

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE REVIEW

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND
PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

CITY OF AURORA, MISSOURI

July 2009



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I N I T I A T I V E

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



CITY OF AURORA

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS	3
A. City of Aurora	3
B. Main Street Aurora	4
C. Aurora Chamber of Commerce	4
III. ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS	5
A. Leadership	5
B. Management Characteristics	5
C. Board Attributes	5
D. Forming Partnerships	6
E. Community Involvement	6
F. Organization Funding	6
G. Organizational Strategic Planning	7
H. Project Planning and Facilitation	7
I. Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion	7
J. Residential Development and Neighborhood Revitalization	7
K. Downtown Advocacy	8
L. Real Estate Development Body	8
M. District Marketing	8
N. Special Events Planning	8
O. Retail/Event Promotions	8
P. Safety, Security and Beautification	9

IV. RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT.....	11
Existing Organization Enhancements.....	12
A. City of Aurora.....	12
B. Main Street Aurora.....	13
Recommended New Organizations.....	14
C. Downtown Aurora Community Development Corporation	14
D. Downtown Aurora Redevelopment Corporation (DARC).....	14
E. Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District (DACID)	15
F. Downtown Events Committee.....	16
G. Downtown Economic Development Committee.....	16
H. Aurora Arts Council	16
I. Downtown Merchants Group	17
V. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE WORK	19

APPENDIX

- Attachment 1 – Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire
- Attachment 2A – Existing Downtown Organizational Structure
- Attachment 2B – Recommended Downtown Organizational Structure
- Attachment 3A – Downtown Organizations and Responsibilities
- Attachment 3B – Specific Downtown Issues and Responsibilities
- Attachment 4 – Sample Job Description
- Attachment 5 – Board and Committee Recommendations

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

All cities are unique in terms of their physical assets, community resources, history, and sense of place. Many cities, however, have shared one characteristic over the last fifty years. That characteristic is the decline of downtown. The decline of downtowns and central business districts has been a problem for economic developers, governments, and citizens from small rural communities to large metropolitan regions alike. The consequence of a declining downtown is a negative effect on the remainder of the city and region. A community's overall health is greatly influenced by the viability of its downtown. From a societal standpoint, downtown embodies the heritage of the community and affords it a sense of identity. A Downtown Revitalization Program encourages a dynamic downtown which features unique retail opportunities, tourist attractions, employment possibilities, and recreational outlets to residents and visitors. Downtown revitalization can benefit cities by improving their economic base, fiscal condition, and well being of residents.

Downtown revitalization is a community process that requires local champions willing to invest time and effort to make the program work. A successful Downtown Revitalization Program requires concerted planning and strategic implementation by many organizations, including a City government dedicated to downtown improvements and active downtown organizations with broad community-wide support. The Downtown Revitalization Program involves coordinating a complex but interrelated series of events, relying heavily on the cooperation of various community groups.

Successful revitalization will depend on a variety of components including:

- Committed, sustainable leadership
- Broad based participation
- A shared vision of the future
- Realistic goals and plan of action
- Effective communication
- Management of implementation
- Recognition of efforts
- Use of outside resources

To ultimately achieve the goal of a successfully revitalized downtown, it is important to assess the existing downtown organization, revitalization efforts, the downtown business community, and the community at-large. This examination begins the process of organizational structure review. Upon analysis, it may be determined that the existing organizational structure is quite adequate to continue the revitalization effort, that the organization will benefit from some minor or limited adjustments, or that some significant changes are required. In any event, during the evaluation of an existing organization or committee, the decision must be made whether or not it is still relevant and can effectively complete downtown revitalization responsibilities. A critical analysis should be made as to the need for encouraging the sustainability of existing organizations that are effectively

carrying out the Downtown Revitalization Program, revamping an existing organization to achieve the objectives of the Downtown Revitalization Program, or establishing new organizations (sometimes replacing an ineffective existing organization) to complete the Downtown Revitalization Program.

The preferred action is to encourage and sustain an organization that is effectively meeting, or can achieve with additional resources, the Downtown Revitalization Program objectives. In many instances, organizational change may be necessary to meet the evolving roles and responsibilities of an existing organization in response to the progression of revitalization activities in the downtown. In these cases, organizational change is made to “build organizational capacity”. The “capacity” of an organization may include its financial resources, personnel or staffing, volunteer activity, mission, and Board leadership. The fulcrum necessary to leverage the organization’s capacity is strengthened by a clearly defined mission and strategic plan to guide its limited resources.

Frequently, setting up new organizations and committees is a better option than revamping an ineffective, existing organization. A new group may be able to undertake new responsibilities and accomplish new objectives that an existing group with an established agenda cannot. The community can set up a new board with broad based support, a clearly defined and independent mission, new goals, and an infusion of fresh spirit of change into the revitalization efforts. A new group can combine all the principles of a successful revitalization organization into one working unit. However, setting up a new organization(s) requires additional resources and must be organized carefully or it may only be seen as an extension of previous failed efforts or ineffective organizations. Many Downtown Revitalization Programs will have the advantage of building upon previous successes as a result of past and current efforts, particularly Main Street.

SECTION II

EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

A prerequisite of DREAM Program selection requires that a city demonstrate broad community-wide support for the revitalization of downtown. Aurora residents, businesses and political leaders speak of the importance of a vibrant Downtown and their interest in Downtown Revitalization. The Downtown Revitalization that has occurred to date is primarily due to 3 organizations: the City of Aurora, Main Street Aurora, and the Chamber of Commerce. These organizations are supported by a number of volunteers as well. **Exhibit 1- Existing Organizational Structure**, located in **Appendix A**, depicts the relationship of various organizations impacting the Downtown Revitalization Program. The following is a description of the organizations impacting Downtown and their current role in supporting the Downtown Revitalization Program. The DREAM Initiative discussed the function of the existing organizational structure with a representative of the City of Aurora and Main Street Aurora within the context of a "Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire." A copy of the "Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire" is located in the **Appendix as Attachment 1**.

A. CITY OF AURORA

The City has an important role to play in all aspects of revitalization, but particularly: building code, nuisance, and law enforcement, solving zoning conflicts, and providing financial assistance. The City of Aurora has continually fulfilled its role in Downtown and worked to improve the conditions of Downtown and create opportunities for revitalization.

There are a number of recent Downtown Revitalization accomplishments that the City is responsible for. One significant accomplishment for the City was the development of the Downtown Revolving Loan Program. The City worked with a number of local banks, and the Aurora Historical Society, to develop the program which provides low interest loans to business owners.

The City has been instrumental in the bricks and mortar improvements in Downtown as well. By providing City staff for grant writing applications, such as CDBG, as well as providing the requisite match, the City is responsible for the completion of the Phase I Streetscape improvements. The City is also working to make the subsequent Phases of streetscape improvements a reality.

Another significant accomplishment by the City is the recently created position of Economic Development Director. This position is serving as the primary point of contact concerning the DREAM Initiative and Downtown Revitalization efforts. This position is a wonderful example of the in-kind services that the City continues to provide Downtown Revitalization efforts.

B. MAIN STREET AURORA

Main Street Aurora was formed in 1991 as 501(c)(3) Non Profit Corporation and has been operating as the lead organization for Downtown Revitalization ever since. The organization is very involved in the activities that the City of Aurora has been pursuing in Downtown, often complementing their efforts. While not utilizing a steady revenue stream, Main Street Aurora has been effective in fund raising efforts to support revitalization efforts.

The organization peaked in its operational size in the mid 1990's when it had one full-time Executive Director and support of a number of volunteers. Main Street Aurora is currently staffed by a number of volunteers that comprise its Board. Mainly operating as an ad hoc group the Board is made up of a diverse group of volunteers including; a chairperson (downtown business owner), banker (who participates in revolving loan program), downtown business person, City staff member, City Council Liaison, and 1 teacher. As stated earlier, the Board meets as needed and develops objectives and goals as for issues as they arise.

Main Street Aurora has been active in a number of projects since its inception. Most recently the organization is involved in the continuation of the Downtown Streetscape improvements and fundraising for Christmas Decorations that will complement the Winter Festival as well as beautify Downtown through the shopping season.

C. AURORA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Chamber is an independent membership-funded organization whose programs involve small business assistance, regional marketing, business advocacy and economic development.

As a committed partner to Downtown revitalization, the Chamber is willing to provide expertise and resources for special projects and/or issues as may be needed. The Chamber is a Downtown business (the Chamber offices are located in the Missouri Pacific Depot) and also collaborates with the City on economic development.

The Chamber's role as the broader community representative requires a wider mission, goals, and objective that impede the ongoing development of the specific expertise and capacity necessary for the unique issues faced in Downtown's revitalization. As such, the Chamber encourages a "downtown specific" organizational structure to which the Chamber provides support rather than leadership.

The Chamber's participation in the organizational structure should continue in a similar capacity as is currently represented with particular benefit afforded Downtown through the Chamber's active regional marketing program. However, the "business development," small-business, entrepreneurial education, and networking opportunities offered by the Chamber will become increasingly important to the success of Downtown's revitalization as business growth occurs. Identifying future opportunities to deliver these resources to Downtown businesses, and to encourage businesses to take advantage of the Chamber's business support services, should be further developed within the context of the overall Downtown Revitalization effort.

SECTION III

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

Downtown revitalization occurs with numerous entities that band together to reach a common goal. Each of the participating organizations, however, may have a different reason for being involved and fulfill a different purpose. Additionally, each Downtown organization will be uniquely developed to address the particular needs of a community. However, there are common elements among the techniques and services offered by the various Downtown organizations that are useful to note including: Leadership; Funding; Strategic Planning; Project Planning and Facilitation; Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion; Downtown Advocacy; Development Body; District Marketing; Special Events Planning; Retail Promotions; Downtown Beautification; and Safety and Security.

A. LEADERSHIP

Invariably leadership is included as one of the most important components of every successful downtown organization. Leaders have a vested interest and are the champions and defenders of downtown. They must be able to build grassroots community support and form effective public/private partnerships. Leaders are charged with informing and educating the public, as well as bringing focus and vision to the organization and Downtown Revitalization Program. Enthusiastic Leadership for the Downtown Revitalization Program must also allow for transitioning from individual to individual so momentum can be sustained.

B. MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

There are different approaches to successful management practices of downtown organizations. Management styles can vary greatly and it is important to match the management style to the particular needs of the downtown organization or revitalization effort. Important skills of successful managers include: speaking effectively to audiences; financial analysis and budgeting; project planning and oversight; situation and political analysis; and bargaining and negotiating expertise. Management approaches can range from being mainly an administrator who makes budgets, hires employees, and enters into contracts to an entrepreneurial approach which emphasizes new service delivery, program design, and developing new sources of revenue.

C. BOARD ATTRIBUTES

Boards and committees should be made up of leaders with a unified enthusiasm for the revitalization of downtown. However, this does not suggest the board should be made up of all similar-minded people. It is important that the board represent diverse points of view from the community. It is also important that the board not be seen as the elite members who stand to benefit from the revitalization. The board should encourage discussions and debate differences to strengthen the ultimate decision and resulting outcomes. Additionally, the board should develop goals and clearly identify those

responsible for completing them. While there are no set guidelines for the size and make-up of boards, it is recommended that boards be limited in size to 7-9 members. Larger boards are possible in larger communities. Potential members should be recruited from, but are not necessarily limited to: local banks; chambers of commerce; City government; downtown businesses; downtown stakeholders; downtown residents; and historic societies and preservation organizations. Board members for all of the downtown organizations should have a similar make-up in order to ensure continuity in leadership and decision-making across the different organizations.

D. FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Nearly all successful Downtown Revitalization Programs typically include 3-5 separate organizations that have different purposes and provide different services. It is not as important which organizations handle which services, but that the services are delivered effectively. However, certain types of organizations are structured or chartered to deliver certain types of services or perform certain functions more effectively than others. Healthy partnerships are crucial to starting the revitalization process and building the critical mass needed to spur the cycle of sustainable development.

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The organization must ensure that citizens and businesses, particularly residents of surrounding neighborhoods have continuous opportunities for input and involvement. Large community events and celebrations are often located in downtown, and are very important to fostering an overall sense of community. Involving the community in the Downtown Revitalization Program will also help to foster that sense of community.

F. ORGANIZATION FUNDING

In addition to leadership, adequate funding is one of the most important components of successful Downtown Revitalization Programs. Downtown Revitalization Programs cannot be sustained without a stable source of money. The amount of money raised can depend on the depth of the programs and services required for revitalization. Large revitalization programs will not only require local resources and fund raising efforts, but may demand outside funding sources as well. A major funding component of all successful downtown revitalization efforts is the local government, particularly at the outset of a Revitalization Program. A number of funding sources will be investigated as the DREAM Initiative moves forward including, but not limited to: Community Improvement District tax levies and assessments; Tax Increment Financing; Transportation Development Districts; and many various state tax incentive and grant programs.

Utilizing different funding sources is necessary due to use limitations (i.e. some funding mechanisms may not be used for operation costs, only for programming or services) of different sources, as well as to build a stable and diverse funding structure to ensure sustainability. Different local fundraising activities include: membership donations; fund raising festival; historic or holiday house tours; and in-kind contributions. Outside funding opportunities include: grants; loans; and tax credit programs.

G. ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is essential for building an organization that will be effective as well as thrive in the future. Successful organizations develop a strong vision and align their resources towards achieving that vision. It is important to establish short-term and long-term goals for the organization. These goals should be specific and measurable and should be reviewed on a regular basis. Strategic planning for the revitalization of downtown will be addressed in greater detail in the Downtown Strategic Plan component of the DREAM Initiative.

H. PROJECT PLANNING AND FACILITATION

The organization in charge of downtown revitalization spearheads the many various improvement projects. Successful organizations keep a keen eye on progress by utilizing resources and overcoming obstacles in facilitating the completion of Revitalization Program goals and objectives. Project oversight will be a large component of all downtown revitalization organizations and the success of projects will depend on the organizations' oversight abilities.

I. BUSINESS ATTRACTION, RETENTION, AND EXPANSION

Typically, efforts of the organization in charge of this activity first focus on retention and expansion of existing downtown businesses. The organization actively communicates with businesses to help identify needs and resolve problems. Additionally, the organization helps to improve existing business practices through training, marketing assistance, access to capital, etc. More successful organizations are proactive in retention efforts by tracking lease expirations and acting to limit business losses.

Business attraction and new business development is an important component of a Downtown Revitalization Program, usually a component of the local chamber of commerce or a downtown support organization. Successful economic development programs understand the market opportunities and have realistic goals. The programs start with providing the basic needs of formation: capital, real estate, labor, and foster the ease of establishment. Innovation is crucial in these efforts, for example, retail incubators have been used successfully in developing retail businesses where national recruitment efforts have failed. Retail development will be addressed in much more detail in the Retail Market Analysis component of the DREAM Initiative.

J. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Development of housing and revitalization of existing neighborhoods is essential to successful Downtown Revitalization Programs. Residents help to provide the demand necessary to support downtown shops and restaurants. Additionally, a vibrant residential component is an integral part of a multifunctional downtown. The vitality of downtowns can be measured by the level of human activity; people on the sidewalks demonstrate a healthy downtown. Housing development will be addressed in much more detail in the Downtown Housing Market Analysis component of the DREAM Initiative.

K. DOWNTOWN ADVOCACY

As a result of downtown decline, most downtown communities, residents, and businesses feel neglected and detached from the city government and larger community. A successful Downtown Revitalization Program will help bridge the gap between the downtown community and the rest of the city, most importantly the city government. An influential downtown organization can effectively address its constituent's needs and provide one voice for their concerns and issues.

L. REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BODY

Successful Revitalization Programs include a real estate development body that encourages private investment in real estate. There are many ways to aid real estate development including: land assembly; preparing property for development; financial assistance; and tax incentives. Many successful Revitalization Programs create a catalytic development firm to develop initial projects that market/consumer research shows have potential demand, but at higher than acceptable market risk. Through these initial projects, the organization demonstrates to the development community and investors that downtown development is feasible and profitable.

M. DISTRICT MARKETING

Successful Downtown Revitalization Programs create a new unified image of downtown that reshapes the perception of downtown into the center of activity. Efforts should focus on developing community pride in the unique physical environment and historical, and present, community culture. Creating a new image or enhancing the existing image of the downtown involves promotional activities that build upon downtown economic and cultural offerings. The key is to create a healthy mix of retail promotions, special events and festivals, public relations, and other marketing medium.

N. SPECIAL EVENTS PLANNING

Through the use of special events, downtown organizations build partnerships, fundraise, encourage community involvement, promote downtown, and in particular promote downtown retail. Special events are essential in marketing downtown to residents that no longer view downtown as a destination, as well as to tourists from outside the Area.

O. RETAIL AND EVENT PROMOTIONS

Downtown revitalization efforts include many activities to promote the unique mix of retail stores offered. Special shopping events, brochures, and other advertising and marketing media are necessary to encourage the community to support downtown retail.

P. SAFETY, SECURITY, AND BEAUTIFICATION

In one fashion or another, every successful Downtown Revitalization Program improves safety, security and the appearance of downtown. Beautification improvements included creating and maintaining cleanliness to ensure a positive first impression of downtown for visitors. Other efforts included; store window decoration, building façade improvement, flower boxes, benches, and awnings.

Improving safety for rural communities mainly focuses on pedestrian traffic through crosswalks, speed bumps, and road marking. Increased signage, banners, maps, and improved wayfinding lessen congestion and help in the presentation of downtown, and also make effective marketing tools. Efforts should be made to improve or control parking in order to turn motorists into pedestrians and encourage walking throughout downtown.

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SECTION IV

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

The most critical component of a successful Downtown Revitalization Strategy, which is of particular importance to the DREAM Initiative, is the creation of a sustainable organizational structure with the capacity to implement DREAM recommendations and provide ongoing Downtown Revitalization support. It is important is that the community has the necessary components; a proactive business community, grassroots support, and a dedicated local government to create the critical mass needed for a successful Revitalization Program. Aurora has most of the assets to create the necessary organizational structure requires through realigning and the creation of additional capacity and proper funding in order to reach the level necessary for success.

Aurora's existing downtown organizational structure has several entities involved in the evolving Downtown Revitalization Program. As such, the current organizational structure has established a foundation for incorporating some of the elements of successful organizations and revitalization efforts described in Section III. However, there are many elements that are not currently being addressed, or have not been historically needed, which may become important features of the Downtown Revitalization Program. The evolving needs of a Downtown Revitalization Program require that the organizational structure be flexible in order to increase capacity to address these elements in the future and potential additional needs.

Aside from the City, there is no funded and structurally organized agency working for downtown revitalization. The Main Street Aurora organization is focused on downtown but lacks the structure and financing to make it an effective lead agency. The Chamber, through the Economic Development Committee, assists in certain areas. Additionally, the City and Chamber have pressures that may limit their continued focus on the downtown and could potentially bring scrutiny from other areas of their respective constituents or members.

It is important that the organization which emerges as the leader of the Downtown Revitalization Program has an appropriate focus for downtown, adequate resources including personnel and funding, support from existing groups as well as grassroots support from citizens, a proactive business community, and a dedicated local government to create the critical mass needed for a successful Revitalization Program. It is vital to coordinate these elements into a forward facing, broad based, widely supported, sustainable effort.

The existing Organizational Structure is shown in Attachment 2-A in the Appendix. **Attachment 2-B** depicts the recommended Organizational Structure and the linkages between these groups. These organizations, specific to downtown, must be pursued in order to bring the Downtown Aurora Revitalization Program up to speed.

The organizations should include a non-profit corporation leading the effort, providing the downtown community as a whole with advocacy, unification, and leadership. This lead organization will be supported by three additional organizations; 1) a community development corporation whose roles is to spur real estate development as well as provide financial support to the lead organization, 2) a redevelopment corporation to assist in property acquisition and assembly, and 3) a community improvement district to bring the necessary services to downtown, as well as provide financial support to the lead organization. In addition to these organizations there will need to be other realignments of responsibilities made to ensure an orderly effort and not disrupt important current activities. A successful downtown requires an events committee and an economic development committee specific to downtown.

The following recommendations are made in two parts. First, recommendations will be provided for “organizational structure capacity” enhancement through the establishment of new organizations to complement the existing organizational structure. Second, recommendations are suggested for the enhancement of the existing organizational structure capacity, whether it is specific to an organization or to an element of successful revitalization efforts involving several organizations. The funding necessary to sustain these organizations will be addressed in more detail in the Financial Assessment Review component of the DREAM Initiative.

EXISTING ORGANIZATION ENHANCEMENTS

A. CITY OF AURORA

The City of Aurora’s involvement in Downtown Revitalization is critical to its success. Many of the Downtown successes to date have occurred mainly due to the City’s leadership and financial participation. Additionally, City involvement demonstrates local government commitment and increases the likelihood of broad citizen participation. The City should assist in the development of all necessary political subdivisions and districts as well as participate in the appropriate boards. However, efforts should be made to avoid politicizing the Revitalization Program.

City services are one of the essential elements for a successful Downtown Revitalization Program. The financial commitment by the City to support capital improvement projects should continue and exceed the current level of activity. The City can help with leveraging other resources by providing a local match investment. This practice is the most effective means for accomplishing large-scale capital and infrastructure projects. However, the local resources of the City must be distributed throughout the community and other financial resources should always be considered. The City will have an important role to play in all aspects of revitalization and has already maintained a steady effort for downtown. This attitude is to be commended and will hopefully remain. The City should take the lead in the tough decisions that lie ahead.

- The City will need to provide attention to downtown code enforcement, design guidelines, and signage, not only in the DREAM Study Area, but throughout the City. Building codes should be pursued aggressively and fairly. A routine check of the buildings and knowledge of property owners should occur on a regular basis.
- The City should also aggressively encourage façade improvements and continue to support the streetscape implementation plan. The streetscape plan is an effort that will need financial and technical support as well as ongoing maintenance. Issues like graffiti, safety, and unsecure vacant buildings will need to be addressed alongside streetscape implementation to ensure a positive downtown environment.
- It is recommended that the City take the lead initiative, in partnership with Aurora Development Corporation (ADC), in educating and informing the downtown community about the benefits of establishing the Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District (DACID) (Both the ADC and DACID will be discussed in more detail later in this section). By using the economic activity created by businesses to generate special tax revenue in the Downtown Area, this financing tool will provide a much needed resource that will strengthen ADC's programming and sustainability and stimulate increased private reinvestment in buildings throughout Downtown. These "small-scale" projects are not easily funded by State and Federal resources, therefore the DACID can provide much needed revenue gap financing to make sure Downtown not only "leaps forward" with "big projects" but also makes incremental improvements on a recurring basis.

B. MAIN STREET AURORA

Downtown Aurora Development Corporation Main Street Aurora has been associated with much of the progress in Downtown since its inception. Due to that link, Main Street Aurora carries with it a brand that is valuable to revitalization efforts. However, for the past few years Main Street Aurora has not been as effective as previous years and is languishing. Additionally, due to the fact that National Trust for Historic Preservation has trademarked the term "Main Street" Main Street Aurora is operating in violation of that trademark. Therefore it is desirable to change the direction of the Downtown Revitalization program, and create a new lead organization in the Downtown Aurora Development Corporation (DADC). Creating the new organization could be a promotional tool to use and build excitement around the new direction and efforts revolving around downtown.

The DADC should operate as a private, non-profit corporation designed to encourage broad community support as well as lead the Downtown Revitalization Program (the "Program"). The DADC will be responsible for advocacy on behalf of the downtown community and the promotion of its members' interests. It will act as the leader of the Program, rallying volunteers, gathering resources, and pressing for progress. In order for the organization to function as intended it will require a full-time manager to oversee operations and if possible a support person to handle administrative duties. The manager of this organization is instrumental to the Program as they will be the point person, community liaison, and motivating force of the Program.

Membership should include a wide array of residents and businesses interested in downtown revitalization. Membership will not be restricted to the Downtown business owners and Downtown residents, but extend to the surrounding neighborhoods. The board of the organization should be comprised by public and private entities. However, more structured board regulation and operational procedures should be considered and incorporated into updated bylaws. Board make-up should consist of 7 to 13 people potentially drawn from the following organizations; Downtown Aurora Redevelopment Corporation, Downtown Aurora Community Development Corporation, Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District, Downtown Merchants Association, Downtown Aurora Promotions Committee, Downtown Aurora Economic Development Committee, Aurora Arts Council, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, City of Aurora, one Downtown Aurora business owner, and one Downtown Aurora Resident.

It is very important that the City is a partner in the Revitalization Program and shares in responsibilities. However, the Revitalization Program must be driven by the private sector, it is their efforts that will ultimately determine its success or failure. Funding will be provided through a variety of sources including; membership, the DACID, City of Aurora, grants, fundraising, and event fundraising.

RECOMMENDED NEW ORGANIZATIONS

C. DOWNTOWN AURORA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Downtown Aurora Community Development Corporation (“DACDC”) should be a downtown based non-profit or for-profit corporation formed to conduct public benefit projects and other redevelopment activities. The DACDC can take on many roles in the effort including; housing development and commercial real estate development as well as economic development, particularly small business development. Membership of the organization will be made up mainly of participating banks but can include local businesses. Funding for the DACDC can be through donations, grants, and investment from members. With a multi-bank CDC loans and equity can be provided to small businesses or development partners. The board should be made up of representatives from the primary bank members, DADC, the Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District, and the City. If a non-profit is desirable the DACDC is organized in the same manner as other non-profits, pursuant to Ch. 355 statutes.

D. DOWNTOWN AURORA REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (DARC)

The Downtown Aurora Redevelopment Corporation will be a tool for stimulating construction of new housing and commercial development. Establishing a Ch. 353 Redevelopment Area would provide the ability to utilize unique financial incentive tools as well as be a driver in property acquisition. The DARC should work closely with the DACDC in spurring real estate development in downtown. The DARC should be organized as a for-profit corporation, with limitations on earnings, pursuant to Ch. 353 statutes. Board members for DARC should be represented by board members of DACDC, the City, ACID, DADC, and other key stakeholders in downtown.

Through the 353 abatements, problem properties should be able to be assembled and long-term asset growth realized for the corporation as the properties are improved. The purchases alone should increase downtown property values which will feed into the abatements and the following recommendation concerning a Community Improvement District.

Having a for-profit corporation operate closely with the non-profits in downtown should also complement all organizations abilities for handling fundraisers, donations, event income, and other unrelated business income.

E. DOWNTOWN AURORA COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (DACID)

The Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District will provide an extra level of public service to the DREAM Study Area. The DACID will channel private sector energy towards the solution of public problems. The DACID will work with DADC, the City, and the DACDC to provide increased public financing resources resulting from private investment to meet the comprehensive objectives of the Downtown Revitalization Program. Funds generated by DACID should be used to provide district marketing, administrative support, event promotions, infrastructure, Downtown beautification, and encourage redevelopment of buildings.

The DACID should contract with DADC to provide administrative and technical services for ongoing administration of the DACID, but this will immediately require appropriate staff and training at to be available at DADC.

At the outset the organization can share office space and services with another organization or government entity, but should eventually be self-reliant and located in the Downtown Study Area.

The DACID can be organized as a non-profit corporation or a political subdivision, however forming a political subdivision is recommended as it provides a more stable revenue source. Forming the CID requires a signed petition submitted to the hosting municipality that includes:

- Property owners owning more than 50% of assessed value of real property
- 50% per capita of all owners
- Boundaries of the district
- 5-year capital and service plan outlining purpose of district
- Cost estimates of improvements

The DACID should designate itself as a public benefit corporation organized according to Ch. 355. The board of directors of a non-profit CID is organized in the same manner as other non-profits, according to Ch. 355. The organization can be funded by a property assessment or by charging fees from tenants, economic development grants, voluntary donations and municipalities may fund through grants or contributions.

A political subdivision CID is organized through a petition which states whether the Board is elected or appointed by the ranking city official. The City should retain majority representation on the Board with downtown property owners, residents, or business owners representing the remaining membership (proposed to include a member or members from DADC, the proposed DARC, and the proposed DACDC). It is recommended that the Board consist of seven (7) to nine (9) members. A political subdivision CID may be funded by levying a tax on property, charging a fee for a business license, or charging an additional sales tax.

Funding provided by DACID to DADC will strengthen the capacity of DADC to expand its marketing and promotion programs and materials, increase the Façade Improvement program funding, and concentrate on retail and business attraction.

F. DOWNTOWN EVENTS COMMITTEE

The existing committees and personnel of the Chamber and City are very skilled at organizing, promoting, and managing events. Therefore, the necessary personnel exist and are experienced. Through the umbrella of DADC and the Chamber of Commerce a Downtown Events Committee would be responsible for downtown event development and management (including all of the current events) and downtown event overall marketing and promotions. Having a single committee organizing and promoting the downtown activities will ensure that the Area capitalizes and makes the most out of the added activity that accompanies events.

It is important to note that the numerous area events appear to operate through a number of different committees without structured oversight over all events. For example, each of the various committees of the Chamber of Commerce have a number of events that they oversee. It may be helpful to create an overarching Events Committee that includes oversight of all events assisting to manage timing, control donor fatigue, and encourage an even spread of events both in terms of geography and timing.

G. DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A new committee should be formed to specifically address the economic development needs of downtown. This committee should include members from the DACDC, DACID, DADC, Chamber of Commerce, and City of Aurora. Not only will the committee be responsible for general business development, it will be charged with downtown retail development. Retail development should encompass the majority of the work for the committee as this is the most pressing need for downtown.

H. AURORA ARTS COUNCIL

The formation of an arts council, while not a direct driver in the Downtown Revitalization Program, can provide additional support to the Downtown Revitalization Program. Therefore it is recommended that the Aurora Arts Council be formed. Arts councils work to enrich, enhance and nurture communities through Arts programs. These programs and their outcomes are often effective economic development partners. Not only can an Arts

Council improve the quality of life for the community it can add to the unique sense of place which is inherent in a successful Downtown. The Missouri Arts Council and the Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies are charged with developing Arts Councils and will be a valuable resource.

I. DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS GROUP

The Downtown Merchants Group should be formed in order to promote improvements to the Downtown business environment, specifically the retail business climate. The organization can be formed as a separate non-profit or a committee under the umbrella of the DADC depending on the size of commitment and interest among Downtown retail and restaurant owners. The shops and restaurants in Downtown Aurora can benefit greatly by improving their retail operations and productivity. This can be accomplished through a variety of means, including increasing communication, improving product offerings and displays, and coordinating hours and events. Retailers should modify or expand their product offerings to address the needs of visitors and residents, taking into account products carried at Mass Merchandisers. Particular attention should be paid to providing unique products and excellent service. Additionally, providing attractive displays and coordinating themes and hours of operation will help create a positive shopping experience.

Increasing communication between Downtown retailers and among other attractions in and around Aurora will allow retailers to improve productivity through their increased knowledge of the market. For example, retailers can adjust their hours of operation to open only when necessary. Retailers could base this decision on when the sales volume at attractions and other retailers is highest or when large events are being held.

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SECTION V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE WORK

The interaction of the various organizations and the assigned roles and responsibilities of each particular organization will remain dynamic as progress is made. Initial roles and responsibilities will change as goals are met, projects are completed, new issues arise, and organizations accept more responsibility. Preliminary recommendations of the responsibilities and roles of the various downtown organizations and committees are listed in the **Appendix as Attachments 3-A and 3-B**.

The strength of Downtown Revitalization Programs is realized through unified collaborative action of the organizations toward agreed upon Revitalization Program goals and objectives. The leadership of the board of directors of individual downtown organizations controls in great part the amount of collaboration between them. In order to attain a high level of cooperation, and agreement in goals and objectives, the boards should contain the same make-up (i.e. for the most part, the same people should serve on the various boards). Not only does this ensure intra-organizational cooperation it ensures control of the process among the key stakeholders: City government, downtown businesses, and downtown residents. It also makes best use of limited board recruit resources. Board make-up should include a majority of private or downtown interests with public entity participation making up the minority. This helps to make certain that a downtown focus will be kept, and that the private sector is driving the effort.

The next step towards implementation of the Revitalization Program begins with gathering willing and appropriate participants to organize the Downtown Aurora Development Corporation. This will be the lead downtown revitalization organization and once formed can then assist with the development and creation of the supporting organizations and committees. A sample job description for the Executive Director position leading DADC can be found in the Appendix as Attachment 4. Additionally, after creating the board of directors for DADC the foundation will be laid for the remaining boards. As soon as DADC is formed attention should be turned to the creation of the supporting organizations and committees.

The following recommendations outline the first steps to establishing an effective Downtown organizational structure in Aurora:

- #1 Establish DADC through utilization of a broad formation committee (including members of the former Main Street Aurora organization). Develop new by-laws that support the recommended structure and mission.
- #2 DADC guides creation of the support committees: Economic Development Committee, Events Committee, Merchants Committee, and Arts Council.

- #3 The City begins the task of developing outreach plans for the Downtown Aurora Community Improvement District. DADC will need to be involved as well.
- #4 The DADC should draft a work program beyond initial implementation for established committees, that also includes the higher level creation of the DACDC and DARDC and any other support committees that arise.

Along with the above responsibility and role adjustments, also required will be realignment of resources such as personnel and funding sources. It will be critical that most, if not all of these organizations show public support of the coming changes. Disagreements should be discussed in meetings and the best unified front possible provided to the public.

The additional work of goal development, bylaw creation or adjustment, mission and vision development can be very exciting and should not get politicized or hijacked for the grandstanding of any individual organization or project. Downtown Aurora Development Corporation will need strong leadership to ensure this doesn't occur. Assistance in evaluating these aspects can be found in the **Appendix as Attachment 5**.

Future DREAM Initiative work will assist in development and improvement of the various funding components, market analysis, and overall strategy development. Formation of these downtown organizations is the first step towards the development of a comprehensive Downtown Revitalization Program.

APPENDIX

Attachment 1

Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire

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Attachment 1

Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire

This is a process to help the community evaluate the effectiveness of existing downtown organizations as well as get an understanding of important factors when considering forming a new downtown organization. It is important for the downtown community to look at its own organizations to determine how it might improve some of its functions, just as it is important to gauge the interest of the community in downtown revitalization. It is beneficial to have many perspectives on how these organizations function. Encourage participants to express their viewpoint even if they are the only one with that perspective or it may seem unpopular.

Community Characteristics

1. Was there a Downtown Organization previously that is no longer functioning or no longer exists?
 - a. If so, please explain.
2. Is there a large amount of conflict in the community (downtown and at-large) about downtown revitalization?
3. Is there strong private business interest in downtown revitalization?
 - a. If so what businesses?
4. Is there strong private citizen interest in downtown revitalization?
 - a. In the downtown community?
 - b. In the community at-large?

Organization Characteristics

5. Is there an organization that is leading efforts towards downtown revitalization? *If there are multiple organizations LEADING efforts please complete all questions for each.*
6. Name of organization.
7. What type of organization is it (non-profit, for-profit, chamber of commerce, political subdivision, etc.)?
8. What year was the organization established?

Attachment 1

9. How many full time employees does it have?
10. How many part time employees does it have?
11. How many volunteers does it have?
12. Where is the organization located?
13. What type of physical facilities does the organization have?
14. Roughly, how many city blocks does the organization cover/represent?
15. Note significant organizational accomplishments.
16. Note significant organizational failures.
17. Note significant organizational challenges.
18. To what extent is the organization involved in providing the following services:
 - a. Capital Improvements (installing pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture; planting trees and shrubbery)
 - b. Consumer Marketing (producing festivals and events; coordinating sales promotions; producing maps and newsletters)
 - c. Economic Development (offering incentives to new and expanding businesses)
 - d. Maintenance (removing litter and graffiti, washing sidewalks, trimming trees)
 - e. Parking and Transportation (managing public parking, maintaining transit shelters)
 - f. Policy Advocacy (promoting public policies to the community; lobbying the government on behalf of business interests)
 - g. Public Space Regulation (managing sidewalk vending; controlling vehicle loading)
 - h. Security (providing supplementary security guards, working with city police force)
 - i. Social Services (aiding low income, providing job training, supplying youth services)
 - j. Any other services not mentioned

Attachment 1

Mission, Purpose, Goals, Vision, Etc.

19. Is there a straightforward and up-to-date written mission statement?
20. Is there a strategic plan being utilized?
21. Are the goals of the organization written, agreed upon, and clear to all?
22. Currently, what are the goals of the organization?
23. Are the goals achievable?
24. Is there a process for setting/renewing goals?
25. Are short term (1 to 3 years) objectives understood and agreed upon by their respective committees/boards?
26. Are long term (3 years+) objectives understood and agreed upon by their respective committees/boards?
27. Are the bylaws current and functional?
28. Do the bylaws contain language requiring short and long term planning for the committees/boards?
29. Does the organization periodically assess its:
 - a. Mission, goals and strategic plan?
 - b. Committee structure and performance?
 - c. Board membership and participation?
 - d. General membership participation?
 - e. Follow through on commitments?
 - f. Budget and goal setting process?
 - g. Role in the community?

Internal Organization Assessment – Committees

30. How many committees are there involved in your organizations activities?
31. What type of activities do the committees conduct?
32. Do committees have a clear statement of purpose?
33. Do committees have clear written goals and objectives?

Attachment 1

34. Do the committees function?

35. Do the committees have specific roles and responsibilities that all members of the organization understand?

36. Is the committee structure and membership make-up reviewed annually for relevancy?

Internal Organization Assessment – Board

37. How many members are on the governing board?

38. Does the organization's board currently have committed and active members?

39. Does the organization's board currently have enough people to carry out its purposes and goals?

40. Do board members have diverse downtown/community interests and perspectives?

41. Do board members have the right mix of skills to lead and direct?

42. Does the organization have a system for recruiting board members for specific needs?

43. Do terms of office provide for stable yet renewing leadership?

44. Does the organization have an orientation session for new board members?

45. Does the organization's board have a drop-out or non-attendance problem?

46. Do board members trust each other?

47. Do board members get along well with each other?

48. Do board members avoid conflicts of interest?

49. Do board members act as a team and work together?

50. Do board members enjoy the organizations meetings and activities?

51. Are board members talents being fully utilized?

52. Are board members individual contributions recognized?

53. Are board members collective efforts acknowledged?

Attachment 1

54. Are board members able to help the board and its committees examine and improve its processes?

Internal Organization Assessment – Membership

55. Does the organization currently have committed and active members?

56. Does the organization's membership base have diverse downtown/ community interests and perspectives?

57. Is the organization's membership base growing, shrinking, stable?

58. Does the organization currently have enough people to carry out its purposes and goals?

59. Does the organization have sufficient skills and diverse community interests and perspectives?

60. Does the organization have a system for recruiting members for specific needs?

61. Does the organization have an orientation session for new members?

62. Does the organization have a drop-out problem?

63. Are general member's talents being fully utilized?

64. Are general member's individual contributions recognized?

65. Are general member's collective efforts acknowledged?

Leadership Characteristics and Effectiveness

66. Are board decisions usually made by:

- a. The board
- b. The officers
- c. Executive director
- d. The committees
- e. Specific individuals
- f. The membership
- g. Combination of above

Attachment 1

67. Does the leadership of the board and its committees effectively encourage different points of view in discussions?
68. Does the leadership of the board and its committees effectively minimize personality differences?
69. Does the leadership of the board and its committees effectively deal with power struggles and hidden agendas?
70. Does the leadership of the board and its committees encourage teamwork?
71. Does the leadership of the board and its committees instill enthusiasm for work to be accomplished?
72. Does the leadership of the board and its committees identify and celebrate milestones?
73. Has the board clearly identified its roles and responsibilities as a board?
74. Has the board clearly identified the roles and responsibilities of the executive director, and his/her relationship to the entire board?
75. Has the board developed a means for minimizing the communication of conflicting board members' expectations to the executive director?
76. Has the board established a process for obtaining staff input for board decision making?
77. Do board and committee meetings have agendas and are they announced in advance of the meeting?
78. Do board and committee meetings follow these agendas?
79. Do board and committee meetings proceed efficiently and effectively?
80. Do board and committee meetings have minutes prepared and distributed in a timely manner?
81. Does the leadership ensure that action goes forward in an orderly manner by seeing to it that decisions are actually made?
82. Does the leadership see to it that all members understand that decision?
83. Does the leadership see to it that someone takes responsibility?

Attachment 1

84. Does the leadership see to it that those persons clearly understand their assignments and specific tasks?
85. Does the leadership see to it that visible results occur?
86. Does the leadership see to it that results are reported to the group?
87. Has the organization established standards of performance or benchmarks from which to evaluate outcomes? If so, please identify and explain those that apply:
- a. Crime Rates
 - b. Taxable retail sales
 - c. Number of jobs created
 - d. Pedestrian/visitor counts
 - e. Lease rates
 - f. Customer attitude survey
 - g. Occupancy rate
 - h. Business license revenue
 - i. Population
 - j. Change in tax base
 - k. Value of real property investment
 - l. Population density
 - m. Other

Fiscal Resources

88. Approximately what is the organizations annual budget?
89. Which of the following are sources of funding for your organization (estimate percentage of total budget for each)?
- a. Special tax assessment on property and/or business
 - b. Bonds (public or private)
 - c. Voluntary donations
 - d. In-Kind contributions
 - e. City general tax revenues
 - f. Subsidies or grants from Federal Gov't

Attachment 1

- g. Subsidies or grants from State Gov't
- h. Sale of goods or services

90. What fundraising activities does the organization undertake?

91. Are the organization's resources sufficient to achieve its goals?

92. Are the organization's resources being used effectively?

93. Is the organization driven primarily by its:

- a. Budget
- b. Goals/strategic plan
- c. Outside factors

Community Networking and Coalition Building

94. Does the organization relate to other community groups and governmental units through ongoing, working relationships?

95. What types of other community groups and governmental units does the organization work with?

- a. Municipality
- b. Community Improvement District
- c. Business Associations
- d. Chamber of Commerce
- e. Economic Development Organization
- f. Visitor or tourism association
- g. Service Club
- h. Environmental Groups
- i. Historic Preservation of Conservation Groups
- j. Historical/Heritage Society
- k. Museum
- l. Churches/Places of faith
- m. Schools/Colleges/Universities
- n. Horticulture Organizations

Attachment 1

- o. Arts and Culture Groups
- p. Senior Groups
- q. Youth Centers/Groups

96. Does the organization seek out new relationships and build coalitions of mutual interest?

97. Does the organization have input into public policy?

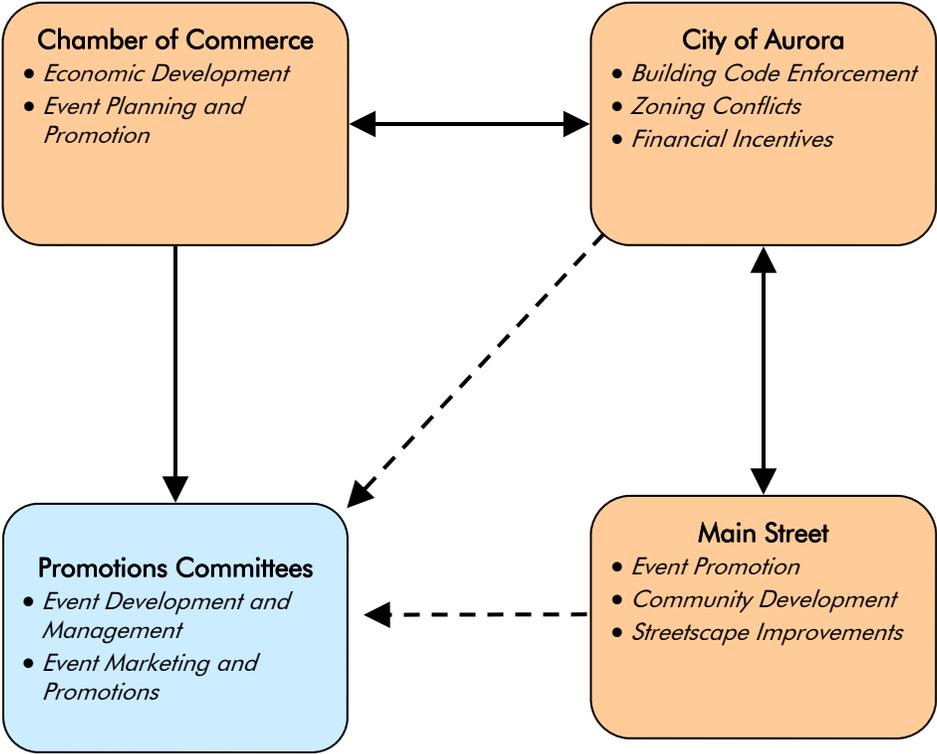
98. Does the organization network at the regional, state, national levels?

Attachment 2-A

Existing Downtown Organizational Structure

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ATTACHMENT 2-A
EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

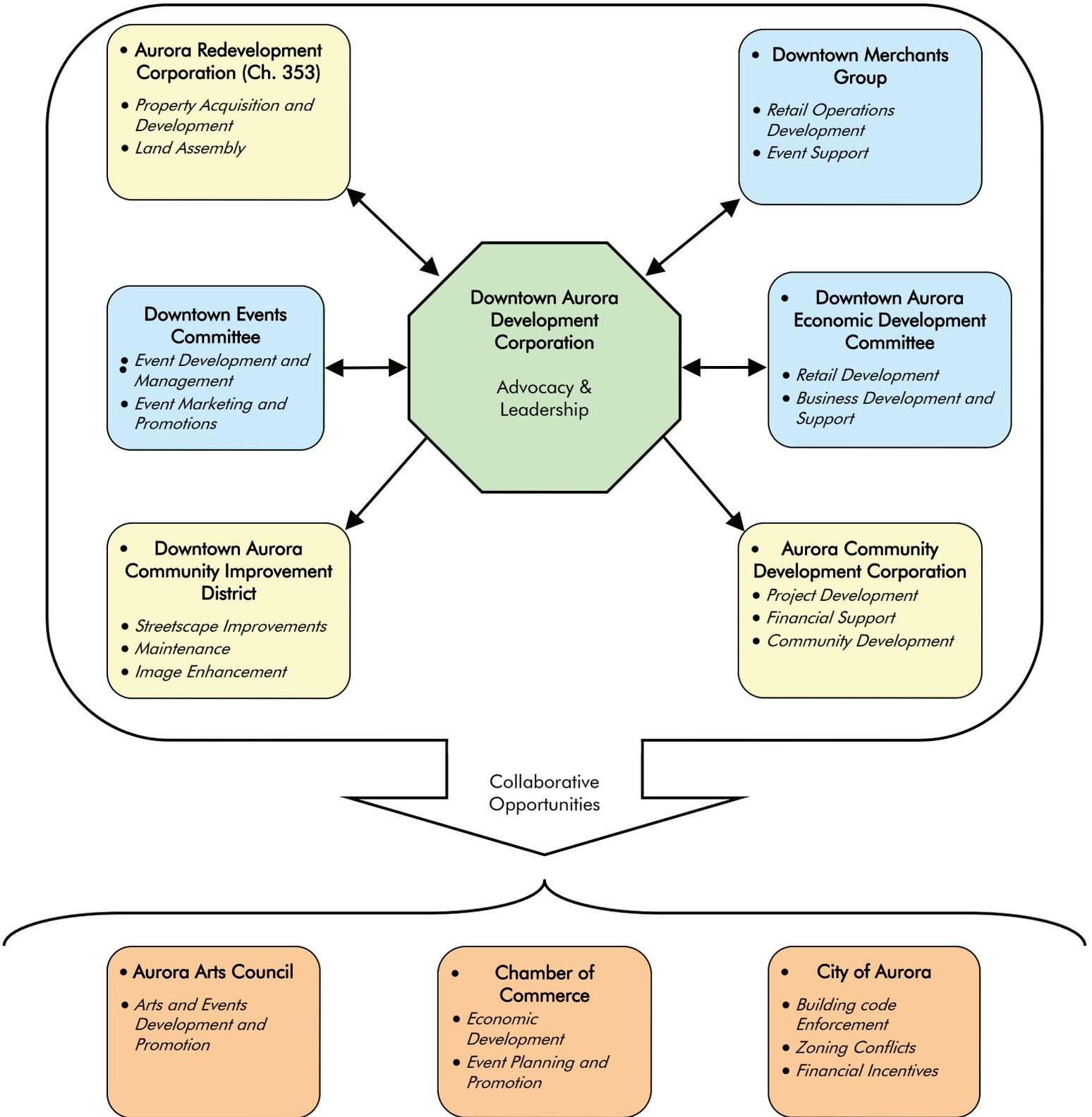


Attachment 2-B

Recommended Downtown Organizational Structure

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ATTACHMENT 2-B
RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Attachment 3-A

Downtown Organizations and Responsibilities

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Attachment 3A - Downtown Organizations and Responsibilities

Elements of a Successful Organization	Main Street Aurora (DADC)	Downtown Community Improvement District	Downtown Community Development Corporation	Downtown Redevelopment Corporation	Downtown Aurora Events Committee	Downtown Economic Development Committee	Downtown Merchants Group	City of Aurora	Aurora Arts Council	Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Leadership	Essential Participant						Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility		Support Responsibility
Management Characteristics	Essential Participant	Essential Participant								
Board Attributes	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant						
Forming Partnerships	Essential Participant				Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility				Support Responsibility
Community Involvement	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility	Essential Participant				Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Alliance Funding	Essential Participant	Essential Participant		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility			Essential Participant		
Organizational Strategic Planning	Essential Participant	Essential Participant						Support Responsibility		
Project Planning and Facilitation	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility		Essential Participant		
Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility
Residential Development & Neighborhood Revitalization	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility		Essential Participant		
Downtown Advocacy	Essential Participant	Essential Participant				Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility			
Real Estate Development Body	Support Responsibility		Essential Participant	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility				
Direct Marketing	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant			Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	
Special Events Planning	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility			Essential Participant		Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Retail and Event Promotions		Essential Participant			Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Safety, Security, and Beautification	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	

 Essential Participant

 Support Responsibility

Attachment 3-B

Specific Downtown Issues and Responsibilities

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Attachment 3B - Specific Downtown Issues and Responsibilities

	Main Street Aurora (DADC)	Downtown Community Improvement District	Downtown Community Development Corporation	Downtown Redevelopment Corporation	Downtown Aurora Events Committee	Downtown Economic Development Committee	Aurora Merchants Group	City of Aurora	Aurora Arts Council	Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Building Design Standards	Essential Participant	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	
Streetscape Design Standards	Essential Participant	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	
Railroad Noise Abatement	Essential Participant	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		
Parking Lot Renovations	Essential Participant	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility		Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		
Wayfinding Improvements	Essential Participant	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility
Downtown Parks	Essential Participant						Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Industrial Conflict	Essential Participant					Essential Participant		Essential Participant		Essential Participant
Pedestrian Improvements	Essential Participant	Essential Participant					Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility
Housing Stock Improvements	Essential Participant		Essential Participant	Essential Participant				Support Responsibility		
Façade Improvements	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant				Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility		Support Responsibility
Building Code Enforcements	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility			Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility

 Essential Participant

 Support Responsibility

Attachment 4

Sample Job Description

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Attachment 4 Sample Job Description

Downtown Aurora Development Corporation Executive Director

Position Overview

The Executive Director position requires an energetic, results-oriented professional eager to be the champion of Aurora Downtown. The position will assume an increasingly responsible leadership and management role in the downtown organization which will lead the Downtown Revitalization Program. The ideal candidate will have the ability to manage complex projects, resolve issues, and work effectively with volunteers, public entities, private entities and a diverse group of stakeholders. Unification of the downtown groups involved will be critical and the Director will need to manage conflict and develop consensus. The Director will effectively and efficiently manage the use of limited resources available.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership

- Charged with informing and educating the public through local media and marketing tools
- Bring focus and vision to the Downtown Revitalization Program and the Organization
- Ensure citizens and businesses have opportunities for input and involvement
- Form partnerships with the community and public and private enterprises in order to achieve revitalization goals
- Provide effective guidance for contracted work for various entities such as services for a future Community Improvement District
- Build grassroots community support as well as form effective public/private partnerships

Downtown Advocate

- Act effectively as a downtown advocate, representing downtown in a variety of situations and addressing needs of constituents
- Facilitate communication and contacts between downtown stakeholders and government officials giving particular attention to significant organizations such as City of Aurora, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

- Respond to requests from businesses, citizens and media in cooperation with other entities such as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Organizational and Project Planning

- Responsible for aligning organizational resources towards achieving Revitalization Program Vision
- Take lead in strategic planning of the downtown organization as well as the overall Downtown Revitalization Program
- Utilize resources and overcome obstacles in facilitating completion of goals and objectives

Management

- Assume a variety of administrative and operational duties including staff supervision, budget preparation, grant application and administration, developing and implementing work programs, and evaluating and entering into contracts for services
- Attend all board and committee meetings as well as appropriate government meetings

Job Requirements

- Creative, entrepreneurial self-starter, capable of working independently
- Diplomatic, able to work with a variety of people
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Five or more years experience in one or more of the following areas: architecture, business administration, downtown management, economic development, finance, historic preservation, planning, public administration, public relations
- Excellent organizational and administrative skills
- Strong computer skills, particularly internet, email, word processing and spreadsheet applications

Attachment 5

Board and Committee Recommendations

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Attachment 5

Board and Committee Recommendations

GENERAL OPERATING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Boards and committees should annually review their mission statement to make sure that it clearly states what their mission is in 25 words or less, is clearly written in easy to understand language, and is something that is easy to articulate.**

Far too often mission statements are written in a clumsy fashion, often in legal language, and are of very little use to the organization. Frequently mission statements are filed away with the bylaws and are seldom used. The purpose of a clearly written, updated mission statement is to be able to have an organization use it in its public relations, in its communication with its board and its committees, and with the public in every way that it can.

- **The board of an organization should also carefully review the existing committee structure and membership to see if all committees are necessary, properly staffed, oriented on group goals, and supplied with the proper organizational resources.**

Any new goals required to attain the mission may mean that new committees need to be established.

- **Boards and committees should also annually review, establish, and publish their goals for the future.**

The board needs to establish both short-term goals (one or two years in length) and long-term goals (three to five years in length or more) for itself. A strategic planning committee should be established with members from the board and/or with each of the organization's committees for the purpose of establishing these sets of goals. Committees should meet to form their own goals so that their actions will complement the Board or other Committee's actions.

A voluntary community organization, board, or committee needs to be able to transfer its goals from board to board, from year to year. There is a tendency to rely on the leadership, enthusiasm, or charisma of a president or chair and achieve only the individual goals set for that year. Then, under a new president, the organization shifts in a different direction.

Leaders have difficulty in mobilizing a community organization around goals articulated by one or some of its members. It is much more effective when a group sits down at least once a year and articulates and votes on their goals together. Group goals can then be carried forward year after year regardless of who the office holders are.

Often the goals of an organization are implied or assumed but are not explicitly written and clear. Goals also need to be written in terms that are clear, measurable, and objective so that it is more readily obvious when and if the goals are being accomplished. (Example: To raise \$5,000 for capital improvements within twelve months.)

- **Boards and committees need to indeed be functioning, meeting regularly, communicating with other committees and carrying through with goals and objectives.**

When a given committee is working in cooperation with another committee it must be clearly understood by all members and the Board which one of the committees is the lead committee and which one is the support committee. Many organizations get into difficulty because they have not clearly established which of several committees is taking the lead in monitoring the progress on a given organizational goal.

- **Effective leadership does not happen by accident, but must be identified, recruited, and developed.**

Constant communication and involvement with all members will usually offer clues to where the leadership potential lies in an organization. Leadership positions require delicate handling. If

the leadership position of a board or committee has a one-year term of office it may result in revolving door leadership. On the other hand long terms with officers staying in the position too long do not allow for the fresh input of new officers.

Usually leaders are of the minority group that does the majority of the work. Leaders need to be challenged, empowered, and recognized constantly. A good leader usually walks a fine line between productivity and 'burnout'.

Leaders must be able to properly deal with power struggles in the open and be effective in getting hidden agendas on the table so that they can be dealt with at the board meetings. A meeting is the proper place for power struggles and hidden agendas to be dealt with rather than either before or after the board meetings are over. A leader can't just run an agenda, but has to be able to make difficult decisions.

- **A board and committee should follow its leader, but be diverse enough in its composition to effectively consider a broad selection of alternative ideas.**

The board itself should represent diverse points of view from the community and represent diverse geographical representation of the municipality. The board should encourage different points of view in discussion. Without debate decisions may represent superficial agreement rather than having covered the more difficult and underlying issues.

- **Agree to disagree - It is expected that people will have different ideas and conflict with each other from time to time, but it is important that board members basically get along well with each other in spite of their differences.**

It is natural for board or committee members to have different points of view and therefore conflicts, but the organization must make sure that people are not voting on their own self interests, but for the good of the group. Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, must be minimized and avoided if possible. The

integrity of the voting members of a board or committee is called into question where clearly they would benefit from the vote, but are not being up-front about their stake in the matter. A policy for handling such matters should be developed.

- **Board and committee members must set an example for other members by being active and engaged to drive the organization forward.**

Most volunteer work occurs between the meetings. Members who agree to serve in a leadership capacity have to understand and encourage this behavior.

Agendas and minutes are important communication tools to capture the actions that occur at meetings. It is important that decisions made at meetings are really understood by all of the members and responsibilities are understood for given tasks.

A process should be developed whereby results of activities are reported, whether positive or negative, and the board or committee can then apply further consideration, action, or reassignment of tasks if necessary.

- **It is important that efforts are made to fully utilize both board members' and general membership's talents.**

It is rare that an organization fully capitalizes on the talents of its members. An effective system for recruiting volunteers for specific needs must be developed. Often in volunteer organizations there is a tendency to 'settle' for the warm body that will take on a task, when a volunteer more suited to the task may go overlooked. It can be difficult to express that a volunteer isn't 'right' for a certain job, but sometimes productivity can be added by subtraction. Again, constant communication with members is critical.

- **Respect the volunteers time.**

Due to the nature of a volunteer organization, where people are giving up their time to work on matters of mutual concern, it is important that everyone is able to enjoy the work in which they are involved. Satisfaction of a job well done is often their only paycheck. Acknowledgment for contributions plays an important role in volunteer work, especially in view of the fact that these are principally activities being undertaken by people apart from their paid employment. Those involved in the process are motivated by emotion, passion, financial returns and many other unique and personal reasons. Contributions should be verbally acknowledged during meetings and, from time to time, in the organization's newsletter, press release, or at the annual meeting.

Meetings can, and should be, fun! Organizations with participants that do not enjoy their meetings have greater problems with attendance, retention, and task accomplishment.

Community organizations are dependent on many people acting together to be effective and suffer more difficulties when only a few people are, or are thought to be, responsible for leading the community organization in its efforts to accomplish its mission.