

DOWNTOWN  
REVITALIZATION &  
ECONOMIC  
ASSISTANCE FOR  
MISSOURI

March 2012

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE REVIEW

## EVALUATION FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Lamar, Missouri





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### A. 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; the decline of downtown. The steady 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 has 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. And, equally important, the reemergence of downtown as a diverse and enjoyable place to be will help create a positive and lasting image of the entire community.

Downtown revitalization is a community process that requires local champions and promoters who are willing to invest time and effort to support the established program. 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 support. The Downtown Revitalization Program involves coordinating a complex but interrelated series of events, relying heavily upon 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 strategies
- 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. Upon review, it may be determined that the existing organizational structure is quite sufficient to continue the revitalization effort, that the organization will benefit from some minor or limited adjustments, or that some significant changes are required. During the evaluation of an existing organization or committee, a recommendation will be made as to whether or not that organization is still relevant and can effectively complete downtown revitalization responsibilities. A critical

review is conducted 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. Organizational change may be necessary to meet the evolving roles and responsibilities of an existing group in response to the progression of revitalization activities in Downtown. In these cases, organizational change is recommended to build organizational capacity. The capacity of an organization includes its financial resources, personnel, volunteers, 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 affective use of 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. A new group can combine all the principles and functions of a successful revitalization organization into a single working unit. However, setting up a new organization requires additional resources and must be done carefully or it may only be seen as an extension of previous failed efforts or ineffective organizations.

In all cases, a formal communication procedure should be developed and established between existing and future organizations. It may seem adequate that "the same 10 people see each other every day", but they will forget to talk about important matters and there is no record of decisions made or agreements. This will eventually lead to resentment and finger pointing. Existing groups are in an ideal situation to build and maintain regular communication channels such as address and email lists. These methods of communication should be assessed for their effectiveness. Once effective communications are established it is vital that these channels remain open.

In Lamar, downtown revitalization will have the advantage of building upon previous successes as a result of past and current efforts, particularly the Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC), and the many groups it supports, especially the DownTown Mainstreet Association (DTMA). Additionally, the City of Lamar (City) and Barton County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) are integral players in Downtown and provide coordination between all the groups. This document provides an overview of Downtown Lamar and an examination of the roles and relationships of these groups. Comparisons are made between the existing structure and a list of "Elements of Successful Organizations" to provide a series of recommendations that will enhance the organizational structure and effectively lead the resurgence of Downtown Lamar.

## B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations noted in this report represent steps to achieve an Organizational Structure with the components in place to attain sustainability and drive Downtown Lamar revitalization efforts well into the future. These recommendations can be implemented in part, or in whole, and there may certainly be other possible scenarios that the City of Lamar leadership feels are more fitting to its unique circumstances. This report simply represents the most effective solution in PGAV's opinion. The principal recommendations for achieving better sustainability of the involved organizations and spurring Downtown revitalization include:

- **Promote the Downtown Mainstreet Association (DTMA), outside the umbrella of the Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC), as the Lead Organization in Downtown Lamar's revitalization**

The DTMA, beyond the umbrella of the LCBC, should play the primary role guiding all Downtown revitalization pursuits. The LCBC should continue to provide leadership and assistance in consolidating the efforts of supporting organizations and groups. The task of improving and maintaining Downtown Lamar will require a major commitment from the entire community. Through the various planning studies and documents developed during the DREAM process, it has become apparent that considerable work is required for Downtown success. To be effective, the DTMA will require paid staff to help facilitate the revitalization goals for Downtown.

- **Formation of a Downtown Lamar Community Improvement District (DLCID)**

A Community Improvement District, or CID, can be used very effectively for a broad range of development and organizational activities that benefit Downtown. The DLCID is created as a political subdivision where funds would be generated through an additional sales or property tax. The DREAM Financial Assistance Evaluation will provide specific revenue estimates for recommended incentive districts like a CID. Any effort to establish a CID must include an adequate community outreach campaign where the benefits of the district are shown to outweigh projected costs or perceived negatives. The DLCID is proposed to collaborate with the DTMA regarding the expenditure of CID funds.

- **Creation of a Downtown Lamar Community Development Corporation (DLCDC)**

The DLCDC will be a multi-bank corporation from which loans and equity can be provided to small businesses or development partners for a number of roles in the revitalization of Downtown Lamar. The DLCDC can assist with the development of housing, commercial real estate, and small businesses. The formation of the DLCDC should be comprised of participating banks and include local businesses that fund the organization through donations, grants, and other forms of investment.

The traditional duties of a CDC could also apply to the Barton County Community Development Corporation (BCCDC). With the possibility of limited resources, and in lieu of setting up an entirely new organization, the BCCDC can take steps to strengthen its focus and role in the Downtown revitalization process by providing financial assistance specifically for business development in Downtown Lamar.

Either setting up a new organization or strengthening an existing one, the City, LCBC, DTMA, and Chamber should begin the task of developing a promotion program to encourage local banks to participate in the process. Promotional materials for spreading information regarding the DLCDC/BCCDC among local business, perspective businesses and developers should also be produced.

- **Creation of a Downtown Lamar Redevelopment Corporation (DLRC)**

Though not required in the near term, this type of development tool may be appropriate at a later date. It is an appropriate tool for stimulating new housing and commercial development in Downtown. Organized as a for-profit corporation pursuant to Ch. 353 RSMo, a Downtown Redevelopment Corporation would be positioned to take advantage of tax abatement for any improvements occurring as a result of plan implementation. As with the DLCID and the DLCDC, all parties will, at the appropriate time, need to begin formulating procedures for disseminating information regarding the DLRC to appropriate audiences.

**While not impacting the organizational structure directly, there are activities that various groups should undertake that will underscore support for the Downtown Leadership structure and bolster all the organizations involved. The following are additional recommendations for the City of Lamar:**

- **Enhance public streetscape elements around the Courthouse and expand the improvements throughout Downtown, specifically along West 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the Truman Birthplace**

The City and Downtown leadership have expressed great interest in providing a substantial visual connection between Downtown and the Truman Birthplace site. Expansion of the streetscape elements requires a public education campaign to illustrate the necessary investment and a demonstration that the City is being a good steward with public money. The benefits and successes that occur in Downtown should be promoted openly and directly tied to public infrastructure improvements.

- **Assist with the relocation of the Barton County Historical Society (BCHS) to a more suitable site on, or around, the Downtown Square**

Although centrally placed within the Downtown Square, the BCHS is located in a corner of the Barton County Courthouse basement and loses the opportunity to be an integral destination for visitors. This cultural resource should be relocated to a more visible spot, preferably on the Square, where it can operate more effectively and contribute to Downtown's revitalization.

## SECTION II DOWNTOWN LAMAR OVERVIEW

Downtown Lamar, similar to other communities, is pursuing an enhanced revitalization process. Downtown has strengths and weaknesses to consider as the revitalization emerges. As part of the Organizational Structure Review, it is important to look at the overall status of Downtown. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the community's planning efforts for Downtown revitalization, existing groups' involvement in Downtown, and a brief summary of achievements to date.



Map of Lamar DREAM Study Area

In 2007, the community completed Next Step 2030 in collaboration with University of Missouri Extension and Drury College. Next Step 2030 is the result of a planning effort that focused on potential improvements to Downtown Lamar. The Plan provided an accounting of existing assets in Downtown and gathered essential public input. One insight highlighted in the Next Step 2030 plan was that of "Connections." The report suggests that the Lamar Downtown Square is the heart of the community and should be connected in distinct ways: north, to the public school complex; south along Gulf Street to Lamar City Park; and east along 11<sup>th</sup> street to the Harry S Truman Birthplace. It should be noted that Next Step 2030 is not a final plan, but an important step in the City's Downtown Revitalization planning process.

The current Lamar Comprehensive Plan was recently updated in 2008. Although issues related to Downtown are mentioned throughout the report, there is no specific section solely dealing with Downtown.

There are multiple entities involved in Downtown Lamar revitalization efforts. The Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC) is a board of individuals acting as the umbrella organization over multiple groups representing various aspects of retail, business, residential and cultural interests in the City. Some of the key groups relevant to Downtown Lamar are the DownTown Mainstreet Association (DTMA), Arts Council of Barton County, and the Barton County Historical Society (BCHS).

- The DownTown Mainstreet Association (DTMA) is important to the DREAM process in that they provide a singular focus on Downtown Lamar, more so than any other group under the guidance of the LCBC. The DTMA recently began the process of establishing itself as a separate and lead entity for the Downtown revitalization process through the Missouri Main Street process. Some key accomplishments by the DTMA include:
  - Plaza Theatre renovation
  - Moore Pavilion
  - New Decorative Street Lights
  - Planter & Bench Installation on Square
  - Holiday Decorations

The Plaza Theatre, located on the Downtown Square, re-opened in 1998 after a five year restoration project. The DTMA was instrumental in obtaining financial and volunteer support for the project. Showing first-run movies every week, the Plaza is now a source of community pride and provides a destination within Downtown Lamar. In 2003, the DTMA led the effort to finance and construct the Moore Pavilion. The Pavilion is located at the corner of Poplar St. and E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, a block off the Square, and was donated to the City. Currently it is used for the youth animal exhibit during the Lamar Free Fair and houses the Farmer's Market. Additionally, the DTMA is responsible for maintenance of the decorative street lights, benches, planters, and holiday decorations on the Square.

- In 2004, the Arts Council of Barton County acquired a building just a block off of the Downtown Square at 206 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The building provides the venue for regular gallery exhibits on the main floor. Exhibits typically run at least six weeks and the Arts Council attempts to have four to six new exhibits each year. Approximately 4,600 people visit the exhibits annually. The upper level of the Arts Council building has been renovated to allow for dancing and art instruction classes.
- The Barton County Historical Society (BCHS) was established in 1975 and is located in the northwest corner of the Barton County Courthouse basement. An extensive collection of Barton County artifacts are on display and bring approximately 1,500 visitors annually to Downtown Lamar. A stated goal of Downtown leadership through the DREAM Initiative is to provide a better venue for the BCHS, preferably on the Square.

Due to the multiple-pronged structure of the LCBC, the City of Lamar (City) Government and the Barton County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) have played integral roles in advancing the revitalization efforts and promoting the importance of a vibrant Downtown. The City is located at 1104 Broadway in Downtown, just a block off the Square. The main provider of capital improvements, public space regulation, and policy advancement, the City has also initiated some incentive mechanisms and attempted others, but none with a specific emphasis on Downtown.

The Chamber serves all of Barton County and is housed at 102 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, on the Lamar Downtown Square. Since 1994, the Chamber has employed staff that has helped to coordinate economic development activities for Lamar and Barton County. The Chamber works to improve the health of existing businesses, encourage high school youth to explore business as a career, and supports efforts to recruit new businesses into the area. The Chamber also sponsors and coordinates a number of special events and tourism promotion effort for the County.

Along with the City and Chamber, Barton County is a key property owner in Downtown Lamar. Institutional and governmental land use can provide stable jobs and involved volunteers, but care must be taken that the Downtown business mix is not heavy on service offices. Often, governmental offices do not attract customers that create a safe and friendly image for Downtown shoppers.

The private sector has marshaled some support for industrial efforts in Lamar. The Barton County Community Development Corporation (BCCDC) is very involved in channeling economic incentive programs to projects throughout Barton County. This group serves as a point of contact for development projects, maintains local partnerships, and advocates on behalf of various development and business issues for the entire County. A more detailed analysis of the LCBC, City, Chamber, and BCCDC is provided in **Section IV** of this report.

Downtown Lamar retail businesses, as in many cities, compete with other areas of the City and nearby towns. Newer retail areas have developed outside the core of the City to the west, along the highway, and in the separate community of Lamar Heights. Downtown Lamar has smaller businesses that often struggle to attract consumers. While this situation is often seen as a balance and may seem adequate for the City overall, the effect is extremely detrimental to Downtown.

The DREAM Initiative discussed the function of the existing organizational structure with representatives of the LCBC, DTMA, City, and Chamber within the context of a "Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire." This questionnaire was completed by each agency. A copy of the "Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire" is located in **Appendix 1**. Additional input from partner organizations was solicited by PGAV when necessary and numerous other sources of information were used to determine various details about Downtown Lamar.

Additionally, the DREAM Initiative reviewed responses given to questions during focus groups conducted as part of the Community & Consumer Survey task item identified for Lamar. The Focus Group Survey Report dated July 2009, is a transcript of the comments

of participants in the groups of “City Staff, Administration, and Elected Officials”, “Downtown Business Owners”, and “Longtime Residents”.

Focus group questions asked included a general question about the direction of the revitalization effort in Downtown Lamar. Some of the answers received from the various groups are shown as follows:

<p>City Staff, Administration, and Elected Officials</p>	<p>“We’ve definitely seen a decline in retail. Overall, there’s decline on and around the Square. And it’s great to have service businesses, but we need to focus on retail so people don’t go out of town for shopping.”</p>
<p>Downtown Business Owners</p>	<p>“More in the past two or three years, it’s been taking steps backwards, being on the Square and seeing the furniture store and GM close. My goal would be to see every building on and around the Square occupied.”</p>
<p>Longtime Residents</p>	<p>“I was just thinking about what we need to be doing, and we’ve got a lot of empty buildings that need to get filled up, and we need to enhance the look of the Square again. We did that years ago, we spruced up the old fronts, and some of those are getting a little bit dated. Still looks pretty good. I was just up in Nevada, and their Square looks better than ours does, more full buildings.”</p>

The existing organizational structure for Downtown has responded to some opportunities, but it involves many groups and lacks sustainability of long-term planning. In addition it seems that the Downtown revitalization efforts are focused on small individual projects and not ongoing programming and organization. This environment will be unable to address the needs of an emerging Downtown revitalization and it appears that there are some roles and responsibilities that are not being fulfilled. To be discussed in **Section V**, there is a definite need to create sustainable leadership specific to Downtown while maintaining a proper relationship with the organizations that have been accepted by the community in the past. Additionally, any recommendations for existing organizations need to be sensitive to the fact that they have other parts of the community or other members to serve. Responsibilities will also need to be shifted to the appropriate groups and priorities may need to be realigned.

## 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 they be limited in size to 7-9 members. However, given the unique characteristics of each community, under certain circumstances, larger boards can be effective. 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 diverse 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 various 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 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.

## **I. Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction**

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 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. Downtown 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 character of the downtown. 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

### 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. As stated in **Section II**, Lamar’s 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 the organizations of the City of Lamar (City), the Barton County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), and the Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC) which oversees the DownTown Mainstreet Association (DTMA). The existing Downtown Organizational Structure is depicted in **Appendix 2** and illustrates the relationship of various organizations impacting the Downtown Revitalization Program. The following is a description of those existing organizations and their current role in supporting the Downtown Revitalization Program.

#### A. Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC)

The LCBC has traditionally lead revitalization activities for Downtown Lamar and the City. The LCBC was founded in 1965 as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with a primary objective to grow and promote the City of Lamar “through the strengthening of area organizations.” The LCBC is located in the Wolf Building on E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, a few blocks southeast of Downtown.

As the principal organizations working with the DREAM Initiative, the LCBC and the City have taken a number of steps to move Downtown Lamar forward. The LCBC is the lead organization for 15 other groups aimed at bettering the community to live, work, play, and raise children. These organizations act as committees under the direction of the LCBC Board. The LCBC Board is comprised of a minimum 7 members, which meet on a monthly basis. The LCBC has no full-time or part-time employees, but is supported by approximately 20 volunteers.

The LCBC membership includes representatives from the following organizations that are also active in revitalizing Downtown:

- DownTown Mainstreet Association
- Arts Council of Barton County
- Barton County Historical Society
- Master Gardeners

Each organization or group has its own board and members that provide priority and tasks for each group. Many of the same volunteers are utilized by multiple groups. The variety of groups shows a strong demonstration of community support for Downtown and a reflection of the strength of LCBC’s promotion of Downtown as a community gathering place.

The LCBC has no real operating budget, but the City provides funding when needed on an annual basis from the City's general revenues. The LCBC also collects funds from membership dues, grants and fundraisers. These funds are used for projects of individual member organizations, such as promotions and special events, informational pamphlets, marketing materials, and other beneficial activities on behalf of Lamar's residents and businesses.

## **B. DownTown Mainstreet Association (DTMA)**

The DTMA is an organization that was founded as a 501(c)3 entity in 1998. The DTMA focuses on the Downtown Lamar Square and operates with approximately 10 volunteers. However, the group has recently begun the process of establishing itself as a separate and stronger organization through the Main Street Four-Point Approach. The Four-Point Approach is a comprehensive strategy tailored to meet local needs and opportunities in four distinct areas: Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organization. The DTMA has established working committees in each of these four areas.

The organization has been very active in Downtown revitalization efforts and has accomplished beautification, building improvements, streetscape improvements and site furnishings. The DTMA operates without a defined budget, relying on LCBC, City, Chamber, and donations for financial support. There are no bylaws in place, however, there is a board consisting of 4 members who vote on matters relating to aesthetic improvements, maintenance, and Downtown policy advocacy. Leadership of the DTMA is generally shared between this board and the LCBC.

## **C. City of Lamar (City)**

The City has an important role to play in all aspects of Downtown revitalization, but particularly: building code, nuisance, and law enforcement; solving zoning conflicts; and providing financial assistance. With regard to these responsibilities, the City of Lamar has continually fulfilled its role in Downtown revitalization. The City of Lamar has several Departments, each with multiple responsibilities. Typically the City also implements sign, building, and streetscape design standards through zoning and code enforcement.

The City has historically provided a policy framework in regard to grant funding, the DREAM application, and investments such as the streetscape improvements around the Square. The City is also a common thread throughout various interested organizations as staff members serve on many of these groups. City Hall is located within the DREAM study area at 1104 Broadway Street.

The City has worked to improve the economic and physical conditions of Downtown and create opportunities for revitalization. Elected leaders and City staff have encouraged and supported multiple organizations through the use of partnerships and are seeking ways to fund significant projects such as the Truman Birthplace Concept Plan and the Franklin School house reconstruction. While these are positive steps in the revitalization of Downtown Lamar, the City has not placed in service a dedicated tax revenue mechanism for continuous reinvestment in Downtown. The City must balance community-wide needs with those of the Downtown. There is an Enterprise Zone designation for the whole City

and a TIF district in place for the former O’Sullivan Industries site, on the south side of Lamar.

#### **D. Barton County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber)**

The Chamber is an independent membership funded organization whose programs involve small business assistance, regional marketing, business advocacy, economic development, and event planning and promotion. The Chamber is also part of regional tourism and economic development groups such as the Southwest Missouri Tourism Alliance and Southwest Missouri Economic Development Alliance.

The largest portion of funding for the Chamber comes from a Landfill Tipping Fee, with the remainder from membership dues, events, and contributions. The Chamber provides consumer marketing, information, a resource library, networking, and a forum for business issues. As a committed partner to Downtown revitalization, the Chamber provides expertise and resources for special projects and/or issues as needed.

The Chamber is located on E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Downtown and has 12 board members and 2 ex-officio members. The Board elects a President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary at its annual Board Meeting in April. The staff consists of 4 part-time employees and 5 regular volunteers. The Board periodically reviews its goals and has several work committees. The Chamber holds an Annual Membership Meeting where volunteer efforts are recognized.

The Chamber’s role as the broader community representative requires a wider mission that impedes the specific expertise and capacity necessary for the unique issues faced in Downtown’s revitalization. The Chamber supports the LCBC and the DTMA as the “Downtown specific” leadership to which the Chamber provides support.

#### **E. Barton County Community Development Corporation (BCCDC)**

The Barton County Community Development Corporation (BCCDC) provides a series of tools for local economic development and coordinates the building and marketing of speculative properties through funding assistance from the Missouri Department of Economic Development. It serves as a resource center for businesses and industries in the area and assists them to take advantage of municipal, county, state and federal economic programs. The BCCDC maintains a comprehensive inventory of available sites and buildings, works to recruit new and expanding industry to Lamar and Barton County, develop cooperative efforts with local financial resources, and enhance workforce development and training.

The BCCDC undertook a reorganization process in 2009 and hired an Executive Director to lead economic development efforts going forward. Although the BCCDC has a county-wide emphasis, City and Downtown interests are represented as Board members including local bankers and Chamber representatives. Additionally, the City of Lamar has provided seed funds for developing new economic development programs.

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## SECTION V

### RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & ENHANCEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

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 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. The City of Lamar currently has the essential assets for the creation of an organizational structure to achieve the required benchmarks that are necessary for success.

The current organizational structure has established a solid foundation for incorporating some of the elements of successful organizations and revitalization efforts described in **Section III**. However, there are a few 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 increased organizational structure capacity to aggressively address these elements in the future. Furthermore, several of the existing organizations could increase their own capacity to support the Downtown Revitalization Program through growth, collaboration, planning and increased financial resources.

Lamar's existing Downtown organizational structure has several entities involved in the City's evolving Downtown Revitalization Program. The City has taken a number of steps to help Downtown Lamar succeed. The DREAM Initiative proposes a greater leadership role for the Downtown Mainstreet Association (DTMA), but it is critical that the DTMA has an appropriate focus for Downtown, adequate resources including personnel and funding, and support from civic leaders.

While the existing Organizational Structure clearly illustrates the current relationships of the various Downtown supporting groups; **Appendix 3** depicts the Recommended Organizational Structure and the proposed linkages between existing and new groups. These organizations, specific to Downtown, must be pursued for the success of Downtown Lamar revitalization efforts. The organizations should include DTMA, with support of LCBC, leading the effort and providing the Downtown community with advocacy, unification, and leadership. The DTMA will be supported by two additional organizations; a Community Improvement District (CID) to bring the necessary services and financial support to Downtown, and a Community Development Corporation (CDC) whose role is to spur Downtown real estate development. In addition to these organizations there will need to be realignment of responsibilities to ensure an orderly effort and not disrupt important existing activities.

The following recommendations are made in two parts. First, recommendations are provided for new organizations to enhance the existing organizational structure capacity. Second, recommendations are provided for existing organizational enhancements, whether specific to an organization or to an element of successful revitalization efforts involving several organizations. Funding necessary to sustain these organizations will be addressed in more detail in the Financial Assistance Review component of the DREAM Initiative.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW ORGANIZATIONS**

### **A. Downtown Lamar Community Improvement District (DLCID)**

The Downtown Lamar Community Improvement District (DLCID) will provide an extra level of service to the DREAM Study Area. The DLCID will channel private sector energy towards the solution of public problems. The DLCID will work with LCBC, the City, and a Downtown Lamar Community Development Corporation (discussed below in section B.) to provide increased public financing resources resulting from private investment to meet the comprehensive objectives of the Downtown Revitalization Program. Funds generated by the DLCID should be used to provide district marketing, administrative support, event promotions, infrastructure, Downtown beautification, and most importantly to encourage redevelopment of buildings.

The DLCID should contract with LCBC to provide administrative and technical services for ongoing administration of the DLCID, in addition to the services discussed earlier.

The DLCID 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 DLCID 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.

As a political subdivision, CID is organized through a petition which states whether the Board is elected or appointed by the ranking city official. It is recommended that the Board consist of seven (7) to nine (9) members. A CID may be funded by levying a tax on property, charging a fee for a business license, or charging an additional sales tax.

A CID that is created as a political subdivision can finance the costs of a project through the imposition of:

- (1) Special assessments for those improvements that specifically benefit the properties within the district;
- (2) Property taxes; or
- (3) A sales tax up to a maximum of 1%

It may finance the costs of a project through the imposition of fees, rents and charges for district property or services or grants, gifts and donations.

A CID may also issue bonds, notes and other obligations and may secure any of such obligations by mortgage, pledge assignment or deed of trust of any or all of the property and income of the district. However, the bonds or other obligations of a CID that is created as a non-profit corporation will not be tax-exempt.

#### **B. Downtown Lamar Community Development Corporation (DLCDC)**

The Downtown Lamar Community Development Corporation (DLCDC) should be a Downtown based non-profit or for-profit corporation formed to conduct public benefit projects and other redevelopment activities. The ultimate decision of whether to form as a non-profit or for-profit CDC lies with those partners forming the entity and the specific roles assigned the organization. The existence of the Barton County CDC should provide an effective model from which the DLCDC can draw experience and Board members. The DLCDC can take on many roles in the effort including: economic, housing, and commercial real estate development, particularly small business growth. Membership of the organization will be made up mainly of participating banks but can include local businesses. Funding for the DLCDC 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, LCBC, DLCID, and the City. If a non-profit is desirable the DLCDC is organized in the same manner as other non-profits, pursuant to Ch. 355 statutes. And, again, as with a CID, the DLCDC Board should consist of no more than seven (7) to nine (9) members.

The formation of a separate Downtown-focused CDC may prove a difficult task due to a finite amount of resources in Lamar. In this case the other option is to charge the BCCDC with the role of a CDC in the revitalization of Downtown Lamar. This includes: economic, housing, and commercial real estate development, particularly small business growth. While these efforts continue for the benefit of the greater Lamar area and Barton County, a special emphasis is needed on conducting public benefit projects and other redevelopment activities for Downtown. This can be accomplished through direct collaboration with DTMA, the creation of a Downtown subcommittee and inclusion of a Downtown emphasis in the CDC's mission statement. Membership of the organization shall continue to be made up of participating banks but also include other businesses. With a multi-bank CDC loans and equity can be provided to small businesses or development partners. In order to strengthen its Downtown focus, the board should also include representatives from the DTMA and DLCID, as well as the City and the Chamber.

With greater investment and focus, the BCCDC can begin to affect positive development changes in Downtown Lamar.

### **C. Downtown Lamar Redevelopment Corporation (DLRC)**

If necessary, the Downtown Lamar Redevelopment Corporation could be formed at a future date as a private activity is attracted. The Redevelopment Corporation will be a tool for stimulating construction of new housing and commercial development. If a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Area is established, the DLRC would be able to take advantage of unique financial tools as well as be a leader in property acquisition. The DLRC should work closely with the DLDC in spurring real estate development in Downtown. The DLRC should be organized as a for-profit corporation, with limitations on earning, pursuant to Chapter 353 statues. Board members for DLRC should be represented by board members of DLDC, the City, LCBC, 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS**

### **D. Lamar Community Betterment Council (LCBC)**

The LCBC is the lead support organization for all groups charged with bettering the entire Lamar community, and therefore requires a wider mission beyond just Downtown. The LCBC should continue to establish itself as the lead unifier of community interests and encourage broad organizational support in its efforts to advance the City of Lamar, and more specifically, Downtown. The most effective way to accomplish this is to allow the Downtown Mainstreet Association (DTMA) to fill the primary role as leader of the Downtown Lamar Revitalization Program.

The LCBC will continue to be responsible for advocacy on behalf of Downtown and promotion of its members' interests. In that regard, it will maintain its role as the support organization for the DTMA, rallying volunteers, gathering resources, and pressing for progress. The LCBC should explore the potential of hiring a paid employee who could assist in facilitating the goals and priorities of the LCBC.

### **E. Downtown Mainstreet Association (DTMA)**

The DTMA provides a singular focus on Downtown Lamar and therefore offers the most effective basis to lead the Downtown Revitalization Program. It is imperative that the organization continue to take the necessary steps to strengthen and grow to fulfill this role. For the DTMA to function as intended, it requires the hiring of an Executive Director to oversee operations and a support person to assist with administrative duties and other functions. The Director of this organization, whether in a full or part-time capacity, is instrumental in growing respect for DTMA and generating interest in Downtown Lamar.

DTMA requires assistance with identifying and obtaining sustainable funding. The proposed DLCID will provide some financial relief to the DTMA and the LCBC to assist in the hiring of employees, as stated previously.

The administration of both the DTMA and DLCID by the Director should emphasize the development and financing of promotions, business attraction and retention, and building rehabilitation.

With increased staffing, the Director will be able to allocate resources toward the goals and objectives of DTMA. A goal of annual strategic planning should be accomplished and the Director's role in implementing the objectives of such planning will be vital. The opportunity for additional staffing can provide the Director with the ability to enhance Downtown business recruitment and expansion through one-on-one meetings with developers, prospective business owners, and property owners. Increased funding and staffing will also allow the Director to take an active and direct role in the ongoing development and execution of Downtown Revitalization efforts while building upon the diverse programs currently offered by LCBC.

#### F. City of Lamar (City)

The City of Lamar's involvement in Downtown Revitalization is critical for success. Many Downtown successes to date have occurred due to the City's participation, leadership, and financial participation. Additionally, City involvement demonstrates local government commitment and increases the likelihood of broad citizen and private interest participation. The City should assist in the development of all necessary political subdivisions and districts as well as participate in 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, such as providing a streetscape connection between the Downtown Square and the Truman Birthplace, should continue and exceed the current level of activity, where possible. The City should also continue to assist with leveraging other resources by providing a local match investment for certain funding programs. 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 continue to play an important role in all aspects of Downtown revitalization. The City should take the lead in the tough decisions that lie ahead.

- The City will need to provide attention to Downtown code enforcement, historic preservation district establishment, design guidelines adherence, and preparing wayfinding and signage, not only in the DREAM Study Area, but throughout the City. Building code enforcement should be pursued aggressively and fairly.
- It is recommended that the City take a supporting role, in partnership with the LCBC and DTMA, in educating and informing the Downtown community about the benefits of establishing the DLCID.

## **G. Barton County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber)**

As stated previously, the Chamber's role as the broader community representative requires a wider mission, beyond just Downtown. As such, the Chamber will continue to be in a vital support role rather than a lead role in Downtown revitalization. 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, sales monitoring, tourism, and visitor counts. However, business development, small-business assistance, 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 developed within the context of the overall Downtown revitalization effort.

## **H. Arts Council of Barton County (Arts Council)**

The encouragement of the arts and, particularly, of an artist community can provide a unique aspect to a visitor or resident's experience of Downtown Lamar. The existence of the Arts Council in Downtown provides a local organization through which grant programs, offered through the Missouri Arts Council (MAC), can be managed and offered to local artists or to out-of-town artists to encourage them to perform in or relocate to Lamar. The MAC, through its Community Arts Program (CAP), provides funding to local arts councils. To be eligible for CAP funding, an organization must maintain basic eligibility requirements as follows:

- Offer programs in more than one, MAC-funded arts discipline and/or offer arts services and foster the long-term cultural development of the community
- Only one organization per community may apply
- Must be a non-profit organization and either an Arts Council or a unit of local government
- Members of governing board must be elected or appointed by others than existing board members

As part of a possible Downtown CID, the Arts Board could also have access to DLCID monies with which to fund activities and add to any grant funds the organization might receive via the MAC.

## **I. Barton County Historical Society (BCHS)**

The Barton County Historical Society provides a cultural asset and destination for the City of Lamar, and more specifically Downtown. As a member organization of LCBC, the BCHS offers tremendous value in educating the Downtown Lamar organizational structure on issues of historical importance, such as preservation and historic funding opportunities. This vital role should be enhanced as the Downtown Revitalization Program progresses.

The BCHS is currently located in a corner of the basement of the Barton County Courthouse, in the middle of the Downtown Square. While centrally placed, this location is easily missed by visitors to Downtown and therefore squanders an opportunity to add to their

cultural experience. Efforts should be made to relocate this important destination to a more visible spot, preferably on the Square, for the BCHS to operate more effectively and significantly add to the Downtown Revitalization Program.

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## SECTION VI

### 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 **Appendix 4** and **Appendix 5**.

The success of Downtown Revitalization Programs is realized through unified collaborative action of the organizations toward agreed upon Revitalization Program goals and objectives. The LCBC, as well as the leadership of the boards 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 guarantees control of the process among the key stakeholders: City government, Downtown businesses, and Downtown residents. It also makes best use of limited board recruitment 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 incorporating the recommendations of this report into the DTMA and promoting that organization heavily as the leader of the Downtown Revitalization Program. LCBC will need to assist with the continuing development of the supporting organizations and committees. Additionally, the boards of the DTMA and LCBC will be the foundation for the remaining boards of the new establishments. A sample job description for the Director position leading DTMA can be found in the **Appendix 6**.

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

- #1 Establish the DTMA, with continuing support from the LCBC, as the leader of the Downtown Revitalization Program and incorporate recommendations of this report.
- #2 The City, DTMA, and LCBC begin the task of developing outreach plans for the Downtown Lamar Community Improvement District (DLCID).
- #3 The City, DTMA, and LCBC begin the task of developing outreach plans for the Downtown Lamar Community Development Corporation (DLCDC), or assisting BCCDC in assuming a greater Downtown focus.

Along with these responsibility and role adjustments, a realignment of resources such as personnel and funding sources may be required. 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 with the best unified front possible provided to the public.

The additional work of goal development, bylaw creation or adjustment, and mission and vision development can be very exciting and should not get politicized or hijacked for the grandstanding of any individual organization or project. A new Community Improvement District and Community Development Corporation will each need strong leadership to ensure this doesn't occur. Assistance in evaluating these aspects can be found in the **Appendix 7**.

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



# Appendix 1

## Downtown Organization Assessment Questionnaire



**APPENDIX 1**  
**DREAM Lamar**  
**Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire**

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The Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire is part of a process to help the Lamar community evaluate existing downtown organizations. The process which is defined as the Organizational Structure Review will give the Lamar community an understanding of the various roles and functions of existing organizations and recommendations for potential new organizations.

It is important for the Downtown community to look at its 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.

Please answer all questions which apply to your organization.

**Community Characteristics**

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

**Organization Characteristics**

5. Is there an organization that is leading efforts towards downtown revitalization? *If there are multiple organizations LEADING various 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?

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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 landscaping)
  - b. Consumer Marketing (producing festivals and events; coordinating sales promotions; producing maps, brochures and newsletters)
  - c. Economic Development (offering incentives to new and expanding businesses)
  - d. Maintenance (removing litter and graffiti, cleaning sidewalks, trimming trees, etc...)
  - e. Parking and Transportation (managing public parking lots, signage and bus 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, etc...)
  - h. Security (providing supplementary security guards, working with city police department, etc...)
  - i. Social Services (aiding low income, providing job training, supplying youth services, etc...)
  - j. Any other services not mentioned

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**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? Are the goals achievable?
23. Is there a process for setting/renewing goals?
24. Are short term (1 to 3 years) objectives understood and agreed upon by their respective committees/boards?
25. Are long term (3 years+) objectives understood and agreed upon by their respective committees/boards?
26. Are the bylaws current and functional?
27. 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**

28. How many committees are involved in your organization's activities?
29. What type of activities do the committees conduct?
30. Do committees have clear written goals and objectives?
31. How do the committees function?
32. Do the committees have specific roles and responsibilities that all members of the organization understand?

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

**Internal Organization Assessment – Board**

34. How many members are on the governing board?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

43. Do board members trust each other?

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

45. Do board members avoid conflicts of interest?

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

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

48. Are board members talents being fully utilized?

49. Are board members individual contributions recognized?

50. Are board members collective efforts acknowledged?

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**DREAM Lamar**  
**Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire**

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

**Internal Organization Assessment – Membership**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60. Are general member's individual and collective contributions recognized?

**Leadership Characteristics and Effectiveness**

61. Are board decisions usually made by:

- h. The board
- i. The officers
- j. Executive director
- k. The committees
- l. Specific individuals
- m. The membership
- n. Combination of above

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

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79. 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**

80. Approximately what is the organizations annual budget?

81. 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
- g. Subsidies or grants from State Gov't
- h. Sale of goods or services

82. What fundraising activities does the organization undertake?

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

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

85. Is the organization driven primarily by its:

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

**Community Networking and Coalition Building**

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

87. 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 or Conservation Groups
- j. Historical/Heritage Society
- k. Museum
- l. Churches/Places of faith
- m. Schools/Colleges/Universities
- n. Horticulture Organizations
- o. Arts and Culture Groups
- p. Senior Groups
- q. Youth Centers/Groups

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

APPENDIX 1  
DREAM Lamar  
Downtown Organizational Assessment Questionnaire

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89. Does the organization have input into public policy?

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



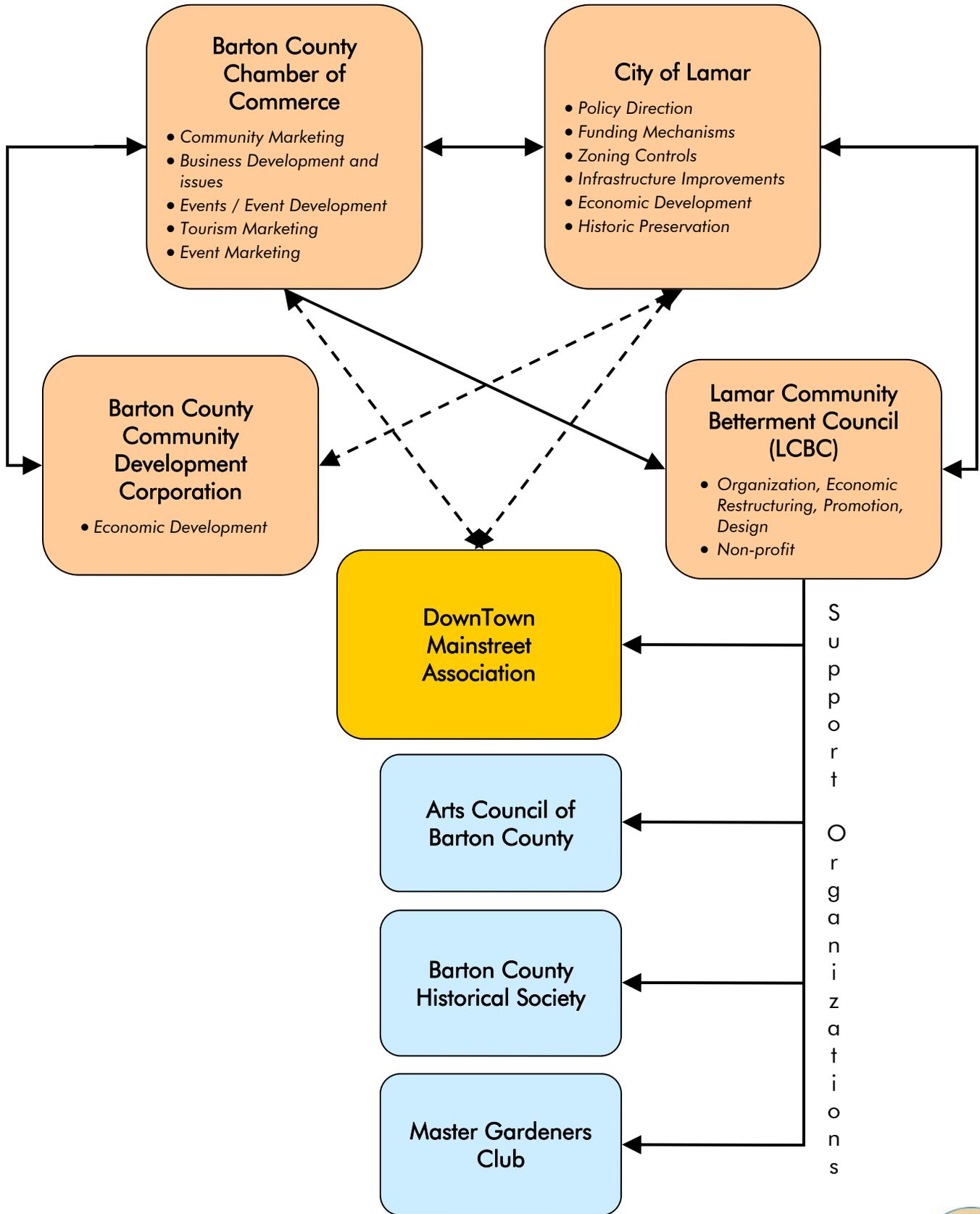
# Appendix 2

## Existing Downtown Organizational Structure



## APPENDIX 2

### EXISTING DOWNTOWN LAMAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





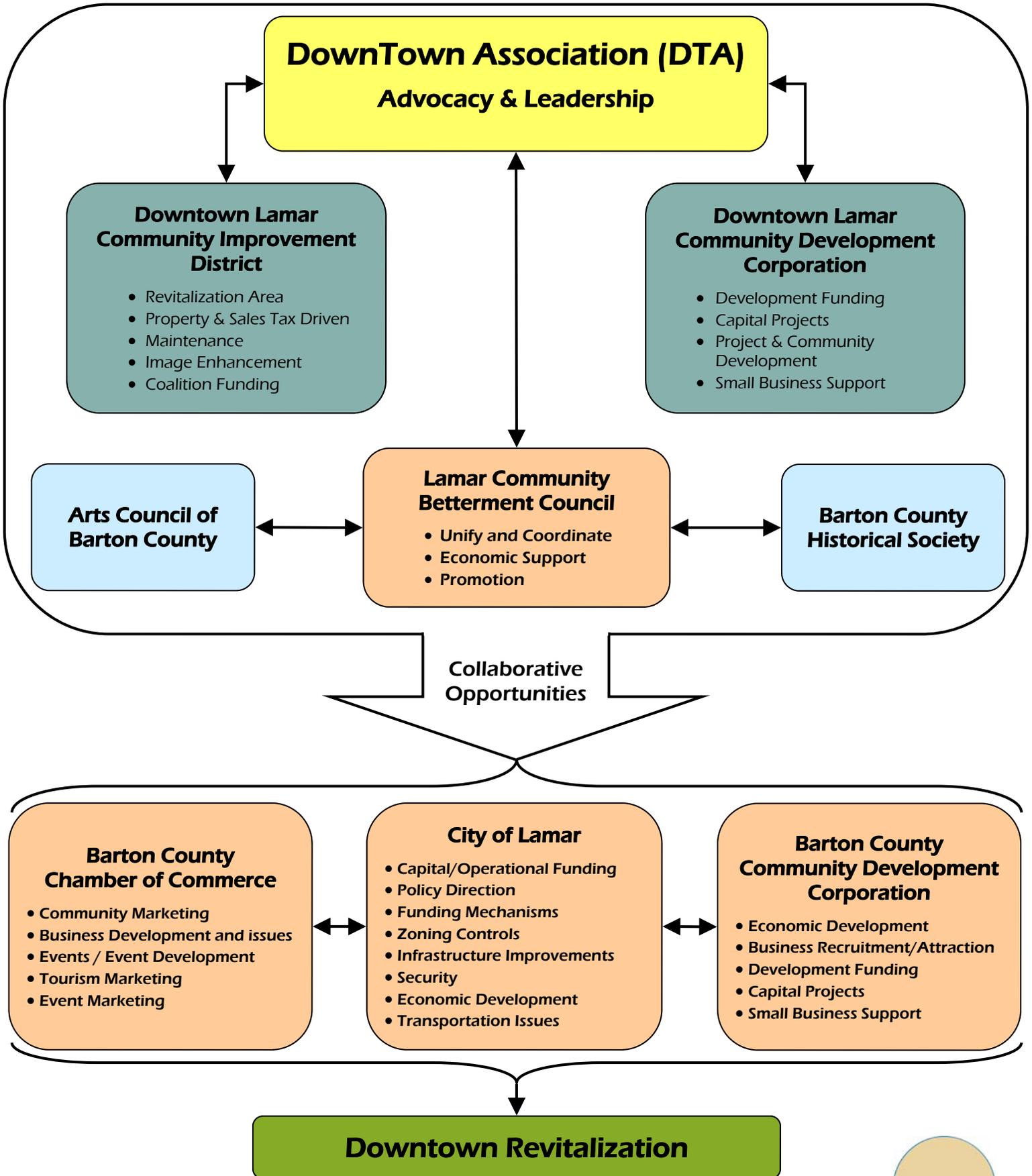
# Appendix 3

## Recommended Downtown Organizational Structure



# APPENDIX 3

## RECOMMENDED DOWNTOWN LAMAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





# Appendix 4

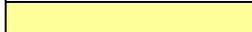
## Downtown Organizations and Responsibilities



**Appendix 4 - Downtown Organizations & Responsibilities**

Elements of a Successful Organization	Existing Organizations				Recommended Organizations or Changes		
	City of Lamar	Barton County Chamber of Commerce	Lamar Community Betterment Council	DownTown Mainstreet Association	Lamar Downtown Community Improvement District	Community Development Corporation (DLCDC or BCCDC)	Lamar Downtown Redevelopment Corporation
Leadership	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	
Management Characteristics	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant		Support Participant
Board Attributes	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Forming Partnerships	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant		Support Participant	Support Participant
Community Involvement	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant		Support Participant	Essential Participant
Organization Funding	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant		Essential Participant	Essential Participant	
Organizational Strategic Planning	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant	
Project Planning and Facilitation	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant		Support Participant	Support Participant
Business, Retention, Expansion and Attraction	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Residential Development and Neighborhood Revitalization	Essential Participant		Support Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Downtown Advocacy	Essential Participant	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Real Estate Development Body	Support Participant					Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Direct Marketing	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant	
Special Events Planning	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Participant		
Retail and Event Promotions	Support Participant	Support Participant	Essential Participant	Essential Participant			
Safety, Security, and Beautification	Essential Participant			Support Participant	Support Participant		

 Essential Participant

 Support Participant



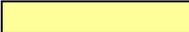
# Appendix 5

## Specific Downtown Issues and Responsibilities



**Appendix 5 - Specific Downtown Issues & Responsibilities**

	Existing Organizations				Recommended Organizations or Changes		
	City of Lamar	Barton County Chamber of Commerce	Lamar Community Betterment Council	DownTown Mainstreet Association	Lamar Downtown Community Improvement District	Community Development Corporation (DLCDC or BCCDC)	Lamar Downtown Redevelopment Corporation
Building Design Standards	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility		
Building Code Enforcement	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility			
Entryway Design Standards	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility		
Wayfinding Improvements	Essential Participant		Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	
Retail Attraction		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Retail Promotions		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility		
Merchant Education		Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility		Support Responsibility	
Commercial Property Acquisitions	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility			Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Commercial Property Renovations	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Facade Improvements (Revolving Loan Fund)	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Essential Participant
Parking Lot Improvements	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	
Pedestrian Improvements	Essential Participant			Support Responsibility		Support Responsibility	
Downtown Branding	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant		Support Responsibility	
Downtown Event Development	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Essential Participant			
Tourism Marketing	Essential Participant	Essential Participant	Support Responsibility	Support Responsibility			
Housing Stock Improvements	Support Responsibility					Essential Participant	Essential Participant

 Essential Participant
  Support Responsibility



# Appendix 6

## Sample Job Description



## APPENDIX 6

### Sample Job Description – Executive Director

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#### Position Overview

The Executive Director position requires an energetic, results-oriented professional eager to be the champion of Downtown Lamar. 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.

#### Primary Duties and Responsibilities

##### Leadership

- Charged with informing and educating the public through local media and marketing
- Bring focus and vision to the organization and Revitalization Program
- 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
- 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
- Respond to requests from businesses, citizens and media

##### 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

## APPENDIX 6

### Sample Job Description – Executive Director

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#### 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

# Appendix 7

## Board and Committee Recommendations



## APPENDIX 7

### Board & Committee Recommendations

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#### 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.

## APPENDIX 7

### Board & Committee Recommendations

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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.

## APPENDIX 7

### Board & Committee Recommendations

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- **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.

## APPENDIX 7

### Board & Committee Recommendations

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- **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.

