



2020 Downtown Development Authority Annual Report

Introduction

In 1975, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Act was enacted, and then updated and recodified in 2018, to be a catalyst in the development of a community's downtown district. The DDA provides for a variety of funding options including tax increment financing which utilizes funds for public improvements in the downtown district. The DDA tax increment financing mechanism allows for the capture of incremental growth of local property taxes over a period of time to fund public infrastructure improvements. Funding large-scale projects can lead to new development opportunities in the district and is considered an amenity to the development community. In collaboration with other public and private entities, the DDA Board of Directors strive to ensure the growth and prosperity of Downtown Auburn Hills.

Mission/Vision Statements

The Board began work in 2020 to finalize a mission and vision statement. It was formally adopted in 2021.

The Auburn Hills Downtown Development Authority strives to create a vibrant, inclusive, and economically viable downtown district by embracing and engaging residents, businesses, and institutions.

Downtown Auburn Hills is a multi-faceted business and entertainment district that offers a unique experience to residents and visitors alike. Our connection to nature through our park system, year-round events and activities, and our diverse business mix of excellent restaurants, specialty retail, and entertainment venues create a strong, vibrant, and high-quality downtown that serves the needs of the community.

2020 Summary

In the first quarter of 2021, the DDA experienced a staff leadership change after the three-year tenure by Mr. Brandon Skopek. Ms. Carroll furthers the vision and commitment to the DDA Board with the tradition established before her.

Despite the challenges of 2020, which included canceled events and business closures, staff worked collectively to host events on a smaller scale and create ways to support our downtown businesses.

Just prior to the pandemic, two committees were formed to further the vision and mission of the DDA. The Organization Committee is charged with getting appropriate stakeholders involved in working toward the same goals and the Promotion Committee is charged with promoting the downtown through special events and other marketing efforts. This will allow for a more organized structure as we continue planning into the future.

The Downtown Development Authority continued to serve as the primary sponsor for downtown events. In addition to the sponsorship of the new Children's Summer Concert Series, the Downtown Development Authority hosted the City's first annual Riverside Park After Dark movie night in downtown Auburn Hills. The Friday Night Concert Series remained very popular all summer as well.

In September 2020, the City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the Auburn Hills DDA to apply to become a Select community under Main Street Oakland County. By moving up to the Select Level, the Auburn Hills DDA will gain access to additional funding and marketing/promotions resources through MSOC.

In October 2020, the Downtown Development Authority hosted the second outdoor movie night at the Knight Amphitheater in Riverside Park and presented a showing of “Casper” for event attendees. Attendees were offered a plush Halloween giveaway.

We worked with Oakland County to provide Re-Open kits for their businesses that contained PPE. Approximately 120 businesses took advantage of these kits.

In an effort to continue to market the downtown, the Community Relations team created a campaign and video series called “Discover Downtown” and created billboards that showcased downtown as a destination. In addition, the Downtown has a full-page ad featured in dBusiness Magazine in the Prosper section.



Future Outlook

With an estimated day-time population over 50,000 people within a two-mile radius of Downtown Auburn Hills, it is important to attract those individuals to the community during lunch and after work. As tax increment revenue continues to grow, the Downtown Development Authority will become the event and marketing mechanism for all of downtown Auburn Hills.

With greater promotion, merchant engagement and cross promotion, and Board Member involvement, downtown events and businesses will continue to grow well into the future.

2021 DDA Board of Directors

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Steven Volk, Vice Chairman

Mayor Kevin McDaniel

Jean Jernigan

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Cortney Casey

Michael Wayne

Stephanie Carroll, *Executive Director*