

## **Downtown Lawrence, Inc.**

### **Work Plan 2008 Submitted to the City of Lawrence**

Downtown Lawrence Inc. (DLI) is a not-for-profit membership organization created to promote the interests of the Downtown business district. DLI has over 100 members including individually-owned specialty stores, national retail chains, restaurants, bars, hair salons, professional businesses and service organizations.

The mission of DLI is . . . "to preserve, protect, and promote Downtown Lawrence as the retail, service and professional, governmental, entertainment, and social center of our community."

Under the direction and with the assistance of a volunteer board of directors made up of six members from the various sectors that make up the Downtown business community – 4 from retail, 1 professional and 1 service – the Director of DLI will marshal additional volunteers to serve on committees or perform one-time tasks as need throughout the year. Professional and volunteer staff will be responsible for recruitment and retention of member businesses who will invest their dollars to provide some of the necessary resources to accomplish the mission of the organization. In addition to membership revenue, sponsorship opportunities and cooperative promotional projects leverage vital additional funding.

Achieving the goals and objectives of the Board of Directors and the expectations of the City will be an enormous undertaking for a staff of one. Adjustments to these objectives and expectations may be necessary based on the resources that are or may become available.

#### **Membership Expansion & Retention**

- Communication
  - Weekly Bulletin
  - Quarterly Newsletter
  - Provide conduit between City & Downtown
  - Enhance Internet presence
    - Redesign website
    - Develop e-newsletter for general public with sign up on website
    - Develop e-mail template for member businesses to personalize for distribution to their e-mail lists
- Semi-Annual Member Meetings
  - Establish schedule
  - Poll members regarding appropriate presentations
- Bi-Monthly Member Breakfast
  - Recruit businesses willing to host breakfast
  - Solicit catering partners

## **Coop Promotional Projects**

- Periodic Promotions
  - Analyze advertising opportunities
  - Develop ad concepts
  - Develop marketing plan and schedule
- Downtown Map and Visitor Guide
  - Compile feedback from merchants and users
  - Explore potential revisions
  - Develop means of evaluating effectiveness
- KansasCity.com
  - Evaluate success of Gift Guide '07
  - Discuss revisions and changes

## **Community Events and Downtown Activities**

- Sidewalk Sale
  - Reopen discussion with City about control of the sidewalk
  - Establish criteria for non-profit spaces
  - Establish policy for non-Mass street members to have presence
  - Discuss food vending options for non-profits with Health Department
  - Explore ways to restore “carnival” atmosphere
- Santa’s Rescue
  - Evaluate impact and effectiveness of '07 enhancements
  - Explore additional enhancements or modifications to '07 enhancements
- Christmas Parade
  - Continue active involvement with planning committee
  - Evaluate impact and effectiveness of '07 enhancements
  - Explore additional enhancements or modifications to '07 enhancements
- Film Festival
  - Explore expanding festival
  - Develop new sponsorship benefits and levels
  - Discuss adding food vendors to sponsorship mix
  - Explore other pre-show entertainment
- Fall Bazaar
  - Explore options for expanding event
  - Encourage member participation
  - Integrate other components such as “Stuff the Bus”
- New Events
  - Progressive Art Show
    - Work with Lawrence Art Guild to determine possibilities of co-sponsoring or adding value to events
      - ❖ Pair artist with merchant for displaying works throughout week
      - ❖ Culminate with “meet the artists” activities
  - Downtown Tours
    - Coordinate with KU History faculty to develop curriculum and train tour guides

- Develop 4-5 unique tours
    - ❖ History of Downtown
    - ❖ Quantrill's Raid
    - ❖ Downtown Architecture
    - ❖ Ghosts of Downtown
  - Develop schedule and promote tours
- Late Spring/Early Summer Street Dance
  - Enlist committee and garner support from members
  - Formulate theme
  - Determine logistics
  - Recruit sponsors
  - Stage event
- Work with local non-profit agencies to explore new event potential
- Facilitate and Enhance Existing Events sponsored by other Entities
  - Mass Street Mosey
    - Explore Options for expanding event
    - Work with planning committee to ensure success
  - Gallery walk
    - Encourage other retail to stay open later on scheduled walk dates
    - Recruit, screen and coordinate street performers
  - Get Downtown
    - Work with Chamber to plan and execute
    - Encourage other retail to stay open later
  - Collegiate Cycling
    - Work with CVB to plan and execute
    - Encourage retail to open early on race day
  - Dance Across Lawrence (Karen Christilles)
    - Discuss continuation of this event
    - Explore adding Downtown outdoor performances by local dance academies

### **Business Development Assistance**

- Quarterly Newsletter Articles
  - Poll members as to the type of information that would be most helpful
  - Develop schedule and sequence for articles
- Member Workshops
  - Analyze survey results to determine types of workshops desired/necessary
  - Develop curriculum with KUSBC
  - Recruit presenters as needed
- Develop Mentor Network

### **New Business Recruitment**

- Identify potential recruits
  - Investigate trade groups such as Independent Retailers Association in which potential businesses may belong

- Generate discussion among current members for suggestions
- Create resource center for outside inquiries
  - Identify incentives
    - Work with City, Chamber and County to identify potential incentives available
  - Compile space availability
    - Develop listing with square footage, rent, estimated utilities and contact information
  - Develop supporting materials with traffic patterns, Downtown sales tax growth, testimonials from current businesses
  - Create website link "Want to locate in Downtown Lawrence?"
- Explore Business Incubator Options
  - Explore potential for entrepreneurial grant opportunities

### **Miscellaneous**

- Inform/remind store owners of their sidewalk maintenance responsibilities
- Clarify regulations with regard to power washing, sidewalk signage/displays and inform members
- Work with City to develop improved parking signage
- Work with City to develop incentives for Downtown workers to park in long-term lots
- Continue to explore panhandling regulations