



MINUTES - APPROVED

April 17, 2025, Board Work Session
Western Vista Conference Room (1920 Thomes Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Scott Roybal; Wendy Volk; Danica Mrozinsky; Brian Bau; Dave Teubner; Janelle Rose

Members Absent: Jamie Winters; Lorrell Bellotti; Amber Nuse; Linda Heath (Ex Officio)

Staff Present: Sophia Maes, DDA Administrator; Irene Parsons, DDA; Miya Debusk, DDA; Charles Bloom, Planning and Development Director

Members of the Public Present: Glen Garrett; Corey Loghry; Stan Hartzheim; ZOOM: Jennifer McClelland; Erin Fagan; Amber Ash

II. ROLL CALL

III. DISCLOSURES / ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

IV. WORK SESSION:

A. DDA Functions Discussion

Sophia Maes began the meeting at 11:35 AM. She stated the purpose of the work session was a casual conversation to get the Board started on the right foot, gain clarity on the future direction, and build momentum for the Plan of Development. She noted that no public comment would be taken during the work session.

Maes began a presentation with a Board overview, addressing the state statute that guides the DDA's intent and purpose. She spoke about the bigger "why" of seeing Downtown Cheyenne thrive. The presentation outlined what a Wyoming DDA is in relation to the government, businesses, and overall role, particularly that it's a municipal board and an urban renewal tool. The presentation outlined how the DDA helps Downtown Cheyenne thrive by stopping and preventing property deterioration and blight within the Downtown District (core responsibilities).

Maes outlined what legal actions the DDA can take per W.S. 15-9-202, including planning development activities, landscaping and maintenance of public spaces, promotion of public events, activities in support of business recruitment and development, and other economic improvement activities. She noted that not all of these actions will be done—or should be—depending on capacity. Maes outlined



what the DDA cannot do, including have full autonomy (as a municipal board), replace City departments, control parking enforcement or policy, collect or spend funds freely, have legislative or policing power, automatically represent downtown (must engage with stakeholders), or bypass the public process.

Maes outlined the current state and issues the DDA is facing, including the renewal of the MOU between the City of Cheyenne and the DDA that provides administrative and staffing support and office space at no charge. She mentioned the limited staff and Board capacity, including scope creep and lack of focus for DDA activities, as well as unclear grant program parameters, unclear public perception and engagement, and the upcoming 2027 Mill Levy Election.

Maes asked the Board members if they agreed with these baseline statements about the DDA's intent, actions, and current challenges. Dave Teubner agreed with the presentation and appreciated that it was documented. Wendy Volk agreed and stated that the presentation would be helpful for new Board member onboarding. Councilman Roybal concurred and appreciated how the presentation outlined what the DDA can and cannot do. Janelle Rose appreciated the summary. She mentioned that the website needs to be revamped, and the mission, vision, and values need to be more accessible and public-facing on the website. She stated that the website needs to be more user-friendly and should be a priority. Danica Mrozinsky also liked the breakdown of the definitions. She mentioned that the current mission statement is a bit vague and that having the definitions visible and public-facing will be helpful.

Maes concurred and asked if the current mission of the Cheyenne DDA is correct. Brian Bau stated that the "how" of "stopping and preventing property deterioration and blight" is more what the mission is, not necessarily economic development. Rose looked at the definition of "economic development," stating that she agrees the DDA's role should be more clearly defined and the mission should be more refined based on state statutes. Teubner stated he hates mission statements but did concur that the mission statement needs to align with the Plan of Development and the actions of the Board.

B. Plan of Development Work Plan Discussion

Maes moved to the next section of the Work Session regarding the Plan of Development Implementation Strategy. She noted that the Implementation Matrix in the Plan may not be properly prioritized for immediate (1-year) attainable actions. Teubner acknowledged that deciding priorities is not easy and expressed appreciation for the Implementation Matrix. He also stated that he hopes the Board will discuss subcommittee structure and priorities during the Work Session, focusing specifically on what is achievable within a strategic year.

Maes revisited the idea that the DDA helps Downtown thrive by preventing property deterioration and blight. She outlined the conditions the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) uses to evaluate blight, noting that the entirety of Downtown Cheyenne qualifies as a blight district and that there are tools available to help. Charles Bloom expanded on what a declaration of blight entails and how it opens up additional tools, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF). He mentioned that the URA webpage on the City's website contains more information. Maes stated that URA tools and others have not been fully utilized. Volk commented that the Western Vista building—where the Work Session was held—was once a Class C property, and without upgrades, it would have deteriorated. She added that many developers do not



have the time to navigate the process of utilizing these tools. Maes emphasized the importance of collaborating with the City to develop a resource repository, a high priority in the Plan of Development, to make Cheyenne easier to invest in.

Rose asked what the URA is and how it functions, and how it differs from the DDA. Bloom explained that the DDA is limited to the Downtown District, while the URA can operate throughout the City and potentially the County. He said an urban renewal district isn't necessary because the formation of a DDA itself is a mechanism to prevent the spread of blight and includes tools the URA doesn't have, such as sales tax increment financing. He described how sales tax increment financing was used by the DDA a few years ago but became ineffective when Black Hills Energy left the district, eliminating the increment increase. He also gave a more in-depth explanation of property-based TIF. Maes provided an example of a current downtown URA TIF project at the corner of 18th and O'Neil. Rose asked if there is any additional cost to businesses or properties under TIF. Bloom clarified that there is not—it is an incentive for development. Teubner requested that the discussion move forward to the remaining Work Session items.

Maes continued the presentation by addressing causes of reduced property values in the District and strategies to prevent blight and increase values. These included reducing development costs through incentive programs, attracting property investment by streamlining investment processes, supporting property improvements, and driving consumer demand by enhancing business visibility and promoting the downtown as a district. She emphasized that the DDA is not a marketing agency and should not market individual businesses. Bau asked if grant programs align with these strategies. Maes confirmed they do. Bloom reminded the group that the grant program parameters must comply with state statutes and the Wyoming Constitution. Public funds cannot benefit individual businesses or properties unless voter-approved, except when aiding the poor. He said programs must be revamped to ensure legal compliance. Volk noted that in the past, no Board members served on the Design Committee that approved grants. She stressed the need for more Board oversight of any future committees to prevent subcommittees from going "rogue" again.

Maes transitioned to the topic of next steps for the Board. Teubner suggested discussing subcommittees first, followed by priorities, and then creating a subcommittee to work on mission, vision, and values. Maes outlined three steps: Step 1—expand DDA capacity; Step 2—improve communication with stakeholders, City departments, and the public. She discussed the DDA's updated social media strategy, explaining the focus shift toward development projects and DDA functions, instead of business promotions. She noted that followers are responding more to posts about downtown happenings and that the DDA is moving toward a more governmental and informative tone. Bloom highlighted a few successful posts, including one about a snowstorm ("snowmageddon") and another on back-in parking. Rose emphasized the need for posts that add value for followers, such as how to apply for DDA grants and utilize available programs. Volk recommended before-and-after examples of grant recipients to highlight best practices. Rose mentioned assessing conversion rates. Maes responded that this type of posting will be prioritized once the grant program parameters are reviewed and updated.



Maes introduced Step 3: building resources, including redesigning the grant program and initiating market research and reporting with KPIs and useful metrics.

The Board then discussed subcommittee creation. Teubner expressed frustration with past subcommittees and praised the current process of Board-approved grant applications. He suggested subcommittees for communications (campaigns), outreach (community engagement), data and benchmarking (capturing comprehensive data like permits and licenses), infrastructure and land use (to support strategic plan goals), rules and regulations (to ensure grant program compliance), and beautification and parking. He emphasized the need for one-page data snapshots and noted that areas like the West Edge are growing but not currently tracked.

Bau cautioned against jumping from no committees to four or five and recommended interim task forces. Bloom noted that committees can include stakeholders, not just Board members. Rose agreed this could enhance engagement. Teubner expressed concern about losing Board cohesion and prefers committees made up solely of Board members. Volk raised concerns about committee continuity, particularly if Board members resign. Rose cited a similar issue with the Downtown Business Collective, where operational subcommittees required too much time and control. She questioned whether the DDA Board is operational or advisory and stressed the importance of considering staff time. Bau asked about the three subcommittees outlined in the bylaws. Maes stated they are Executive, Design, Promotion and Events, and Economic Development and Restructuring. Teubner reiterated his subcommittee suggestions. Maes noted that some could be combined. Bloom asked what a Parking Committee would do. Rose said it would focus on advocacy and education, as the DDA cannot enforce parking. Teubner clarified that it would address painting, signage, and facilitation. Maes suggested Beautification be a separate subcommittee encompassing the Design Committee and planter programs, while Parking would fall under a Mobility and Infrastructure committee. Teubner emphasized the importance of naming committees to reflect the Plan of Development goals. Maes clarified what the bylaws allow and asked whether to move forward with subcommittees or defer the discussion. Bau recommended forming two subcommittees for now—one focused on outreach and another under the Design Committee to limit complexity. Teubner suggested identifying priorities first.

Maes distributed cards listing Implementation Matrix priorities for Board members to sort into one-year goals. She urged the Board to focus on impactful and feasible actions for the year. The Board established the following as top priorities:

1. 15th Street Experience
2. Website Updates/Public Perception
3. Resource Repository
4. Enhance Downtown Parking (painting and additional spaces)
5. Streetscape/Greenscape Enhancements (planters/street fixtures)
6. Gateway Enhancements/Wayfinding Signage
7. Winter Events (NYE)

Following Priorities:

8. Art Planning



9. Entry Surveys (for new businesses)
10. Outdoor Dining
11. Enhanced Design Guidelines
12. Design Review Encouragement
13. Downtown Development Standards

Lower Priorities:

14. Reed Avenue Corridor
15. Existing Street Lighting
16. Sidewalk Snow Removal
17. Alley Maintenance
18. Greenway Connections
19. 1600 Alley Project
20. Micromobility
21. Enhance Pedestrian Crossings
22. Anchor Tenant
23. Support Enhancement of Transit Service
24. Lighting Design for Alleys/Enhance Bike/Pedestrian Amenities
25. Design Assistance Program
26. Preservation Handbook/Explore Local Historic Preservation Funding

Final Priority:

27. Pumphouse Park

Teubner reminded the group that the Plan of Development task force was strongly opposed to the DDA reverting to an event-planning organization. While supporting community events is beneficial, he stressed the importance of focusing on infrastructure. He stated that the top priority this year should be a cost-benefit analysis and a decision on where the DDA should be housed. He supports moving the DDA out of City Hall but emphasized that it should happen on a business-driven timeline, not based on public pressure. Additional priorities include collecting baseline data, developing a marketing and communications plan, building a new website, and creating a resource guide. He suggested using the same agency as Visit Cheyenne for continuity and data tools. He also wants to explore design and costing for the 1600 Alley Project and Pumphouse Park and recommended issuing an RFP to better understand implementation needs. Volk asked if the City was already working on this. Teubner suggested the DDA could offer funding and facilitation support to help the public visualize project costs. He emphasized collaboration, not conflict, with the City. Rose agreed, noting that residents often say projects are too expensive without citing actual figures. She stressed the role of alleys in parking, walkability, and connectivity.

Teubner added two more priorities: professional cost estimates for parking striping and signage. He wants a comprehensive design plan for these improvements. He also stressed the importance of balancing feedback from vocal stakeholders with the broader base that pays the mill levy, noting that retail and restaurants make up a small portion of that base. He rejected the idea that the DDA is to



blame for national retail trends and emphasized supporting businesses through infrastructure improvements. Roybal called for increased DDA visibility, including outreach and ambassadors.

Teubner suggested an annual "State of the Downtown" event, like the Chamber's, potentially hosted at The Lincoln. Parsons noted she had recently discussed reintegrating the DDA with LEADS and the Chamber, both of which it previously worked with.

Volk voiced concerns about moving the DDA out of City Hall too soon, citing the need for City coordination on major projects like 15th Street. She stressed that to be effective facilitators and conveners, the DDA needs to remain close to City operations. She warned that spreading the DDA too thin would jeopardize implementation of the Plan of Development.

Teubner praised the current Board and staff for navigating a tumultuous transition and consolidating previous plans. He emphasized the need to focus on infrastructure and agreed the DDA should remain with the City for now to stabilize. Bloom recalled that even the last long-term DDA Director faced challenges and poor documentation. Volk agreed, stating the DDA had been disorganized in the past and expressed concern about losing momentum. Teubner supports moving DDA staff out of City Hall when the time is right but worries that doing so prematurely would isolate them and expose them to external influences misaligned with Board goals. Volk and Rose agreed. Bau asked staff if they'd like to be housed in the parking garage. Maes replied no. She noted that some members had prior commitments and recommended adjourning the meeting, with a Part 2 Work Session to be scheduled for completing the subcommittee discussion.

C. DDA Lunch 'N Learn Itinerary Discussion

The Work Session ran out of time and will discuss this time at the Work Session Part 2.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Work session adjourned at 1:17 PM.

CHEYENNE DDA

WORK SESSION

APRIL 17, 2025

Cheyenne DDA Board Overview

(W.S. 15-9-201 et seq.)

WHY
are we all here?

To see downtown Cheyenne thrive

What is a DDA (in Wyoming)?

A MUNICIPAL BOARD

- Appointed by the Mayor and created to support the revitalization of downtown.

A CATALYST

- Spurs downtown development, investment, and beautification.

A CONVENER

- Brings business and property owners together working to align on shared goals.

A PARTNER

- Works with the City and community in planning, projects, and public space improvements.

A STEWARD

- Utilizes public funds, such as the mill levy, to invest in downtown priorities.

A RESOURCE

- Supports small businesses through resource connection, grants for public right-of-way projects, and promotion of events that benefit the downtown district.

The Cheyenne
Downtown
Development
Authority is an **Urban
Renewal** tool.

It is one cog in the
downtown
revitalization and
development
machine.



**How does the
Cheyenne DDA
help downtown
thrive?**

**Support
private
redevelopment
and long-term
vitality**



**Assist
municipality in
planning and
revitalization**



**Stop and prevent
property
deterioration
and blight within
the Downtown
District**

What can the Cheyenne DDA do to help downtown thrive?

Allowable activities per W.S. 15-1-202



Planning or management of development activities in the Downtown District



Landscaping and maintenance of public spaces



Promotion of public events



Activities in support of business recruitment and development



Any economic improvement activities that benefit the district



What can the DDA **NOT** do?



CANNOT have full autonomy

The DDA is a municipal board. It operates under the City of Cheyenne and is bound by municipal procedures and oversight.



CANNOT replace City Departments

The DDA cannot issue permits, do public works, or enforce codes.



CANNOT control parking enforcement or policy

The DDA can advocate for solutions, but the City manages parking policy, enforcement, and infrastructure.



CANNOT collect or spend funds freely

All expenditures must follow public budgeting rules and must benefit the defined DDA district overall. Public funds may only fund a public purpose or improvements in the public right-of-way.



What can the DDA **NOT** do?



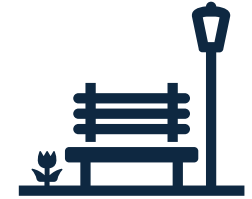
CANNOT have legislative or
policing power

The DDA cannot make or enforce laws, zoning decisions, or override City authority.



CANNOT automatically
represent downtown

The DDA must continuously engage with stakeholders to reflect their priorities; it does not automatically speak for everyone.



CANNOT bypass public process

All DDA projects are public and require permits, licensed contractors, and compliance reviews through City departments.

Cheyenne DDA at Present

- ❑ Renewal of MOU with the City of Cheyenne (June 2025)
 - Three total staff members (two full-time, one part-time)
 - Planning and Development Director oversight and varying time commitments
 - Additional City staff support –Treasurer, Attorney, Compliance, etc.
- ❑ Limited staff and Board capacity
 - Scope creep, too many cooks, too many directions (lack of prioritization)
- ❑ Grant Programs for Private Properties (in public right-of-way)
 - Unclear parameters and evaluation requirements
- ❑ Right-of-way beautification programs
 - Limited capacity to maintain and/or manage well
- ❑ Unknown public perception/communication/stakeholder involvement
- ❑ 2027 Mill Levy Election



What we've heard - Stakeholder feedback

Stakeholders want more proactive outreach from the Board.

Some feel the DDA Board isn't listening.

Communication gaps between City and DDA frustrate stakeholders.

Past engagement from and with stakeholders has been lacking.

Confusion persists around the DDA's purpose and power.

Confusion persists around the DDA's purpose and power.

Stakeholders want design committees back to streamline decisions.

Stakeholders question how much authority the DDA really has.

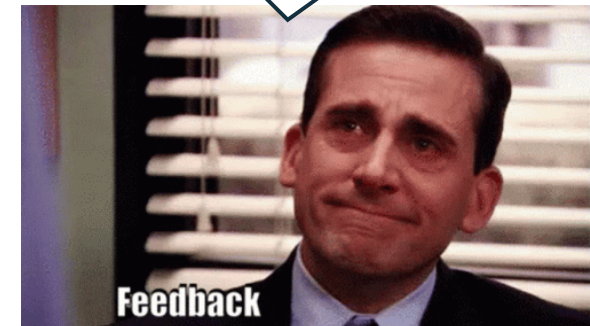
Call to use reserves for visible, high-impact projects.

Don't want to spend money on designs, would rather implement through grassroots activism

Parking garage and PR efforts need a reset.

Uncertainty over what Board members can discuss outside meetings, need clarification on Ex Parte restrictions.

Some pushing for full separation from the City by June 2025.



Plan of Development

Implementation Strategy

**How does the
Cheyenne DDA
help downtown
thrive?**

**Support
private
redevelopment
and long-term
vitality**



**Assist
municipality in
planning and
revitalization**



**Stop and prevent
property
deterioration
and blight within
the Downtown
District**

Blight and Low Property Values: What is blight?



Scan QR code for
Expanded Downtown
Blight Study



The Urban Renewal Authority evaluates blight based on ten conditions:

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures

Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout

Faulty lot layout in relation to size, accessibility or usefulness

Unsanitary or unsafe conditions

Deterioration of site or other improvements

Diversity of ownership, tax or other special assessment

Delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land

Defective or unusual conditions of title

Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes

Blight and Low Property Values: What causes reduced property values?

High vacancy rates

Conditions of blight

Lack of strong public
policies

Development costs
too high

Attracting businesses
that don't fit with the
desired downtown
identity

How to Stop Blight and Increase Property Values

Lower development costs:

Close (or lessen) the financing gap for development through grants, incentive programs (TIF), etc.

Attract Property Investment:

Make commercial and residential development more appealing through market and key priority indicator reports, public relations and marketing of district, and infrastructure support.


Support Property Improvements:

Facilitate right-of-way improvements and encourages private property investment aligned with district goals.

Drive Consumer Demand:

Enhance business visibility by promoting the downtown district overall and connecting businesses to helpful resources.

Local businesses attract customers through their offerings and marketing.



Step 1: Expand DDA Capacity through subcommittees and volunteers

Subcommittee Creation

- Design Subcommittee
- Mobility/Infrastructure Subcommittee
- Promotion/Events Subcommittee
- Economic Development Subcommittee









Volunteer Development

- Assignments depend on subcommittee progress/needs
- No-experience-needed
 - Alley clean up, planter program, block clean up, events, Downtown Ambassador outreach, etc.
- Others?

Step 2: Improve Communications with downtown stakeholders, City departments, and the public

- Update projects and drive traffic to Connect Cheyenne platform
- Quarterly (potentially monthly) newsletter
 - Plan of Development Action progress
 - Feature/highlight of existing business resource (e.g. SBDC)
 - Feedback surveys about DDA progress
 - Market/Economic Analysis for CBD
 - City Council/other government updates/actions that effect downtown
 - Downtown events
- Social media strategy revamp
 - More educational/informative tone
 - Building brand/identity of trusted source of downtown development information
 - More big-picture posts about development progress and things to do

Step 2: Improve Communications (cont'd)

Title		Date published ↑↓	Reach ⓘ ↓	Likes and reactions ⓘ ↑↓	Comments ⓘ ↑↓	Shares ⓘ ↑↓
 The Big Boy is back! Welcome back to Cheyenne. We're happy t... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Jul 26, 2024	54.6K	565	14	52
 The Stencil Group is set to build a 5-story, market-rate apartmen... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Tue Mar 25, 10:07am	38.8K	366	76	39
 Have you seen these new vehicles around downtown? Designed ... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Thu Mar 13, 3:00pm	24.8K	107	82	9
 🇬🇧 Congratulations to our Holiday Window Display Contest win... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Dec 17, 2024	18.7K	95	8	13
 Welcome to The Ranch Wife Mercantile , where Wyoming pride ... Reel · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Oct 4, 2024	14.6K	236	12	19
 The set up is starting and the energy is growing toward our first ... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Jun 3, 2024	13.5K	93	4	12
 Are you all ready for the start of Fridays on the Plaza? The atmos... Photo · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Jun 7, 2024	9.3K	53	4	8
 Step into the world of Clay Paper Scissors Gallery & Studio 🎨 Fr... Reel · 🔥 Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority - DDA	Boost	Nov 22, 2024	8.8K	132	7	19

Step 2: Improve Communications (cont'd)

- High-Level Communications Plan (line item in FY26 Budget)
- Website RFQ
- Website updates
 - Ensure all information is up to date ASAP
 - Grant program information/applications easily accessible
- Stakeholder Town Halls → Frequency?



Step 3: Build resources for investors and business recruitment per DDA goals

- **Grant Program Redesign** to fit with Plan of Development goals
 - **CIG:** Redesign to incentivize larger infill investments (\$50,000-\$100,000 per grant)
 - Preference to mixed-use developments (increase residents and earn mill levy), but **must have** commercial component
 - Grants for downtown capital improvements: public sidewalk improvements, public park support, urban forestry support, etc.
 - **FIP:** Collaborate with the Historic Preservation Board to create a targeted historic preservation grant.
 - Offer higher match rates for projects involving historic buildings.
 - **Sidewalk Improvement Program:**
 - Define clear program guidelines, develop a user-friendly application in OpenGov, and coordinate with Engineering on project scheduling.
- **Market Research & Reporting (external and internal):**
 - Gather and provide data that reflects key priority indicators (KPIs) sought by developers and investors.
 - Collaborate with partners like LEADS, the Chamber, and Visit Cheyenne to collect CBD-specific data

Activity

1. Create subcommittees
2. Rank implementation actions by
 - a. Ease of Implementation
 - b. Level of impact
3. Place highest implementation actions in 1-Year Goals (to be completed by June 2026)
 - a. Be realistic of what can be accomplished **well** within 1 year

Guiding Question: “How much will this stop and prevent property deterioration and blight within Downtown Cheyenne?”



Subcommittee Discussion

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Design Subcommittee2. Mobility/Infrastructure Committee Focus3. Promotion/Events Committee Focus4. Economic Development Committee Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rules & Regulations for Grants Subcommittee2. Beautification/Parking Subcommittee3. Infrastructure/Land Use Subcommittee4. Communications/Outreach Subcommittee5. Data/Benchmarking Subcommittee	<p>Hybrid: Task Forces & Subcommittees (depending on deliverable)</p>

Notes:

- Limit outside subcommittee members (need Board ownership)
- Not all action items should have a standing committee, some are more suited to task forces

DDA Priority Actions (Suggestions)

1. Cost Benefit Analysis for City/DDA MOU (must make good business sense)
2. Baseline Data for Downtown Market
3. Marketing/Communication Plan
 1. Engage advertising firm/agency (potentially the same one Visit Cheyenne uses)
 2. Really highlight Plan of Development
 3. New Website
4. Resource Guide (hand-out & on website)
5. Fund a design/costing proposal for 1600 Alley & Pump House Park
 1. Work with City Engineering, get renderings of the projects
 2. DDA Ambassadors can do more outreach/speaking to project feasibility
6. On-street parking striping/signage: Contract a professional (DDA funds)
7. Join forces with Downtown Stakeholder groups
8. Annual “Summit” of Board Accomplishments



1 Year Plan of Development Priority Actions

1. 15th Street Experience
2. Communications
 - a) Website Updates
 - b) Public Perception
3. Resource Repository
4. Enhance Downtown Parking (painting and additional spaces)
5. Streetscape/Greenscape Enhancements (planters/street fixtures)
6. Beautification/Wayfinding
 - a) Gateway Enhancements
 - b) Wayfinding Signage
7. Winter Events (NYE?)