

Top 10 List: Strategies to try today for progress tomorrow

Organization:

- Review/update your organization bylaws or mission.
- Create a board matrix. Who is not at the table? Recruit.
- Identify some tasks volunteers can help complete, in person or on their own.
- Find volunteers with needed skills and reach out directly.
- Develop a strategy to recognize volunteers and supporters.
- Update your work plans. Make sure that everyone knows what needs to be done.
- Set goals for each program/event and ways to measure impact.
- Host a community visioning session (or online survey) to determine priorities and identify concerns or opportunities.
- Identify 10 potential donors and strategically approach them.
- Create a partnership with at least one other civic group to improve the district, increase awareness of the community or tackle a project.

Economic Vitality:

- Inventory your district. Properties, businesses, residential units. How many, status, ownership.
- Market vacant spaces (clean windows, add signage, list online).
- Learn about vacant/underutilized properties in your district (ownership, value, mortgage/tax status).
- Complete a business retention survey (samples available).
- Identify entrepreneurs in your community and what needs they have.
- Create a market profile/summary of your district.
- Collect testimonials and stories from your district – business owners, volunteers, employees.
- Implement a secret shopper program (exchanges with other communities possible).
- Participate in a first impressions program (exchanges with other communities possible).
- Host a popup activity/event/shop in a vacant/underutilized space.

Promotions:

- Create a visitor itinerary for target demographics (families, outdoors, girls outing). What is missing?
- Take/collect photos of your district. Buildings, events, people.
- Schedule social media posts into the future. Featured businesses, fun facts, historic insights.
- Encourage community groups to host their events downtown. Create a guide to hosting downtown events with ideas and inspiration.
- Plan and publish a master downtown events calendar.
- Ensure local events are included in regional and statewide calendars.
- Create/revamp your organization's logo to reflect your downtown and be recognizable on marketing materials.
- Help local businesses claim/enhance online listings
- Promote local shopping, including Shop Small Saturday and Shop Local Day
- Coordinate local ad and marketing buys among local businesses.

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Design:

- Review/update local ordinances (sign, historic preservation)
- Review/update local design guidelines (signs, facades)
- Review/create local incentives (loans, grants, etc.)
- Review local planning documents (downtown, comprehensive, bike/ped. Identify gaps and take action.
- Introduce yourself to the local building inspector and discuss common challenges and how to educate property owners.
- Introduce yourself to the local planning/zoning director and/or commission members.
- Create a one-stop building improvement resource guide (printed & online) for property owners.
- Meet w/ business/building owners one-on-one to discuss design assistance, incentives, and potential projects.
- Coordinate a downtown block walk in spring & fall to identify potential improvements
- Coordinate a spring & fall planter maintenance and/or alley cleanup schedule.
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