

Proposed DDA Focus for Next Five Years (5-Year Strategic Plan)

The 2024 Plan of Development outlines many goals and actions for the health and benefit of Downtown Cheyenne. These are outlined in four Focus Areas:

- 1) Building & Street Character
- 2) Economic & Cultural Development
- 3) Infrastructure & Land Use
- 4) Transportation & Parking.

This Plan of Development is a comprehensive vision for Downtown Cheyenne and will take a multifaceted approach of direct action from the DDA, partnerships with other organizations, and empowerment of the community to implement and execute this Plan effectively.

The Plan incorporated extensive community input to establish a vision and goals across the four Focus Areas. Subsequent feedback from downtown stakeholders, City departments, and Council members has also identified several service and program gaps. While many stakeholders believe the DDA should address needs (such as community events or snow removal coordination), some of these responsibilities fall outside the DDA's statutory role. In these cases, the DDA should focus on creating funding programs, partnerships, and other tools that empower the community to address these needs rather than directly implementing them.

These considerations should also inform how stakeholder feedback and location or organizational scenarios are evaluated. Some requested items will not change based on where the DDA is located or how it is structured, as they fall outside the organization's intended responsibilities. However, many of these needs can still be supported through programming, partnerships, or funding initiatives that help achieve the desired outcomes.

Over the past year, the DDA has received the following feedback:

- Desire for more stakeholder outreach and earlier engagement on projects that the City and the DDA are doing, especially with property owners and businesses.
- Concerns that ongoing communication gaps between the City, DDA, and stakeholders create confusion about projects and decisions.
- Uncertainty about the DDA's role, authority, and relationship with the City remains a common concern.
- Stakeholders want clearer reporting and visible reinvestment of mill levy funds into downtown improvements.
- Requests for more efficient project review processes, including use of specialized committees (e.g., design review).
- Downtown is valued for its walkability, historic character, events, restaurants, and small businesses.
- Priority improvements identified: more retail and dining options, additional events, improved parking convenience, and cleaner/safe public spaces.
- Desire for stronger marketing, public information, and promotion of downtown activities.
- Need for stronger coordination among downtown partner organizations and City departments.
- Concerns about DDA stability and the effect of constant disruptions on the organization.
- Concern that City coordination will struggle and/or deteriorate if not located in the Municipal Building or not City employees (access to City tools).

The overall sentiment from stakeholders: continued support for downtown’s future, with expectations for clearer communication, measurable outcomes, and visible progress from the DDA.

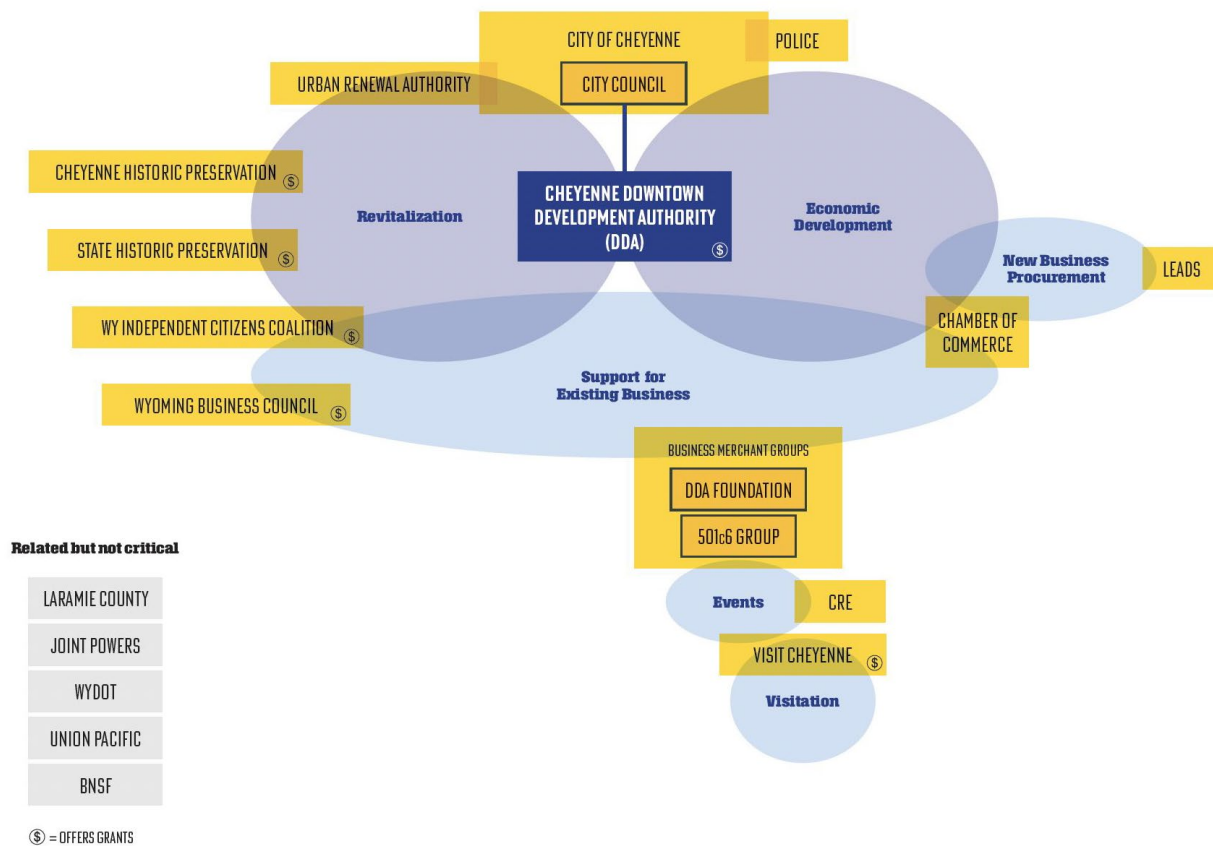
Why a Cost-Benefit Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to figure out which staffing and office location setup will best help the DDA do its job and carry out the 2024 Plan of Development. We are looking at financial costs, how well each option would work in practice, possible risks, and how each setup would affect partnerships. **The goal is to choose the option that will help the DDA succeed in the long term.**

Proposed DDA Focus for Next Five Years (5-Year Strategic Plan)

The DDA’s statutory purpose is to stop and prevent the spread of blight and the deterioration of downtown property values or structures, as well as assist the City in the development, redevelopment and overall planning and health of downtown. The DDA does this through Economic Development and Urban Revitalization efforts. This is the DDA’s specific role in the Downtown Support Ecosystem in implementing and executing the 2024 Plan of Development.

DOWNTOWN SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM



Based on historical programs, community needs and gap analysis, and statutory purpose and restrictions, the DDA's proposed operations for the next five years is grouped in three buckets: Projects, Programs, and Resources.

1. Projects

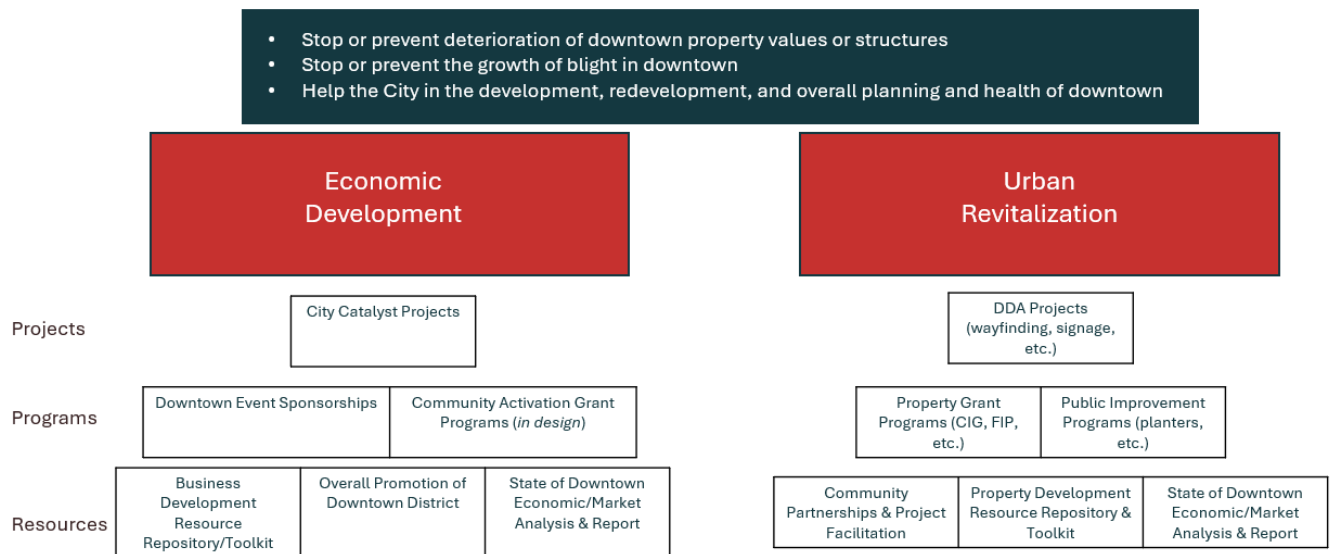
- a. City Catalyst Projects
 - i. Role: Facilitation
 - ii. Examples:
 - 1. Creating and maintaining project public engagement pages on Connect Cheyene
 - 2. Coordinating and facilitating outreach and town halls for stakeholders and the general public
 - 3. Creating and executing educational campaigns for project updates and information in the downtown context
 - 4. Ensuring all necessary parties are at the table and informed
- b. DDA Projects
 - i. Role: Driver
 - ii. Examples:
 - 1. Wayfinding: Replacing the I-25 exit sign from "Central Business District" to "Downtown Historic Shopping District"
 - 2. In-Ground Landscaping in ROW/Street Medians

2. Programs (DDA Managed): All DDA Programs designed to implement and execute Plan of Development

- a. Property Improvement Grants
- b. Public Improvement Programs (e.g. Downtown Planter Program)
- c. Community Activation Grants (e.g. Downtown Event Grant, Public Art Grant, etc., in planning)

3. Resources

- a. Resource Repository/Toolkits for new businesses and property developers
- b. Annual State of Downtown Economic/Market Analysis Report
- c. Sponsorships
- d. Overall Promotion of District



An important reminder: The Governing Body could theoretically dissolve the DDA, as it is a municipal entity created under state statute and City code.

Also, the mill levy revenue is dependent on an election, with the next election in October 2027. For a successful election, the DDA will need to prove the effective use of these funds.

City Staff, Muni Building

This scenario is the current location and staffing structure of the DDA, therefore “Status Quo” or “Business as Usual.”

- DDA Staff are all City employees, under the umbrella of the Planning and Development Department.
- DDA salaries and benefits are determined by the City Human Resources Department. These expenses are also part of the Planning and Development budget, and subject to approval of the Department Director (Charles Bloom) and the Governing Body.
- DDA Staff are currently located in Room 202 near the Building Division and the Planning and Development Department. There is no dedicated office for the DDA at this time. However, there are plans to renovate the Municipal Building, with rumors that construction is planned to start early next year (with or without 6th Penny funds). Designs are already in place, and at this time there is a dedicated DDA office being planned.
- The Municipal Building is located within the Downtown District, towards the northwestern edge.

Qualitative Benefits/Pros	Related Evaluation Criterion
- City group-rate, self-insured health benefits reduces overall compensation expense.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- City-paid salaries, benefits, and facilities eliminate rent and personnel costs.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Mill levy funds remain largely available for programming and public improvements.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Payroll, benefits, and financial oversight handled through the City Treasurer and HR systems.	Administrative Simplicity (+)
- Administrative infrastructure already in place, allowing staff to focus on operations rather than back-office functions.	Administrative Simplicity (+)
- Strong security and facility management provided through City Hall.	Administrative Simplicity
- Close physical proximity to City departments supports informal coordination and problem-solving on complex projects.	Mission Alignment
- Reinforces the DDA’s role as a governmental entity responsible for public improvements.	Mission Alignment
- Clear identification of the DDA as a City-affiliated entity helps set expectations around authority and scope.	Public Support
- Strong working relationships and growing support from City departments for large-scale downtown projects.	Long-term Stability
- Stable staffing and facility arrangements without exposure to lease or relocation risk.	Long-term Stability

Qualitative Costs/Cons	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Access to City support services (e.g., Legal, IT) is constrained by competing Citywide priorities.	Administrative Simplicity
- Subject to City HR hiring timelines and processes, limiting responsiveness.	Administrative Simplicity
- Staffing levels and compensation are constrained by City salary structures and departmental budgets, reducing flexibility.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Location in City Hall limits regular interaction with the downtown business core.	Mission Alignment
- Internal City silos can slow coordination on cross-departmental downtown initiatives.	Mission Alignment
- Perception that City leadership influences mill levy decisions, despite formal DDA authority.	Public Support
- City Hall location can feel intimidating or inaccessible to some downtown stakeholders.	Public Support
- Office location is subject to City space availability and future reprioritization.	Long-Term Stability
- Upcoming retirements of key City department leadership may affect continuity and institutional knowledge of City operations/function	Long-Term Stability
- Lack of guaranteed long-term tenancy could undermine stability messaging if the office move is perceived as temporary.	Long-Term Stability

Projected Financial Costs:

Item	Projected Costs to DDA (Annual)
Personnel + Benefits	\$0.00
Rent	\$0.00
Utilities	\$0.00
Telephone & Internet	\$0.00
Legal	\$0.00
Copier Expenses	\$0.00
Cleaning	\$0.00
Insurance – Liability	\$0.00
Auto & Travel	\$0.00
Total Projected Costs of Scenario:	\$0.00

City Staff, Co-Location with LEADS

This scenario keeps DDA Staff as City employees with all benefits and restrictions, while co-locating with LEADS in the Cheyenne Depot (a City-owned building).

- DDA Staff are all City employees, under the umbrella of the Planning and Development Department.
- DDA salaries and benefits are determined by the City Human Resources Department. These expenses are also part of the Planning and Development budget, and subject to approval of the Department Director (Charles Bloom) and the Governing Body.

- While the Depot is City-owned property, it is leased through the Cheyenne Depot Museum for income. In this scenario, we assumed market rate rent, though a concession may be feasible as the DDA is a City component.
- Due to the Depot being an income-generating City property, we assume DDA responsibility for other expenses, including utilities, telephone and internet, copier expenses, and cleaning services.
- The Depot Building is located within the Downtown District, between the Historic Core and the West Edge along 15th Street. As of January 2026, the door still has the Cheyenne DDA as a tenant.

Qualitative Benefits/Pros	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Low or no rent costs if City-owned space is provided at no or reduced cost, preserving mill levy funds for programs and capital improvements.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Continued access to City-funded benefits and overhead (HR, payroll, insurance, IT), which remain significantly more cost-effective than standing these up independently.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Closer proximity to downtown assets and projects (parking structures, streetscape areas, public spaces) aligns with DDA's operational focus.	Mission Alignment
- No change to employment structure, HR policies, or reporting lines — avoids legal and operational complexity.	Administrative Simplicity
- Still benefits from City security, IT systems, records management, and risk mitigation.	Administrative Simplicity
- Perceived increase in accessibility compared to City Hall, which some stakeholders find intimidating or inconvenient.	Public Support
- Signals responsiveness to stakeholder concerns without conceding governance control or statutory boundaries.	Public Support
- More “downtown-facing” presence helps counter the narrative that the DDA is distant or disconnected from the business core.	Public Support
- Utilizes support of the City, which is critical for capital projects and interdepartmental coordination.	Long-Term Stability
- Reduces exposure to leadership turnover risk compared to full separation (legal, finance, HR continuity remains City-based).	Long-Term Stability
- Reinforces that mill levy funds are still administered within a public framework, supporting transparency and compliance.	Mill Levy Support
- Physical separation may help reduce misperceptions of political interference while preserving statutory protections.	Mill Levy Support
- Minimal legal risk: no new entities, leases, or employment agreements required.	Legal Complexity
- Direct access to economic development expertise from LEADS	Mission Alignment
- Opportunities for coordinated strategy with LEADS	Mission Alignment

- Potential for joint funding or grants (though not dependent on co-location)	Mission Alignment
- Enhances the DDA's credibility in the business and development community by signaling alignment with a respected development organization.	Public Support
- Could create informal learning opportunities for DDA staff from LEADS' processes, deal-making, and investor relations.	Mission Alignment

Qualitative Costs/Cons	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Potential renovation or fit-out costs if Depot space is not turnkey (furniture, security, IT wiring).	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- If space is later reclaimed by CRE or another department (which will have priority), relocation costs and time could recur, reducing long-term efficiency.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Physical separation from City Department staff reduces informal coordination ("hallway conversations") that currently benefit projects.	Administrative Simplicity
- May increase effort on the part of DDA to keep updates and communications with City departments flowing	Administrative Simplicity
- Could embolden stakeholders who want DDA to be fully independent and not as compliant with statutory constraints.	Public Support
- DDA operations and adherence to statutory purpose and regulations will not change due to location	Public Support
- Space availability is uncertain and dependent on City priorities (CRE relocation, future Depot uses).	Long-Term Stability
- Lack of guaranteed long-term tenancy could undermine stability messaging if the office move is perceived as temporary.	Long-Term Stability
- DDA staff will have to go through the moving process, which will be very disruptive, especially while processes and systems are still being stabilized.	Administrative Simplicity
- Some stakeholders may think the DDA is prioritizing LEADS-led initiatives or big business projects over smaller downtown businesses.	Public Support
- Could appear to blur public-private lines, raising questions about mill levy fund usage or DDA independence.	Legal Complexity
- Potential cultural friction between a public-sector staff team and a fast-moving private economic development organization.	Legal Complexity

Projected Financial Costs:

Item	Projected Costs to DDA (Annual, no CPI increase)
Personnel + Benefits	\$0
Rent (assuming 100%-50% discount)	\$33,600

Utilities	\$3,360
Telephone & Internet	\$3,360
Legal	\$0
Copier Expenses	\$1,000
Cleaning	\$2,240
Insurance – Liability	\$3,360
Total Projected Costs of Scenario (estimated):	\$46,920

City Staff, Independent Office

This scenario keeps the DDA Staff as City employees, but the DDA pays for rent, utilities, and other overhead directly in an office of its choosing.

- DDA Staff are all City employees, under the umbrella of the Planning and Development Department.
- DDA salaries and benefits are determined by the City Human Resources Department. These expenses are also part of the Planning and Development budget, and subject to approval of the Department Director (Charles Bloom) and the Governing Body.
- Office is independent, not City-owned.
- 2023 Mill levy funds cannot be used for administrative costs; funding must come from reserves, grants, or a future mill levy election (2027) to be used for office rent and other overhead.

Qualitative Benefits/Pros	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Retains City-paid salaries, benefits, and core administrative services, avoiding major separation costs.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Physically embeds the DDA in the district, reinforcing its statutory role as a localized downtown entity.	Mission Alignment
- Enhances responsiveness to downtown conditions and strengthens credibility as a downtown specialist.	Mission Alignment
- No change to employment status, HR, payroll, or benefits administration.	Administrative Simplicity
- Continued access to City legal and Planning & Department Director support.	Administrative Simplicity
- Improves accessibility and approachability for downtown stakeholders.	Public Support
- Helps counter perceptions of City Hall intimidation and City control over the DDA.	Public Support
- Shows visible commitment to downtown community.	Public Support
- Reduces vulnerability to Municipal Building space changes.	Long-Term Stability
- Provides a flexible, middle-ground governance model that can evolve without abrupt restructuring.	Long-Term Stability
- Maintains eligibility for City-supported resources and interdepartmental collaboration.	Mission Alignment
- Increased downtown visibility may indirectly strengthen partnerships, sponsorships, and grant positioning.	Revenue Diversity

- More options in office location, size, and offerings than what the City has.	Long-Term Stability
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Qualitative Costs/Cons	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Introduces new operating expenses (rent, utilities, telephone, internet, etc.) and reduces the City's in-kind contribution, weakening the financial advantage of co-location.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Increased accessibility may lead to mission or scope creep, with expectations that the DDA operate like a BID or downtown manager.	Mission Alignment
- Requires increased effort to stay aligned and updated with City relationships, progress, and communications.	Mission Alignment
- Adds complexity through facility management, leasing, vendors, and off-site IT/security coordination.	Administrative Simplicity
- Does not fully satisfy stakeholders seeking complete separation from the City.	Public Support
- Greater accessibility may invite pressure from individual stakeholders to prioritize their interests over Board-directed goals.	Public Support
- Lease commitments are a risk if governance, funding, or priorities change.	Long-Term Stability
- Stability depends on continued political and administrative support; future leadership may reassess the value of non-City space.	Long-Term Stability
- Public-facing accessibility may raise expectations that conflict with state and City regulatory requirements, requiring careful boundary-setting.	Legal Complexity
- Physical separation from City Departments reduces informal coordination ("hallway conversations") that currently benefit projects.	Mission Alignment
- DDA staff will have to go through the moving process, which will be very disruptive, especially while processes and systems are still being stabilized.	Administrative Simplicity

Projected Financial Costs:

Item	Projected Costs to DDA (Annual, no CPI increase)
Personnel + Benefits	\$0
Rent	\$33,600
Utilities	\$3,360
Telephone & Internet	\$3,360
Legal	\$24,640
Copier Expenses	\$1,000
Cleaning	\$2,240
Insurance – Liability	\$3,360
Total Projected Costs of Scenario (estimated):	\$82,100

City Staff, City Facility (not Muni Building)

This scenario is similar to the one above, without the co-location with LEADS or other City Departments. Office location would most likely be the Spiker Parking Garage office.

- DDA Staff are all City employees, under the umbrella of the Planning and Development Department.
- DDA salaries and benefits are determined by the City Human Resources Department. These expenses are also part of the Planning and Development budget, and subject to approval of the Department Director (Charles Bloom) and the Governing Body.
- The only expenses estimated to be the DDA's responsibility are copier expenses, since we currently utilize the Planning & Development Departments shared equipment, and would need separate additional equipment in-office.
- There may be several options of City facilities located within the Downtown District, however, the only one that has been somewhat explored is the previous Transit Services lounge in the Spiker Garage. This space requires renovation, of which the status is currently unknown.

Qualitative Benefits/Pros	Related Evaluation Criterion
- Low or no rent costs if City-owned space is provided at no or reduced cost, preserving mill levy funds for programs and capital improvements.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Continued access to City-funded benefits and overhead (HR, payroll, insurance, IT), which remain significantly more cost-effective than standing these up independently.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Closer proximity to downtown assets and projects (parking structures, streetscape areas, public spaces) aligns with DDA's operational focus.	Mission Alignment
- No change to employment structure, HR policies, or reporting lines — avoids legal and operational complexity.	Administrative Simplicity
- Still benefits from City security, IT systems, records management, and risk mitigation.	Administrative Simplicity
- Perceived increase in accessibility compared to City Hall, which some stakeholders find intimidating or inconvenient.	Public Support
- Signals responsiveness to stakeholder concerns without conceding governance control or statutory boundaries.	Public Support
- More "downtown-facing" presence helps counter the narrative that the DDA is distant or disconnected from the business core.	Public Support
- Utilizes support of the City, which is critical for capital projects and interdepartmental coordination.	Long-Term Stability
- Reduces exposure to leadership turnover risk compared to full separation (legal, finance, HR continuity remains City-based).	Long-Term Stability
- Reinforces that mill levy funds are still administered within a public framework, supporting transparency and compliance.	Mill Levy Support

- Physical separation may help reduce misperceptions of political interference while preserving statutory protections.	Mill Levy Support
- Minimal legal risk: no new entities, leases, or employment agreements required.	Legal Complexity

Qualitative Costs/Cons	Related Evaluation Criterion
- If space is later reclaimed by another department (which would have priority), relocation costs and time could recur, reducing long-term efficiency.	Financial Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Physical separation from City Department staff reduces informal coordination (“hallway conversations”) that currently benefit projects.	Administrative Simplicity
- Will increase effort on the part of DDA to keep updates and communications with City departments flowing	Administrative Simplicity
- Could embolden stakeholders who want DDA to be fully independent and not as compliant with statutory constraints.	Public Support
- DDA operations and adherence to statutory purpose and regulations will not change due to location	Public Support
- Space availability is uncertain and dependent on City priorities and agreement.	Long-Term Stability
- Lack of guaranteed long-term tenancy could undermine stability messaging if the office move is perceived as temporary.	Long-Term Stability
- DDA staff will have to go through the moving process, which will be very disruptive, especially while processes and systems are still being stabilized.	Administrative Simplicity

Projected Financial Costs:

Item	Projected Costs to DDA (Annual, no CPI increase)
Personnel + Benefits	\$0
Rent	\$0
Utilities	\$0
Telephone & Internet	\$0
Legal	\$0
Copier Expenses	\$1,000
Cleaning	\$0
Insurance – Liability	\$0
Total Projected Costs of Scenario (estimated):	\$1,000

City Grant for Personnel, Independent Office

This scenario is the most independent. All operations and costs would be the DDA’s responsibility; it would truly be an independent corporate body (still subject to state and city regulation) and the office would be located somewhere within the Downtown District.

- Staff are no longer City employees; HR, payroll, benefits, insurance, and legal support must be handled internally or contracted.
- Office is independent, not City-owned.
- In this scenario, the City provides a grant of ~\$250,000 annually to cover administrative and rental costs, but this is not a guarantee (dependent on Mayoral support, as seen in 2019-2020).
- DDA remains statutorily bound as a City board: all budgets and projects require Governing Body approval.
- 2023 Mill levy funds cannot be used for administrative costs; funding must come from reserves, grants, or a future mill levy election (2027).

Qualitative Benefits/Pros	Related Evaluation Criterion
- DDA can set priorities and workflows independently of City HR constraints, improving operational flexibility.	Mission Alignment
- Ability to strategically locate office downtown for accessibility and stakeholder engagement.	Mission Alignment
- DDA has full control over roles, hiring, policies, and workflows, aligned directly with downtown objectives.	Mission Alignment
- Physical independence signals responsiveness and autonomy, particularly to stakeholders frustrated by perceived City overreach.	Public Support
- Downtown office can improve visibility and engagement with property and business owners, residents, and partners.	Public Support

Qualitative Costs/Cons	Related Evaluation Criterion
- DDA is still a City board: all projects, budgets, and staffing changes require Governing Body approval. Too much independence may start to lean into scope creep or relaxed compliance with legal requirements. Or, adherence to legal compliance will disappoint stakeholders anyway, disrupting staff and separating from the City for no reason.	Legal Complexity
- Dependence on a City grant introduces risk if City or DDA funding priorities shift in the future.	Long-Term Stability
- DDA assumes responsibility for all HR, payroll, IT, benefits, insurance, and legal compliance, which requires robust internal systems or contracted services, which can be distracting from executing DDA objectives	Administrative Simplicity
- Physical move to a new office is disruptive, especially while stabilizing internal processes.	Administrative Simplicity
- Loss of City HR/legal infrastructure increases exposure to compliance or employment risks. DDA Staff will lean on the DDA Board for more support and oversight because of the higher staff workload just to maintain operational continuity.	Long-Term Stability

- Cannot fully operate independently; statutory oversight limits flexibility, e.g., budget timing, procurement rules, and approval processes.	Legal Complexity
- Administrative costs shift entirely to the DDA: payroll, benefits, insurance, IT, legal services, rent, utilities, and office operations. Likely \$150–\$250k/year at least.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Mill levy cannot be used for administrative purposes; reliance on reserves, City grants, or future mill levy (2027) introduces risk.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Financial sustainability is uncertain in general, especially if revenue streams fluctuate or reserves are insufficient.	Financial Efficiency and/or Effectiveness
- Board members may feel vulnerable to operational and financial instability.	Long-Term Stability
- Full operational responsibility for HR, payroll, benefits, insurance, IT, legal, and office management falls on the DDA.	Administrative Complexity
- DDA may become less effective without City infrastructure.	Mission Alignment
- Failure to stabilize systems or deliverables first could erode trust, particularly given prior criticisms of inefficiency.	Long-Term Stability

Projected Financial Costs:

Item	Projected Costs to DDA (Annual, no CPI increase)
Personnel + Benefits	\$308,500
Rent	\$33,600
Utilities	\$3,360
Telephone & Internet	\$3,360
Legal	\$24,640
Copier Expenses	\$1,000
Cleaning	\$2,240
Insurance – Liability	\$3,360
Utilities	\$3,360
Total Projected Costs of Scenario (estimated):	\$390,660

Next Steps

Staff preference is for the scenario that has the least amount of disruptions and displacement in the short-term while the team and organization is still stabilizing.

1. **Conduct expanded stakeholder outreach:** Gather structured feedback from downtown stakeholders, City departments, Council members, and the Mayor’s Office to inform probability of options.
2. **Validate baseline assumptions and current conditions:** Make sure assumptions are mostly realistic and flag any that need to be reassessed.

3. **Evaluate and compare scenarios:** Apply the agreed evaluation criteria to each scenario and document both quantitative and qualitative impacts.
4. **Determine the preferred end-state scenario:** Based on analysis and stakeholder input, identify the scenario that best aligns with long-term strategic goals (what do we EVENTUALLY want this to look like?)
5. **Develop a phased implementation strategy (if a change is recommended):** Outline the steps, sequencing, and timeline needed to transition from the current structure to the preferred model. Identify required approvals, policy changes, agreements, or resource adjustments.
6. **Prepare decision-ready materials:** Develop recommendations for presentation to the DDA Board and Governing Body.