



2021

REDISCOVER DOWNTOWN DAYTON

# ACTION PLAN

# ACTION PLAN INTRODUCTION



The Greater Downtown Dayton Plan was launched in 2010 and has been the strategic blueprint for downtown development. As we look to the future, Plan leaders recognized how the pandemic created near-term and long-term challenges and opportunities for our city. This spring, an effort was launched with public and private leaders to create the Rediscover Downtown Dayton Action Plan, with the goal of identifying short-term and long-term recommendations and setting a vision for downtown's recovery following the pandemic.

**The Action Plan is the result of nearly 100 community volunteers and stakeholders who are committed to downtown's continued growth and recovery. This team of diverse community leaders, business owners, residents and other stakeholders gathered to address some of the top challenges and opportunities the pandemic presented.**

In just a few months, eight different subcommittees convened, including:

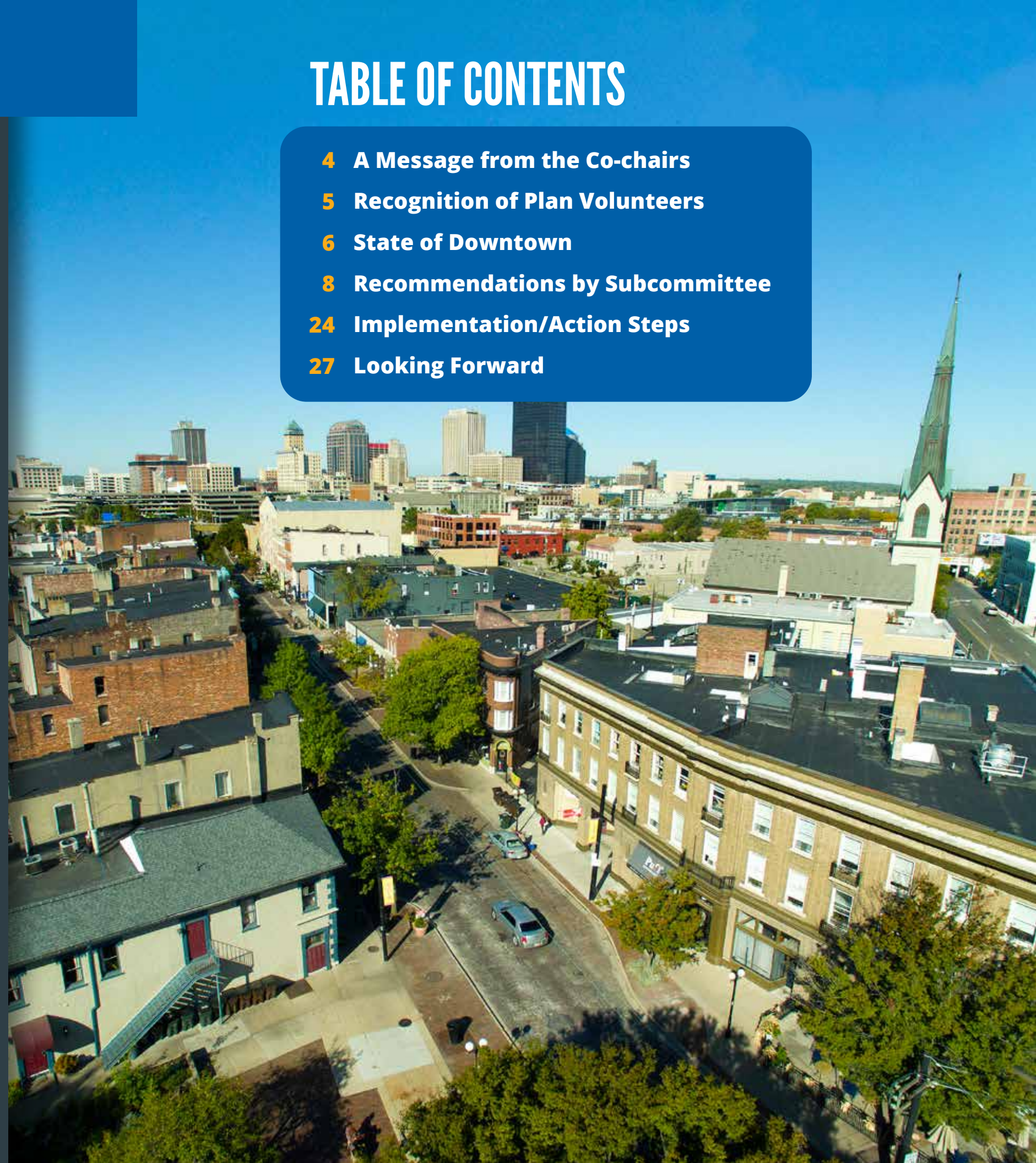
- Future of Office
- First Floor & Small Business Relief
- Outdoors & Recreation
- Downtown Development
- Arts, Entertainment, Culture & Venues
- Public Realm & Transportation
- Residents
- Marketing

As teams began to tackle their focus area, cross-collaborations emerged across committees, which were anchored by the guidance of the Steering Committee. This report includes summaries and recommendations from each of the groups. So much work has already started, and implementation teams are ready to move the recommendations forward.

**Downtown Dayton is poised for businesses, employees, students, residents, and visitors to come back and RECONNECT, RECHARGE, AND RECONVENE.**

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# MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS

As co-chairs for the Rediscover Downtown Dayton Action Plan, we are pleased to share these targeted strategies and initiatives that will make our downtown stronger. As we entered this planning process, several items were at the top of our minds, including:

- Leveraging a public that is excited to start doing things again and ensuring our downtown venues benefit
- Capitalizing on federal funding opportunities that will accelerate downtown's recovery and revitalization
- Near-term recovery of first floor businesses and addressing the financial gaps that prohibit small businesses from opening and growing
- Welcoming back students to their campuses and classrooms this coming fall
- How the pandemic impacted our black- and brown-owned small businesses, and what tools are needed to ensure our recovery efforts are inclusive
- Capitalizing on the boost in demand for outdoor spaces
- Streetscape improvements, placemaking initiatives, transportation connections, and the long-term vision for downtown's public realm
- What the future of office will be and how downtown can capitalize on hybrid work trends
- The impact of the pandemic on the development industry
- Continuing the momentum in the startup ecosystem and leveraging the opening of the Arcade

We are inspired by the energy and enthusiasm our community has shown through this planning process. Our team is committed to accelerating downtown's recovery, and we invite you to become a supporter of this effort. Special thanks to everyone who took the time to engage in one of the Plan's subcommittees. We appreciate your creativity and dedication to our center city.

**It is time for our community to Rediscover Downtown Dayton!**



**Dan McCabe**  
CareSource



**Chris Shaw**  
City of Dayton



**Sandy Gudorf**  
Downtown Dayton Partnership



# SPECIAL THANKS

## Steering Committee

Dan McCabe, CareSource – Co-Chair  
Commissioner Chris Shaw, City of Dayton – Co-Chair

Carly Cox, JJR Solutions  
Sandy Gudorf, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Sarah Hackenbracht, Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association  
Helen Jones-Kelly, ADAMHS  
Vince Lewis, The Hub at The Arcade  
Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, Montgomery County  
Dan Meixner, Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School  
Bear Monita, LWC  
David Neal, The Windsor Companies  
Anne Pfeiffer, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Greater Miami Valley  
Kate Rivers, Twist Cupcakery  
Marya Rutherford-Long, Fifth Third Bank  
Ty Sutton, Dayton Live  
Liz Valenti, Wheat Penny  
Jason Woodard, Woodard Development

## Subcommittees

### Outdoors & Recreation

Carrie Scarff, Five Rivers MetroParks – Co-Chair  
Bear Monita, LWC – Co-Chair  
Meredith Adamisin, Five Rivers MetroParks  
Lindsay Deck, Space Three  
Laura Estandia, Bike Miami Valley  
Dan Foley, Miami Conservancy District  
Madeline Iseli, Sinclair College  
Tony Kroeger, City of Dayton  
Commissioner Chris Shaw, City of Dayton  
David Taylor, DECA  
Mary Van Kirk, Downtown Dayton Partnership

### Marketing

Michelle Kaye, PNC – Co-Chair  
Jenny Michael, CareSource – Co-Chair  
Holly Allen, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce  
David Bowman, The Ohlmann Group  
Mike Colvin, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Carli Dexter, The Windsor Companies  
Shelli DiFranco, Five Rivers MetroParks  
Samantha Elder, ADAMHS  
Diane Ewing, Premier Health  
Sarah Hackenbracht, Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association  
Madeline Hart, Levitt Pavilion Dayton  
Jonah Otchy, TriCom B2B  
Bev Rose, Dayton Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Josh Stuckey, Square One Salon & Spa  
Castel Sweet, University of Dayton Crotty Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership  
Laura Woeste, Downtown Dayton Partnership

### Future of Office

Carly Cox, JJR Solutions – Co-Chair  
Vince Lewis, The Hub at The Arcade – Co-Chair  
Jeff Addison, Techknowvate  
Jeff Brownrigg, Premier Health  
Lisa Coker, Infinite Management Solutions  
Dave Dickerson, Miller-Valentine Group  
Jennifer Harrison, Taft  
Stephanie Keinath, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Jena Kreitzer, Liberty Tower  
Dan McCabe, CareSource  
Scott Murphy, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Rick Peters, Tangram Flex  
James O'Hara, ConsumerOptix  
Amber Wenzler, Apex Commercial Group  
Betsy Westhafer, The Congruity Group

### Residents

Dan Meixner, Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School – Co-Chair  
Anne Pfeiffer, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Greater Miami Valley – Co-Chair  
Val Beerbower, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Autumn Cox, Downtown Resident  
Emmitt DeAngelo, Downtown Resident  
Dan Desch, Downtown Resident  
Susan DeLuca, Downtown Resident  
Laura Fenlon, Downtown Resident  
Richard Grant, Downtown Resident  
Greg Greening, Downtown Resident  
Jessica Jenkins, Downtown Resident  
Allison Jordan, Downtown Resident  
Marilyn Klaban, Downtown Resident  
Evan Kloth, Downtown Resident  
Patrick Martin, Downtown Resident  
Tracey Obenour, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Marsha Pippenger, Downtown Resident  
Jeffrey Roberts, Downtown Resident  
Steve Seboldt, Downtown Resident

### Downtown Development

David Neal, The Windsor Companies – Co-Chair  
Jason Woodard, Woodard Development – Co-Chair  
Dave Dickerson, Miller-Valentine Group  
Scott Everett, Wright Patt Credit Union  
Joe Geraghty, Dayton/Montgomery County Port Authority  
Dan Kane, CityWide Development Group  
John Kopilchack, Synergy & Mills Development  
Mary Kate Lindsey, Weyland Ventures  
Scott Murphy, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Marya Rutherford-Long, Fifth Third Bank  
Aaron Savion, Apex Commercial Group  
Amy Walbridge, City of Dayton  
Dave Williams, Cross Street Partners

### Arts, Entertainment, Culture & Venues

Julie Liss-Katz, Dayton Business Committee – Co-Chair  
Ty Sutton, Dayton Live – Co-Chair  
Meredith Adamisin, Five Rivers MetroParks  
Eva Buttacavoli, The Contemporary  
Juanita Darden, Third Perk  
Courtney Deutsch, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Eric Deutsch, Dayton Dragons  
Matt Dunn, Montgomery County Arts & Cultural District  
Diane Farrell, Dayton Metro Library  
Russell Florence, Jr., Dayton Daily News  
Kelly Geers, Montgomery County  
Elaine Gounaris, Dayton Art Institute  
Lisa Hanson, CultureWorks  
RoNita Hawes Sanders, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company  
Kappy Kilburn, The Human Race Theatre Company  
Marilyn Klaban, Downtown Resident  
Mary Beth Natarajan, Dayton Performing Arts Alliance  
Jami Pack, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Tracy Tomme, Boonshoft Museum of Discovery  
Lisa Wagner, Levitt Pavilion Dayton  
Holly Wiggins, AES Ohio

### First Floor & Small Business Relief

Kate Rivers, Twist Cupcakery – Co-Chair  
Liz Valenti, Wheat Penny Oven and Bar – Co-Chair  
Mary Baldino, Connect E-Sports  
Jennifer Dean, Mudlick Tap House  
Chris Dimmick, The Idea Collective, Tender Mercy  
AJ Ferguson, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Carlina Figueroa, Sinclair College  
Bryan Hunter, 937 Payroll  
Jonathan McNeal, The Neon  
Allison Swanson, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Paula Willis, Now and Zen DIY Studio  
Tae Winston, The Entrepreneurs Connection

### Public Realm & Transportation

Susan Vincent, City of Dayton – Co-Chair  
Brandon Policicchio, Greater Dayton RTA – Co-Chair  
Laura Estandia, Bike Miami Valley  
John Gower, CityWide  
Matt Lindsay, MVRPC  
Emily Mendenhall, Oregon District Business Association  
Scott Murphy, Downtown Dayton Partnership  
Joe Weinel, City of Dayton

# STATE OF DOWNTOWN

A lot has changed in downtown Dayton while you were social distancing. More than \$90 million in projects finished in 2020 – including new housing, employers, storefronts, and attractions. More than \$200 million in projects are already underway in 2021, and several more are expected to start later this year. The pandemic temporarily slowed downtown development, but investment interest is quickly rebounding.

 **\$90 MILLION**  
IN PROJECTS  
FINISHED IN 2020

 **\$200 MILLION**  
IN PROJECTS  
UNDERWAY IN 2021

The pandemic tested our businesses like never before. Because of the grit of Dayton’s entrepreneurs and a supportive community that rallied around them, our city has navigated the economic fallout of 2020 better than most cities. Only a few downtown storefronts closed permanently, while several more have persevered to grand openings in 2020 or early in 2021. Proving that entrepreneurs start businesses even in tough economic times, more than 30 new downtown businesses have opened in the last 12 months.

 **30+ NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES**  
OPENED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Aviatra Accelerators



Jollity



Baba Love Organics



Flyboys Deli



More than 21,000 employees are based in downtown Dayton and the absence of office workers continues to impact weekday vibrancy. Employers are beginning to come back to their downtown offices, but the bulk of employees won’t return until the fall. The future of office is hybrid, but almost 90% of our employers say their workforce will spend more time in the office versus working remotely. The pandemic has proven your desk can be anywhere, so commercial office space must provide other intangibles to justify the cost to the company. With the renewed focus on company culture and teambuilding, the walkable, amenity-rich environment of downtown Dayton could be poised for commercial office growth in the post-pandemic world.

Uncertainty remains, but downtown Dayton is coming out of the pandemic stronger than it entered it. Despite our distance from each other over the past year, our downtown community grew closer than ever before. We found new ways to activate our streets and support our small businesses. A public that is anxious to see each other is coming back to downtown event venues and entertainment amenities.

**COVID-19 caused so much loss and heartbreak, but it’s also been a catalyst for creativity. We’ve shown it so many times - the Gem City shines brightest when we are tested. It’s in that entrepreneurial spirit we present this roadmap for downtown Dayton’s reopening.**



# ARTS • ENTERTAINMENT • CULTURE • VENUES



Downtown Dayton’s arts, entertainment, and cultural organizations - along with all of our city’s public venues - suffered immensely through the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety orders put in place cancelled all large events and public gatherings. Shuttered venues left artists, performers, and athletes with no one to entertain, and the host organizations with no way to secure income. The negative impact on these organizations was perhaps greater than that of any other business sector in our community, and effectively shut this industry down for more than a year.

An overarching frustration within this industry has been the lack of consistent messaging from officials about current mandates and orders. Compounding this issue is the vast spectrum of opinions, levels of comfort, and compliance from this sector’s constituents: the public. This industry has been challenged with finding a way to safely and effectively bring people back together - at events, to our venues, and to all of the other various public gathering spaces in our community - while respecting the beliefs and comfort levels of all. It is highly important that each organization and venue put out clear and concise messaging about its respective policies and guidelines to ensure that patrons and customers are well informed and clearly understand what they can expect when they return.



## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an Arts & Venues CEO Roundtable committee to address the ongoing challenges and opportunities facing the industry. This group will meet regularly to focus on the long-term financial sustainability of the industry, advocacy with local and state officials, and finding ways to collaborate for the collective betterment of the industry in our community.



## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a clear, coordinated, and cohesive branding/messaging strategy for all members of the industry to use to welcome the public back as we transition out of the pandemic
- Convert existing pandemic brands/ messaging to this new brand that focuses on safely returning to our events, spaces, and venues
- Create a marketing toolkit with the option for each organization or venue to use and personalize according to its specific needs
- Use our public gathering places as vaccination sites, as appropriate, and in coordination with Public Health.





# FUTURE OF OFFICE



**OFFICE MARKET IMPACT:** The pandemic has fundamentally changed how companies think about their office spaces. Surveys and conversations with downtown employers reveal that **hybrid work is the new standard**. Almost all employers report that they will be coming back to the office, but with a lot more flexibility for remote work. Fortunately, this is likely to have only a minor impact on downtown office leasing - most do not expect changes to their offices, and only a small fraction (17%) say they expect to reduce their office footprint. Employers report that face to face interactions are vital, but also believe they must offer remote work flexibility to retain and recruit top talent.

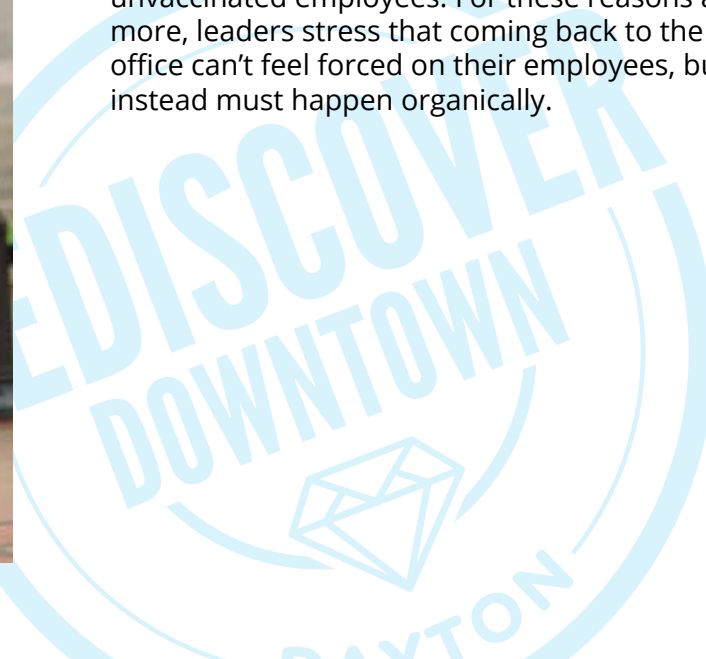
**CULTURE SPACE:** While employers have realized their employees can be productive while working remotely, most know their company culture and sense of team has atrophied over the past year. If team members are only together a few days per week, using that precious time to collaborate and build culture will be critical. The pandemic has proven your desk and computer can be anywhere, so commercial office space must provide other intangibles to justify the cost to the company. The walkable, amenity-rich environment of downtown Dayton could be poised for commercial office growth in the post-pandemic world.

**COMING BACK TO THE OFFICE:** Employers will be coming back to their offices over the summer and fall, but emphasize the return to downtown will be in phases. Downtown CEOs will manage complex issues as employees come back - apprehension about returning to the office, shortfalls in child care and other personal dynamics, and mixes of vaccinated and unvaccinated employees. For these reasons and more, leaders stress that coming back to the office can't feel forced on their employees, but instead must happen organically.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **BUILD EXCITEMENT FOR COMING BACK:** Downtown stakeholders should partner with companies to share information about downtown progress, events, programs, and other initiatives, and supply office managers with welcome back packages and perks (e.g. Downtown Dollars) to help build excitement among employees about returning to the office.
- **PREP FOR HYBRID WORK:** Downtown CEOs face several challenges in their changing workplaces. Downtown stakeholders can help companies prepare for hybrid work by creating a resource toolkit with best practices for hybrid office technology and layouts, strategic messaging for why it's important for employees to return, and recommendations on COVID-19 protocols.
- **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO SOCIALIZE WITH COWORKERS OUTSIDE:** Socializing with coworkers has never been more complex, or more needed. Downtown stakeholders should connect employers to opportunities to gather outside - through regular events like The Square Is Where and Out on 5th, on restaurant patios for lunch or happy hour, and by providing more opportunities for outdoor work and office gatherings.
- **FACILITATE OFFICE TEAM BUILDING:** Employers who locate downtown also value their company's contribution to the Dayton community. Downtown stakeholders can help companies rebuild their sense of team by connecting them to volunteer opportunities that support the center city's revitalization, or to other team-building activities they can complete with coworkers.
- **HELP DOWNTOWN CAPITALIZE ON THE FUTURE OF OFFICE:** How companies think about their office space has changed, so downtown must change too. Continued growth in office building amenities and shared work spaces will facilitate connectivity and collaboration between employees and help distinguish downtown office properties. Additionally, downtown stakeholders should continue to aggressively promote the value proposition of a downtown business location, which, given the increased focus on company culture, is likely to resonate even more with CEOs moving forward.





# FIRST FLOOR & SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF



Slowed revenue, a loss of staff, the necessity to “pivot” to a new way of operations, and the unexpected closures caused by sickness - this is just a small list of the many challenges the pandemic caused. As an effect, nearly every first floor business owner in downtown Dayton questioned whether their business would survive, including downtown’s most beloved and successful establishments. Resilience, endless creativity, and an array of relief resources helped to carry them through a seemingly impossible year. For some, especially the smallest and newest businesses, the barriers to federal and state relief funds have left owners on especially strained foundations to move ahead post-pandemic. For black- and brown-owned businesses who have historically struggled with access to capital and support networks, the challenges introduced by COVID-19 were even more daunting. But through these trying times, downtown businesses and their supporters have equipped themselves with a new set of ideas, tools, and perspectives to build upon, leaving downtown’s first-floor businesses optimistic that our city center’s brightest days are still ahead.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- The most pressing and difficult challenge facing the majority of first-floor businesses is finding, hiring, and training a workforce that can carry the business back to pre-pandemic revenues and resume the growth that many had in their sights at the start of 2020. These workforce challenges are not going to disappear anytime soon and hinge on larger economic forces.
- Downtown’s close-knit commerce community wants to be part of creating a complete, connected, and energetic experience for customers. They desire to encourage longer visits within downtown and foster patronage to more than one business.
- Activations prompted by the pandemic, like Pop-Up Patios, Pick-Up Zones, and DORA/Out on 5th, have ongoing value even as restrictions wind down.
- New businesses are searching alongside developers and building owners for financing tools and resources to build downtown’s next wave of vibrant restaurants and storefronts.

- Rising construction costs and hesitancy from banks to lend to first-floor concepts are complicating an already difficult path to opening. Entrepreneurs are exhausting every potential source of funds, often launching without appropriate reserves to manage the ups and downs of a new operation.
- Downtown’s robust and growing entrepreneurial ecosystem relies upon targeted efforts to support small business owners, including through the Retail Lab and the Arcade Kitchen Incubator. These efforts will require continued and increased support to achieve their full potential.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Connect local workforce leaders and organizations to the efforts of the first-floor business community as they work to identify and create viable staffing solutions, both in the near- and long-term.
- Develop a revolving loan fund to help close the financing gaps for new first-floor concepts. This fund should have aggressive goals for the support of women-owned and minority-owned businesses.
- Invest in the Retail Lab, Arcade Kitchen Incubator, and other strategic efforts to provide mentorship and on-ramp opportunities to new businesses. These programs should continue their focus on building pathways for minority-owned businesses and take on added importance to ensure downtown will be part of an inclusive recovery for entrepreneurs across the city.
- Expand and enhance efforts to make the downtown environment more connected, walkable, and welcoming.
- Support collaboration and communication among first-floor businesses to extend and deepen customers’ experience of downtown Dayton.
- Connect first-floor businesses to catering, event, and meeting opportunities as downtown employers return to the office and rebuild their company culture.
- Expand downtown Dayton marketing and messaging to the regional audience.



# OUTDOORS & RECREATION



Unlike many of the issues being addressed in the Action Plan, participation in the outdoors and outdoor recreation increased during the pandemic. People with few other options for their leisure time and exercise went outside where opportunities for activity still existed and were safer than indoor activities. The goals for the Outdoor and Recreation Subcommittee are to continue the momentum of outdoor activity, for leisure time, recreation, exercise, and transportation, by increasing opportunities and breaking down barriers to spending time outdoors, including improving physical, perceptual, and skill-based access to these activities. Challenges exist in the reliance on the public sector funding for these priorities that face competition in the current environment.



## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create outdoor workspaces:** engage the large employers and public agencies to build outdoor meeting spaces and solitary work environments by providing seating and high-speed internet access. Engage students to participate in design (Sinclair College) and mural painting (K12 Gallery & TEJAS).
- **Provide outdoor fitness opportunities:** provide consistent programming and self-directed walk/ride routes. Packaging and promotion are key to programming. Themed walks and rides such as brewery hops, birds, architectural and historical tours create identity. Promote the Civic Loop to connect people with the river. Engage students in try-it classes for cycling and paddling.
- **Provide a consistent Friday party:** invest in Out on Fifth with quickly erected and removed bollards and signage and other amenities so that the weekend closure of Fifth Street becomes permanent.



## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Provide an urban outdoor recreation event:** demonstrate how easy it is to paddle, bike, and walk downtown by connecting users to providers, demonstrating access, and teaching skills. Mimic the "Taste of..." concept to expose participants to a variety of opportunities. Leverage existing events and focus on one activity per event. Promote the events to area schoolchildren.
- **Activate the River Run:** Final bank improvements are coming to the River Run this summer to create a great hangout spot and increase access for program providers. Partner with the private sector to provide reliable and recurrent classes, programming and independent paddling opportunities. Explore opportunities to provide programming to students as part of their fitness classes.







# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT



Development projects that were either close to securing financing or had started construction before March of 2020 have continued largely uninterrupted through the pandemic. Projects earlier in the pre-development process still face a variety of challenges - delays in commercial financing, uncertainty in market uses, and more recently, supply chain delays and the skyrocketing cost of materials for construction.

Downtown residential development is the least affected and overall demand for downtown living is still high (e.g. 95%+ apartment occupancy). The hospitality industry and commercial office are the murkiest markets, but seem to be rebounding in the first half of 2021. Financing for first floor tenants was challenging prior to the pandemic and has become more difficult. Downtown developers emphasized the criticality of these first floor tenants to the success of their mixed use development projects and downtown Dayton overall.

Even in an economic downturn, savvy developers see opportunities and expressed overall confidence in the long-term strength of downtown Dayton. In the second quarter of 2021, predevelopment interest in downtown Dayton has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels.

• **DAYTON FIRST FLOOR FUND:** Downtown needs first floor businesses to succeed for the city to succeed. Stakeholders should create a revolving loan fund that is partnered with the commercial lending community to help finance first floor tenants and accelerate the activation of downtown's ground floor.

• **FOCUS ON MAIN STREET:** Almost all of downtown's 21,000+ employees are within a block or two of Main Street. Downtown stakeholders should continue efforts to activate the core of downtown and bring vibrancy to the Main Street corridor. This should include a focus on streetscapes and other linkages between signature assets like the arts, office towers, the Dayton Arcade, the Convention Center, Levitt Pavilion, and Courthouse Square.

• **CONVENE THE DOWNTOWN DAYTON DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY:** There is benefit for the downtown development community to meet regularly to discuss issues and facilitate collective action. Beginning in 2021, downtown stakeholders should convene a downtown developers round table that meets at least twice per year.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

• **SHARED RISK IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT:** Developers are entrepreneurial by nature and accustomed to accepting risk. Downtown stakeholders could accelerate the pace of development through more local private sector investment in downtown projects. So far the development community, the public sector, and investors outside the region have carried much of the load. An example of effective local private sector support is the Downtown Dayton Investment Fund (DDIF) - more alternative and mission-based funding sources like the DDIF would unlock more development opportunities and investment across the city.





# PUBLIC REALM & TRANSPORTATION

While many portions of this plan identify the costs incurred and hardships faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City's public realm revealed itself to be an invaluable asset and untapped resource during this time of crisis. As the nation continues to emerge from COVID-19 and the new federal administration begins to allocate both recovery and new programmatic funds, Dayton plans to be ready with agreed-upon priorities and recommended projects that build off the lessons we learned on how best to take advantage of our public spaces. The following section highlights both short-term and long-term programs or actions that the Transportation and Public Realm Subcommittee believe will utilize our public realm to promote the rediscovery and enjoyment of downtown by all users.

- Explore expanding the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) to include more of downtown, either as separately managed districts or as one continuous system, to encourage pedestrian exploration of attractions outside of the Oregon District. Partners will include City of Dayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership.

- Continue dedicated Carry-out Zones at existing Delivery Zones and at targeted downtown meters on a case-by-case basis to support easier take-out and short visit parking. Partners will include City of Dayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, downtown businesses.

- As a companion to the Pop-Up Patio Program (private use of public space), design and launch a parklet pilot program that will create guidelines and an approval process for public seating areas and hang-out spaces installed within the public right-of-way (public use of public space). Partners will include City of Dayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, MetroParks, Bike Miami Valley, nonprofit community.

- Develop and publish a toolkit for community partners that will guide them through the City approval process and logistics requirements for planning and hosting events that utilize public spaces or require street closures, (e.g. fitness classes, ciclovia-style festivals, food trucks, or street-fairs) to ease barriers to launching new events and encourage diversity in hosts and event type.



## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

During COVID-19, downtown Dayton's expansive public rights-of-way were used as a tool for businesses seeking creative solutions to social distancing requirements. Downtown partners worked to design and offer programs tailored to help our small businesses weather the daily challenges of a public health crisis including Pop-Up Patios, dedicated take-out parking zones, and the weekly Out on Fifth street closure event. As our community evaluates the impact of these emergency response programs, we have the opportunity to adopt permanent, expanded versions that will continue to enliven our public spaces while supporting our small business community. Below are the top six short-term priorities identified:

- Reduce the cost and administrative burden of closing down East Fifth Street during Oregon District closures by identifying and raising necessary funds for removable bollards (~\$40-\$50K). Partners will include City of Dayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, Oregon District Business Association, and Oregon Historic District Society.

- Adopt the Pop-Up Patio pilot as a permanent seasonal program of the City and allow administrative approvals to shorten processing time for temporary, expanded patio areas. Partners will include City of Dayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, Business Associations, and State Liquor Control.



## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Some activities discussed by the Transportation and Public Realm Subcommittee will necessarily require additional planning and implementation time. The subcommittee reviewed existing City plans and policies and identified a list of approximately six priority downtown transportation projects, such as streetscape enhancements, one-way to two-way conversions, road diets, etc., that will be ready to submit for funding as programs are announced. In addition, the subcommittee discussed ways to tie support for downtown businesses to active transportation by allowing users to cash in miles for points. Models from other communities, in addition to a program the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority is launching in 2022, provide guidelines for how Dayton partners might launch a similar initiative.





# RESIDENTS

Our downtown residential community plays an important role in our city's overall vibrancy and success. Housing continues to be in demand, and each year more and more people decide to call downtown Dayton home. Our residents are also some of our strongest supporters, and a critical audience to engage in revitalization efforts.

## KEY AREAS

A diverse group of downtown residents identified four key areas to address for the Action Plan:

- **Resident engagement:** connecting residents of any one apartment or condo complex to one another, and connecting residents across all complexes
- **Beautification:** placemaking and public infrastructure
- **Marketing/public messaging:** social media, interactions with local media, talking points for social interactions
- **Event support:** ensuring there are enough volunteers and infrastructure available for festivals and other large-scale events to return downtown

**These volunteers could be activated through other initiatives launched through the recovery plan.**

- Explore the creation of a Downtown Resident Council.
  - Culmination of social engagement activities
  - Can continue the work of the Downtown Dayton Partnership on hyper-local basis
  - Can generate resident-driven ideas for projects impacting the downtown environment
  - Would create a more "neighborhood" type function for the growing population that's offered to other City of Dayton residents



## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Creating a Downtown Resident Council (DRC) may be a long-term solution to continued efforts for all these goals.
- DRC would interact with the Downtown Dayton Partnership, apply for funding for various projects for approval through the Downtown Dayton Partnership.
- Downtown Dayton Partnership could lean on DRC for volunteer opportunities and guidance for planning and executing events.



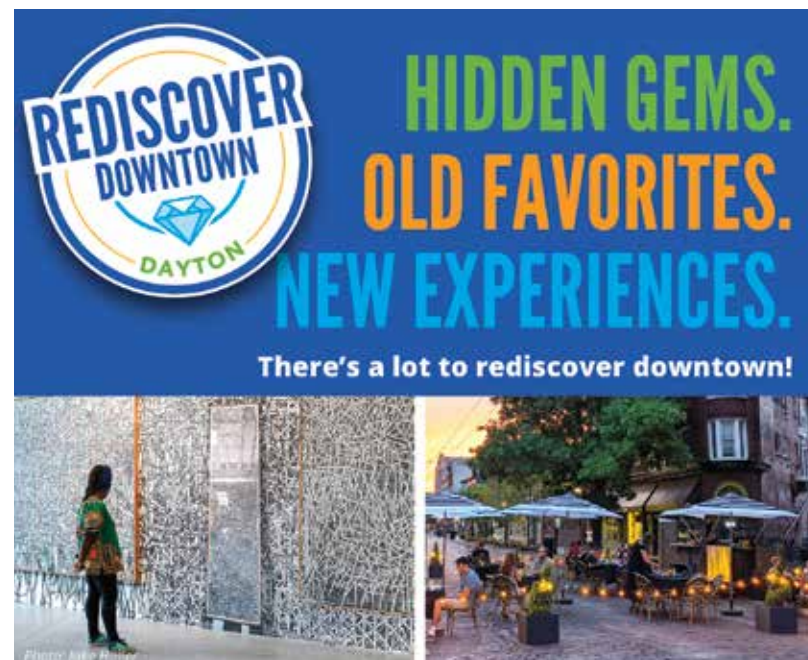
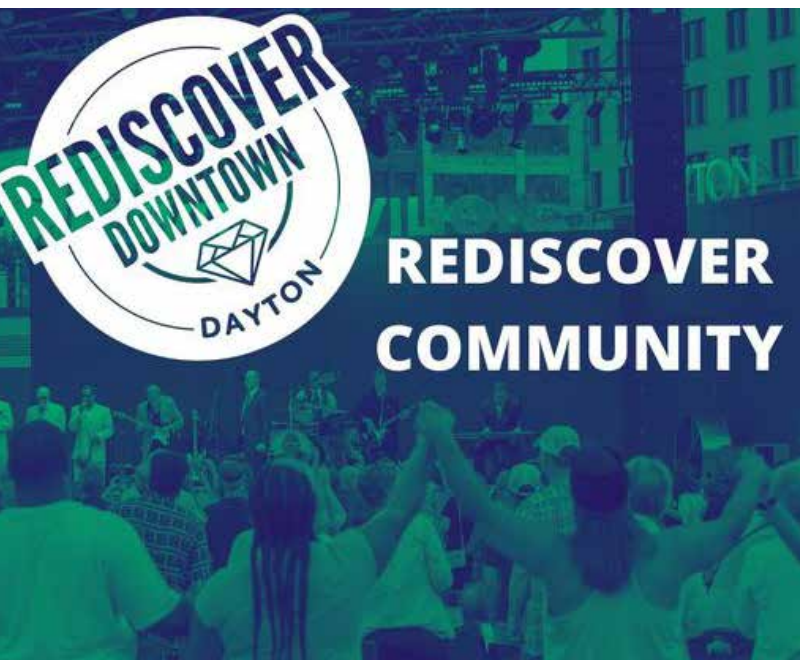
## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Schedule social events for downtown residents. These will be used as "friendraiser" events to collect contact info and grow the engagement network.
- Recruit volunteers for Downtown Dayton Partnership events and various Action Plan initiatives (for example – residents could help promote the Rediscover Downtown brand by applying it to their social media channels).





# MARKETING



Now that the orders have been lifted, finding ways to safely bring people back downtown is a top priority for downtown businesses and organizations. In addition, the need for a coordinated and cohesive marketing strategy was a focus of nearly all our Action Plan subcommittees. An overarching “welcome back” campaign is needed for numerous target audiences – our downtown businesses, employees, residents, students, and visitors.

During the pandemic, the OPEN\* campaign proved to be successful for informing the public on what was open for business and how that business was operating. The Marketing subcommittee looked to the success of OPEN\* for inspiration and began working toward an overarching theme that would help welcome our community back downtown. The subcommittee focused on developing a marketing approach that would be appealing to a wide variety of audiences and demographics, and easy for partners to use in tandem with their own branding.

Due to the timing of all the orders being lifted, the work for this committee began immediately and a new theme – Rediscover Downtown Dayton – was launched on June 1, 2021.

- Identify key marketing materials to produce with the Rediscover logo on them, including street banners, posters, and other promotional items.
- If needed, establish common language messaging for downtown venues to utilize with regard to any rules or safety protocols that may still be enforced or arise in the future.

**The brand was designed to be used for however long the recovery effort takes, and will be evaluated by the committee every quarter.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional recommendations from the Marketing committee that will be implemented in the coming months around the Rediscover Downtown Dayton theme include:

- Develop a toolkit for partners and stakeholders to use that includes all branding materials and consistent messaging.
- Utilize the DDP website as the central source for the Rediscover Downtown Dayton brand.
- Launch a social media campaign with the hashtag #RediscoverDowntownDayton.
- Leverage existing marketing resources and media relationships to promote the brand throughout the region with a special effort to reach diverse communities.
- Coordinate special promotions with key partners and stakeholders.



# ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the recommendations from the eight Action Plan subcommittees, the following priority projects and initiatives will be implemented over the next year:



## WELCOME BACK MARKETING & MESSAGING CAMPAIGN

Implement an aggressive **Rediscover Downtown Dayton** messaging and branding campaign to welcome the community back downtown and encourage them to rediscover the places they have missed during the pandemic. Provide a toolkit for arts, entertainment and cultural venues to use on the web and through social media to expand the campaign reach. Include focused outreach to office employers to help them build excitement with employees about coming back through welcome back packages, Downtown Dollars promotions, tours, and more.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>ALL ACTION PLAN PARTNERS</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
ALREADY UNDERWAY	

## INCLUSIVE DOWNTOWN RECOVERY

Ensure the initiatives that launch from this Action Plan are intentional in supporting black- and brown-owned businesses, which, because of their smaller size and disproportionate access to capital, have been more severely impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic. Leverage the efforts already in work, including the connections between The Hub at the Arcade and Greater West Dayton Incubator, the City of Dayton's Inclusive Recovery Playbook, the planning and fundraising for the Kitchen Incubator at the Arcade, and programs that provide downtown opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged businesses, such as the Downtown Dayton Retail Lab.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>CITY OF DAYTON, THE HUB AT THE DAYTON ARCADE, DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>MULTIPLE</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
ALREADY UNDERWAY	

## OFFICE EMPLOYERS & OUTDOOR SPACES

Connect office workers with opportunities to socialize with coworkers outdoors through existing programs like The Square Is Where, RiverScape Music @ Lunch and food trucks, Out on 5th, and on downtown patios for lunch and happy hour. Provide the building blocks to enable companies to utilize outdoor spaces for coworking, meetings, parties, and other office functions.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP &amp; FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS</b>	<b>DAYTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
NEXT 30-60 DAYS	

## DAYTON FIRST FLOOR FUND

Launch a first floor revolving loan fund in partnership with commercial lenders to fill a major financing gap for mixed use development projects and storefront activation across the city. Jumpstart the launch of 50 locally-owned first floor businesses in downtown Dayton and in neighborhood commercial corridors, which will boost Dayton's walkability and quality of place for residents and businesses.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>CITY OF DAYTON</b>	<b>CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
NEXT 6 MONTHS	

## FIRST FLOOR BUSINESS CAPACITY BUILDING

Continue to leverage the growth of Dayton's entrepreneurial ecosystem and service provider network through programs like the Downtown Dayton Retail Lab and new kitchen incubator at the Dayton Arcade to build capacity for existing and new locally-owned restaurants, bars, retailers, and personal care service businesses. Target that at least half of the businesses served by these programs will be women-owned, and at least one third will be minority-owned.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURS' CENTER, THE HUB, AND SEVERAL OTHER PARTNERS</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
ALREADY UNDERWAY	

## FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY WORKFORCE INITIATIVES & ADVOCACY

Continue to convene community partners and workforce development resources around developing long-term solutions to food and beverage (F&B) industry workforce challenges. In the near-term, spotlight the importance of F&B industry workers, show our appreciation for their contribution to the downtown mission, and equip them to be downtown champions and supporters of downtown's reopening and revitalization.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>TBD</b>	<b>MULTIPLE</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
NEXT 6-12 MONTHS	

## PUBLIC REALM POLICIES & OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

Create the 2.0 version of the COVID-driven public realm changes that have been popular with downtown patrons and businesses over the past year, including Pop-Up Patios, Pickup Zones, and the long-term infrastructure needs for Out on 5th. Additionally, provide a policy framework to enable businesses to activate more areas in the public realm, including parklets, spaces for outdoor fitness classes, and a street closure toolkit.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
<b>CITY OF DAYTON</b>	<b>DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP &amp; GDRTA</b>
LAUNCH TIMELINE	
FIRST QUARTER OF 2022	

## DOWNTOWN DORA EXPANSION EXPLORATION

Convene downtown stakeholders to explore expansion of the Oregon District DORA or adding a second downtown Dayton DORA district. Gauge support of key downtown constituents, establish the target DORA geography, and create an operational plan to support the expanded responsibilities that would come with a larger district.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP	MULTIPLE

LAUNCH TIMELINE

TBD

## PLACEMAKING PROJECTS

Activate downtown residential and employer volunteer groups for tactical placemaking programs and beautification initiatives to create a more vibrant and colorful downtown. Pilot low-cost signage and other public realm improvements to make downtown more welcoming and navigable.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP / PLACE LAB	CITY OF DAYTON

LAUNCH TIMELINE

NEXT 6 MONTHS

## FUNDRAISING & ADVOCACY FOR ACTION PLAN & DOWNTOWN CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Convene a team of public and private partners to fundraise and advocate for local match and / or private funding to support the implementation of the Action Plan Initiatives and other downtown catalytic projects (e.g. Downtown Signage & Wayfinding, streetscape improvements, and the revitalization of Courthouse Square). This effort includes planning for a 2022 RAISE Grant application and other federal and state funding opportunities on the horizon.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
CITY OF DAYTON, GDRTA, DOWNTOWN DAYTON PARTNERSHIP	MULTIPLE

LAUNCH TIMELINE

NEXT 6 MONTHS

## CONTINUED COLLABORATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Leverage the sense of collaboration and teamwork created through the Action Plan subcommittees to facilitate long-term dialogue and coordination between key stakeholder groups in downtown Dayton. Target areas for ongoing collaboration include downtown arts groups and event venues, downtown developers, and downtown residents.

LEAD	SUPPORTING
SPECIFIC TO EACH CONSTITUENCY	MULTIPLE

LAUNCH TIMELINE

NEXT 6 MONTHS

# LOOKING FORWARD



**Despite all the struggles that have come with the pandemic, progress continues.**

In 2020, projects completed downtown totaled more than **\$90 million**. Our community rallied around several **relief efforts** that were designed to help our independent small businesses that are the lifeblood of our city. While commercial activity took a significant hit nationwide due to the pandemic, more than **20 new businesses opened in 2020**. Major development projects like the first phase of the **Arcade** made significant progress and downtown housing continues to be in demand. New units have come online and there are now **1,807 market-rate housing units in the core**. This is a **77% increase** since the launch of the Plan. Projects completed since 2010 total **\$1.5 Billion**, and with projects that are currently in the pipeline, total investment is close to **\$2 Billion**.

The end of 2020 was the time Greater Downtown Dayton Plan leaders had intended for an update, but the reality of the pandemic was pressing, and a shorter-term recovery effort became our top priority. While our near-term focus is on the implementation of the **Rediscover Downtown Dayton Action Plan**, leaders are working toward a longer-term planning process that will begin later this year. This process will work to identify top priorities and strategies for Greater Downtown Dayton for the next ten years. Public input from a diverse cross-section of our community will play a key role, and there will be a concentrated effort to connect the Rediscover Downtown Dayton Action Plan to the new Greater Downtown Dayton Plan.

For more information on the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan, visit [downtowndayton.org](http://downtowndayton.org) or contact Sandy Gudorf at (937) 224-1518 ext. 224 or [gudorf@downtowndayton.org](mailto:gudorf@downtowndayton.org).

Plan Partners:

