

City of Lawrence
Outside Agency
Bi-annual Report
2016

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org. Reports on activities from January 2016 to June 2016 are due on July 15th 2016. Cumulative reports on activities from January 2016 through December 2016 are due on February 15th 2017.

Agency Name:

Reporting Period (please check one):

☐ January - June
(deadline July 15)

☒ January – December
(deadline February 15)

1. Give a brief narrative of the activities that were funded with City funds over the reporting period checked above.

Downtown Lawrence, Inc. continued to expand its membership and engage with member businesses, collaborate with local organizations, and the community at large in 2016. We produced and coordinated many longtime community wide events, most of which are free and open to the public, that encourage residents and visitors alike to spend time downtown enjoying the atmosphere and patronizing our local businesses. DLI also sponsored other local events and assisted with marketing and advertising via earned media, social media, and traditional media buys. We continually promote downtown through a variety of media channels as a destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment and as a community gathering space. We support our member businesses and assist with business development, marketing, targeted initiatives and promotions in our role as an economic development organization. Our members are also afforded multiple marketing and advertising opportunities that are included as a benefit of membership. They are promoted online via our website, downtownlawrence.com, on our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and on our printed map and directory as well as the large format map and directories located at 9th and Mass and in the Vermont St. garage. DLI also offers co-op advertising opportunities several times a year that allow businesses to increase the impact of their limited marketing dollars.

DLI has continued to develop and grow our collaborative relationships and partnerships with other local agencies and organizations for the benefit of downtown as well as our city as a whole. We continue to work with the City on issues related to downtown parking including communications, signage, and bike corrals and we work with Lawrence Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste and Public Works to communicate with business owners and the public about street and sidewalk repairs, traffic pattern changes, beautification efforts and trash and recycling issues downtown. DLI maintains a close relationship and open lines of communication with Lawrence Police on issues of downtown safety and security; we are often the liaison between businesses and residents and police and work to facilitate positive and proactive discussions to ensure that our downtown is as welcoming, safe and inviting as possible. Our goal is to offer any visitor to downtown Lawrence the best experience possible, to make them feel welcome and encourage them to visit often.

2. Provide specific detail (and supportive documents, if needed) to demonstrate progress made toward your goals/objectives.
 - Continued membership retention and growth – 36 new members i2016 and 197 members total in 2016.

- Started a Small Business Support Network committee including City staff, Chamber staff and member property and business owners to discuss ways to recruit and retain local independent retailers to downtown Lawrence.
- Started a Retail Events committee to focus on developing and expanding retail specific events as well as improved integration of retail businesses into large and small scale events downtown.
- Retail Events committee developed two expanding retail specific events, Moonlight Madness in mid-October and Winter Open House Weekend in mid-November – to drive business and raise awareness of late shopping hours and holiday gift ideas.
- Hosted the DLI Annual Members Breakfast April 12th with City Manager Tom Markus as guest speaker. We had the highest response to date, with over 80 members in attendance.
- Hosted the DLI Annual Members Holiday Mixer on November 16th with 65 in attendance. Overview of year to date totals for gift card sales, social media reach and website analytics and board elections at the event.
- Managed and promoted DLI gift card program for 125 participating DLI member businesses. From 1/1/16-12/31/16 DLI sold 3526 gift cards for a total of \$155,329 and generated \$106,000 in direct spending in 4336 transactions at 125 downtown businesses. To date since its inception in mid-November of 2015 we have sold 4798 gift cards for a total of \$215,518 and generated \$116,319 in direct spending in 4686 transactions.
- Promoted and helped coordinate the 5th annual Kansas Craft Brewers Expo in conjunction with Free State Brewing Co. and the Kansas Craft Brewers Guild. The event welcomed 1600 attendees from across Kansas and the Midwest and included over 40 Kansas and regional craft breweries. The event raised over \$28,000, split between DLI and the Kansas Craft Brewers Guild.
- Helped facilitate successful relocation of Tuesday Farmers Market to Library Lawn Plaza from City parking lot in the 800 block of New Hampshire.
- Coordinated a promotional social media campaign for National Small Business Week May 1-7 featuring DLI member businesses.
- Coordinated the Downtown Summer Film Festival “Dinner and a Movie” in conjunction with the Lawrence Public Library. In 2016 we showed three films (1 each in June, July and August) at this free community event at the Library Lawn Plaza. We collaborated with more than 15 Downtown businesses to offer local food and drink for direct purchase, provide free popcorn courtesy of DLI, and door prizes donated by Downtown businesses. Attendance for the summer series was approximately 1200.
- Coordinated and promoted the 57th annual Sidewalk Sale July 21st with over 100 participating businesses, media outlets and local non-profits. Marketing and advertising included television, radio, print, social media, and targeted online ads as well as live radio broadcasts on event day. Provided amenities to shoppers including free water, cooling stations, and porta johns.
- Continued our sponsorship with Lawrence Parks and Recreation for the Summer Brown Bag Concert Series and Halloween Painted windows. Promoted both events via our website, social media, and our weekly public e-newsletter.
- Coordinated and promoted the second annual Oktoberfest Lawrence with The Chamber. This year’s event welcomed 1300 attendees, an increase of 200 from 2015, and added new entertainment options. The event, which is a fundraiser for DLI and The Chamber, netted \$10,000 for each organization.
- Coordinated and promoted the Santa Rescue & Holiday Lighting Ceremony with LPRD and Lawrence Fire & Medical and Police. Entertainment was provided by Theatre Lawrence, Lawrence High School Chorale and a local caroling group.
- Coordinated a Small Business Saturday/shop local social media campaign featuring local downtown businesses.
- Coordinated and promoted the third annual Winter Wonder Weekend with community partners Watkins Museum, Big Brothers Big Sisters Gingerbread Festival and Auction, Craft Collective local arts and craft show, The Eldridge Hotel, Waxman Candles and the Lawrence Civic Choir to encourage parade spectators and visitors to stay downtown after the parade to shop and participate in holiday activities and enjoy live caroling on Mass. Street.
- Collaborated on numerous Downtown and community events including: Final Fridays; Lawrence Farmers Market; St. Patrick’s Day Parade; Downtown Men’s Olympic Shot Put; Lawrence Busker Festival and Art Tougeau; Free State Festival; Tour of Lawrence; Kaw-Boom Festival; Watkins Museum

Summer games program; Library Summer Reading program; KU Orientation and Hawk Week; KU Homecoming Parade; 10th Annual Lawrence Zombie Walk; Halloween Trick-or-Treat and Lawrence Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade. Provided marketing and social media support as well as planning assistance.

- Produced a promotional music video with Lawrence Schools Foundation, eXplore Lawrence and DLI member Nordera Productions showcasing downtown, residents, community organizations, City departments and services to be used as a social media marketing tool for our community.
 - From January 1-December 31, 2016 the DLI website, downtownlawrence.com, had 178,000 page views, nearly 82,000 visits and over 65,000 unique visitors. Visitors are from 145 countries and all 50 states + DC.
 - DLI Facebook page has nearly 32,000 likes, Twitter has 6,300 followers, and Instagram has 3600 followers. Social media continues to be one of our strengths and gives us incredible reach and engagement on behalf of Downtown as a whole as well as for our members. Also responsible for Downtown Lawrence Restaurant Week Facebook page with 1180 likes.
 - DLI weekly members' e-newsletter communicates information about events, promotions and initiatives, construction, street closures, development plans, etc. Weekly public e-newsletter highlighting community, downtown and member events, initiatives and promotions goes to 2900 subscribers in addition to 38,000 social media followers via Facebook and Twitter. In 2016 we moved to a weekly format from a bi-weekly format in order to promote more downtown and member special events.
 - Increased marketing and promotion efforts via social media, print, television, digital advertising, and radio, which grow year over year
 - Continued to implement and promote successful Downtown Quarterly Passport program for visiting groups, meetings, conferences, and conventions. Collaborated with eXplore Lawrence, area hotels and meeting and event planners, University of Kansas and Sports Pavilion Lawrence to provide Downtown Passport with over 25 offers redeemable for the quarter at participating member businesses for visitors. Ongoing program that is a member benefit at no cost to them.
 - Continued collaboration with eXplore Lawrence to market and promote Lawrence as a destination locally, regionally, and nationally. DLI executive director and board past president are both members of the eXplore Lawrence board. Co-promotion for all DLI and Downtown events and collaboration on Downtown Business Directory and map, DLI printed map (nearly 20,000 copies distributed annually) and Downtown Passport. Continued collaboration on meetings and conferences to provide outside activities, event spaces, and events to offer visitors the best city and downtown experience possible.
 - Continued collaboration with City of Lawrence, Lawrence Parks and Recreation, Lawrence Public Library, Watkins Museum, Lawrence Arts Center, The Chamber, Lawrence Farmers Market, Kansas Public Radio, the World Company, WOW!, Great Plains Media, Kansas Athletics, Lawrence Kids Calendar, Lied Center, Lawrence KS app.
 - Maintain and update Downtown Lawrence kiosk including map, business directory and quarterly events calendar to assist visitors at 9th and Mass as well as Downtown map and directory in the Vermont Street garage.
3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?
- Downtown Lawrence is an important aspect of the city as a whole. We are an important recruiting tool for KU as well as for the City and the Chamber when new businesses are looking to locate here. Our goal is to create and foster an exciting, dynamic, and relevant Downtown, and remain the heart of the city.
 - Downtown Lawrence, Inc. serves to draw people from within and without the City to patronize and enjoy our Downtown Historic business district. We provide multiple free community events drawing attendees from across the region as well as special events aimed at particular demographics. Our goal is to provide the community gathering place for all of our citizens. By providing a gathering place and excellent opportunities for shopping, dining, and entertainment we provide a valuable public service that adds to the quality of life in Lawrence. It also improves and increases business and stimulates the local economy through sales and guest tax collections. Downtown Lawrence is the number one tourist destination in the state of Kansas according to Trip Advisor, and DLI plays an important role in fostering the welcoming and charming atmosphere.

- We also assist many non-profit service organizations in the community via gift card donations to fundraising event and publicity and promotion. We have formed a partnership with Just Food that has netted them over \$10,000 in the past seven years. In addition, Downtown businesses consistently donate to organizations across the city to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars each year in goods and services – from event venues, to catering, to goods and services for silent and live auctions and outright cash donations. There is no more generous group in Lawrence than our Downtown business owners

4. What barriers, if any, have you encountered?

- Parking issues continue to present a challenge to business owners and downtown visitors and patrons alike. DLI is committed to working with the City on new parking plans and programs including the comprehensive parking study that was begun in January 2017 as well as new signage to direct visitors to free and low cost parking options off Massachusetts St. Communicating effectively and efficiently with the public about downtown parking remains a challenge and a priority. Parking continues to be compressed by ongoing construction projects that limit on street parking and add to the congestion in surface lots and garages. DLI would like to encourage development of a long term parking plan that includes increased parking inventory and options as a result of the parking study.
- We know that not everyone in Lawrence is aware of the importance of shopping locally and keeping dollars in the community. We are always trying to communicate how essential shopping locally is, not just for individual businesses, but for our entire community and our city budget. DLI continues to work on spreading that message.
- DLI continues to discuss ways to recruit and retain local independent retail businesses. Several downtown businesses have closed in the past few months and we do not want to see this becoming a trend. The increasing cost of rent and property tax can make it difficult for small independent retailers to survive long-term. We are aware that a diverse mix of retail, restaurants and entertainment venues, and residential properties make a healthy downtown and we are working to foster and maintain that.
- DLI continues to monitor and remain involved in the conversation surrounding both the E. Ninth project and a downtown grocery. We have very good lines of communication with stakeholders involved in both issues and are very pleased to be part of the discussion surrounding both. There are always issues that arise when dealing with a large group, in our case, an entire neighborhood and business district. We hear differing opinions about development and construction, street closures, traffic patterns, utilities work, etc. DLI works to increase communication with member and non-member businesses as well as with the public about what is going on Downtown. We have improved our communications and are striving to find new ways to interact with and engage more members of the community.
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5. Review the line-item budget you provided in your application. How much of your allocation has been spent?

- 75%