bring customers in to actually shop rather than just browsing during the market.
 - Brenda Narayan - Should we consider changing the logo to include arts & crafts (branding)
 - Greg Scott – focus on Quality to attract the right audience vs. Quantity turning into a flea market.
 - Greg Scott – need to really look at security on Broadway, park food trucks to ensure a car cannot drive down Broadway (ie New Orleans)
 - Suggestion: Taking a pause in July / making it smaller and including cars for a Hot August Nights Event
 - Steve Stull – parade's always bring people. Staff: DCBA will partner with CARD for 4th of July parade.
 - Staff: It is difficult for the Farmer's Market to take a break but staff is working on having other features to bring people, i.e., car show (working with Nick Andrew)
 - Brenda Narayan – should not only be marketing TNM but also the retail stores and restaurants.
 - **Because of the diversity of the feedback a Planning Committee was set up to further discussions on TNM : Mary Hartley, Nicole Hill, Brenda Narayan, Pat Macias, Shari Anderson. Meeting to be held within next two weeks.**
2. Friday Night Concert – the downtown business survey indicated that having a First Friday Art would be good.
 - Nick Andrew commented it could be integrated into the FNC
 3. ARTober Fest – Art & Wine Walk, Harvest Sidewalk Sale
 - Art & Wine Walk - Mary Hartley Feedback: It was good to charge because people would be invested into the event rather than just running around for “free stuff.”
 - Question: How do we get people to stay in town and spend the night?
 4. Treat Street
 - Shorten to 2 hours and initiate street closures
 5. New Potential Events
 - 2025 Events Listening Session to be hosted at the end of the month?
 - Steven Stull Suggestion: What other events can we do to bring people into downtown while the students are here? A car show typically brings a lot of people down in other areas, this would be a great idea for downtown chico.
 - Nick Andrews - would a business like Harley Davidson want to move their events downtown? HOT SUMMER NIGHTS - Merge 1st Fridays Art Show in the Plaza to happen during the Friday Night Concert Series.
 - Pat Macias - Events don't necessarily bring people into downtown businesses.



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Focus Area 3 - Placemaking & Vitality 2025 Proposed Work Plan

Placemaking as important as it is, has no staff involved. It is volunteer-driven. That is a challenge to keep the initiatives going as someone needs to be responsible to see things move forward, hard to “assign” things to these initiatives. There are two primary initiatives replacing the COBA Board through a student Arts Initiative and the Vacant Building Initiative.

Vacant Building Initiative would be a joint project with PBID, attorney is reviewing an agreement between the two organizations.

Other potential initiatives could be Historic Buildings – Bidwell Mansion, El Rey Theatre or Wayfinding Signs – creating monuments to welcome visitors to downtown.

1. Other infrastructure issues, identified in the Downtown Business Survey
 - Lighting and clean streets
 - Greg Scott commented that Will Clark, Target Team was doing a safety through environmental practices (or something like that) which might be able to help with lighting. **Something to check on.**
2. Partnership with PBID – Clean & Safe
 - Question asked: **Can PBID address the power wash to clean streets.**
 - What can we do within our control? Business owners have to keep the entryways clean.
 - How else can we fund/ work with the PBID to propose change? Greg has been proposing for months to get funding that is being spent poorly on maintenance of the Parking Structure to go to PBID, no reply.
 - How do we bring in community action to encourage volunteers to help us keep downtown clean?
 - Nicole Hill: can we create a Clean Up Day with Greek Life? A collaboration
 - Nicole Hill: Reports from the volunteer initiatives to the BOD would be helpful and should also go to staff would be helpful to portray positive messaging to tv and radio.
3. **These initiatives should have metrics to measure progress.**



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Focus Area 4 - Organization & Advocacy 2025 Proposed Work Plan

Audrey provided a quick overview of items under Organization

1. 1) Board & Staff
2. 2) Office
3. 3) ByLaws
4. 4) Budget & Funding – City Funding expires, District Assessment, Donors, Other
5. 5) Advocacy – Complete Streets, code enforcement, trash
6. 6) Partnerships – TeamChico, PBID

Change District Assessment

- Reminder this is the 3rd year of a 3 year contract with the City of Chico, an annual investment made through the American Rescue Funds of \$140,000 per year.
- Greg Scott commented that a priority was to complete the Assessment change by May 2025.

Sponsorship Package Feedback

- Add: # of tickets for an event as a value
- Question on membership for those not in the District. Response: there is no membership but non-members can sponsor and advertise with DCBA.
- Suggestion that packages be offered with a monthly fee – at different levels.
- Nick Andrews interested in sponsoring all events in 2025 - build package offer
- Steven Stull to connect us with Prominent Contractors - Bilson, Hull Construction, etc.
- Nicole Hill mentioned that some business will provide Gift Cards as sponsorship as they can measure that.
- **Draft advertising/sponsorship packages and donor packages. Begin targeting potential supporters.**