



**Mayor & City Council  
Work Session Meeting Agenda**

**Monday, August 23, 2021, 7:00 PM**

**Tucker City Hall**

**1975 Lakeside Pkwy, Ste 350B, Tucker, GA 30084**

**Members:**

**Frank Auman, Mayor**

**Pat Soltys, Council Member District 1, Post 1**

**Matt Robbins, Council Member District 2, Post 1**

**Michelle Penkava, Council Member District 3, Post 1**

**Vacant, Council Member District 1, Post 2**

**Noelle Monferdini, Council Member District 2, Post 2**

**Anne Lerner, Council Member District 3, Post 2**

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ZOOM link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81913470171> or Telephone: 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) ID: 819 1347 0171

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**Pages**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. ROLL CALL**

**C. MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS**

**D. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**E. BUSINESS**

E.1. Council & Downtown Development Authority Visioning Session 2

E.2. Presentation by Discover DeKalb

E.3. Presentation by Atlanta Regional Commission on the Community Development Assistance Program Project - Art in the Alleys

E.4. Discussion of Intersection Improvement – Mtn Industrial Blvd @ Hugh Howell Rd by Ken Hildebrandt 28

**F. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**G. ACTION AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**H. ADJOURNMENT**



## MEMO

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
**From:** John McHenry  
**CC:** Tami Hanlin, City Manager  
**Date:** August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
**RE:** Council & Downtown Development Authority Visioning Session

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### **Issue:**

Downtown Development Authority Proposed Plans & Programs

### **Recommendation:**

Please review proposed project list and give DDA members your input on prioritizing the top three items at upcoming joint session on August 23rd.

### **Background:**

The Downtown Development Authority contracted with the Georgia Tech Center for Economic Development Research to develop a strategic vision of short- and long-term economic development goals. Attached to this memo is both the report and the project list. The proposed project and task list draws from the report as well as City adopted plans.

### **Summary:**

Continued Council collaboration with the Downtown Development Authority to further economic development in Tucker.

### **Financial Impact:**

Future Funding Allocation to the Downtown Development Authority

# STRATEGIC VISIONING

AND PLANNING SERVICES FOR

## CITY OF TUCKER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



Georgia  
Tech



Center for  
Economic Development  
Research

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# 1. INTRODUCTION + BACKGROUND

# INTRODUCTION

## About the Team

The Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2) is Georgia Tech's chief business outreach and economic development organization. Since its inception in 1960, its core mission is to help business, industry, entrepreneurs, and economic developers across Georgia grow and remain competitive. EI2 continues Georgia Tech's more than 60-year legacy of commitment to community economic development by providing research and technical assistance to support economic development efforts in communities in Georgia and around the world.



The Center for Economic Development Research (CEDR) is an applied economic development unit of EI<sup>2</sup>. CEDR assists local elected officials, economic developers, policy makers, and community and state leaders who seek innovative tools and methods to leverage their local advantage and quality of life for their residents by attracting, maintaining, and growing business and industry within their areas.

CEDR's economic development team are experts with decades of experience in advising economic development and community leaders on how to stay competitive in an ever-changing global economy. CEDR's staff includes:

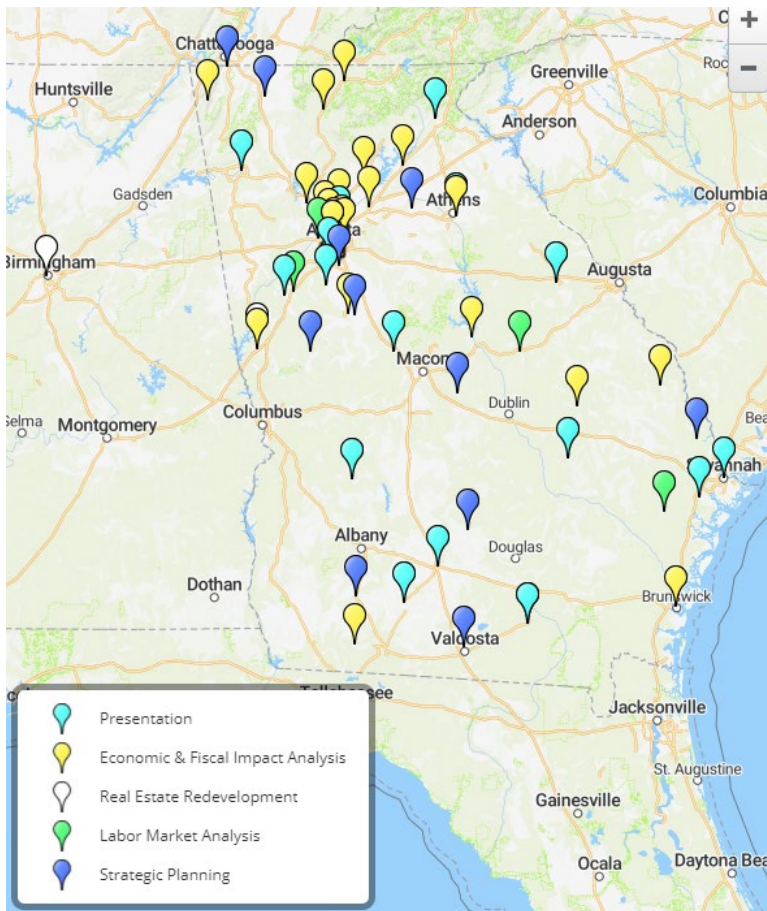
- **Economists**
- **City Planners**
- **Economic Development Finance Professionals**
- **Downtown Development Specialists**
- **Public Policy Researchers**

The expertise of the CEDR team is concentrated in the areas of strategic planning, organizational development, labor market and workforce analysis, facilitation, research, and economic and fiscal impact analyses. All have a depth of experience performing applied research for the economic development community. When needed, staff can supplement their skills by calling on Georgia Tech academic faculty to assist in specific research projects. Through their research, CEDR helps their clients understand the opportunities and challenges in fostering local and regional economic development.

For purposes of this report, the research team at CEDR will simply be referred to as "Georgia Tech".

## Project Overview

Georgia Tech is pleased to present this report assisting the City of Tucker Downtown Development Authority in their pursuit of strategic visioning and planning services. As an EDA University Center, Georgia Tech has supported economic development efforts across Georgia for decades, including research, facilitation, technical and management expertise. These services are available through its headquarters in Atlanta, GA and a network of regional offices located throughout the state.



*Impact of the Georgia Tech's CEDR team across Georgia.*  
Source: <http://cedr.gatech.edu/projects/>



Recognizing some of the challenges of being a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) formed just several years ago, but also some of the opportunities, the City of Tucker DDA initiated Strategic Visioning process to better understand how the DDA can work more efficiently for the betterment of the city. The DDA will use this Visioning process to lay the groundwork for its own strategic planning.

This Strategic Visioning project consisted of four fundamental tasks: (1) project kick off, (2) review of recent initiatives, (3) strategic visioning sessions, and (4) creation of outcome-based findings to address the DDA's short and long-term economic and community development planning goals.



## Visioning Process

Georgia Tech used an established strategic planning process for this visioning project, guided by research to gain the greatest understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Tucker DDA. Georgia Tech focused on identifying common themes based on its research and feedback from the three (3) visioning sessions. Based on staff expertise in strategic planning and hands-on experience with downtown development authorities, Georgia Tech developed a practical “toolbox” to inform the DDA on how it should focus its community and economic development efforts.

Georgia Tech worked with leadership from across the City of Tucker’s local government to develop its approach.



Image: Outdoor dining on Main St. in the City of Tucker  
Source: @CityofTucker Twitter page

### 1. Kick Off Meeting

The Tucker DDA and Georgia Tech held a kickoff call on September 15th, 2020 to review the visioning process goals for the DDA and establish the project timeline.

### 2. Review of Recent Studies

During November 2020, Georgia Tech reviewed several plans and studies conducted on behalf of the City of Tucker. These studies provided valuable insight into current conditions and challenges facing the city, as well as valuable insight into the city’s economic and community development goals.

### 3. Strategic Visioning

Georgia Tech worked with the DDA to hold three virtual strategic visioning sessions focused on identifying the DDA’s biggest challenges, and opportunities for creating the most economic prosperity in the City of Tucker. These sessions led to the creation of a working vision and mission for the DDA.

### 4. The DDA Toolbox

After a review of the plans and studies and distilling the outcomes from the visioning sessions, Georgia Tech identified a “toolbox” of programs and initiatives the DDA can use in building its brand and value to the community.



The City of Tucker was incorporated in 2016, but it wasn't until 2019 that the City of Tucker's DDA was established. The Tucker DDA consists of a seven-member board. Typically, the connotation of a "downtown development authority" gives the impression that the organization would only work within the extent of Main Street. However, the City of Tucker's DDA boundaries (shown in blue) extend well beyond Main Street to the Pittsburg neighborhood to the north, along the length of the Lawrenceville Highway corridor running east-west, and the Mountain Industrial area, south to East Ponce de Leon Avenue to Stone Mountain.

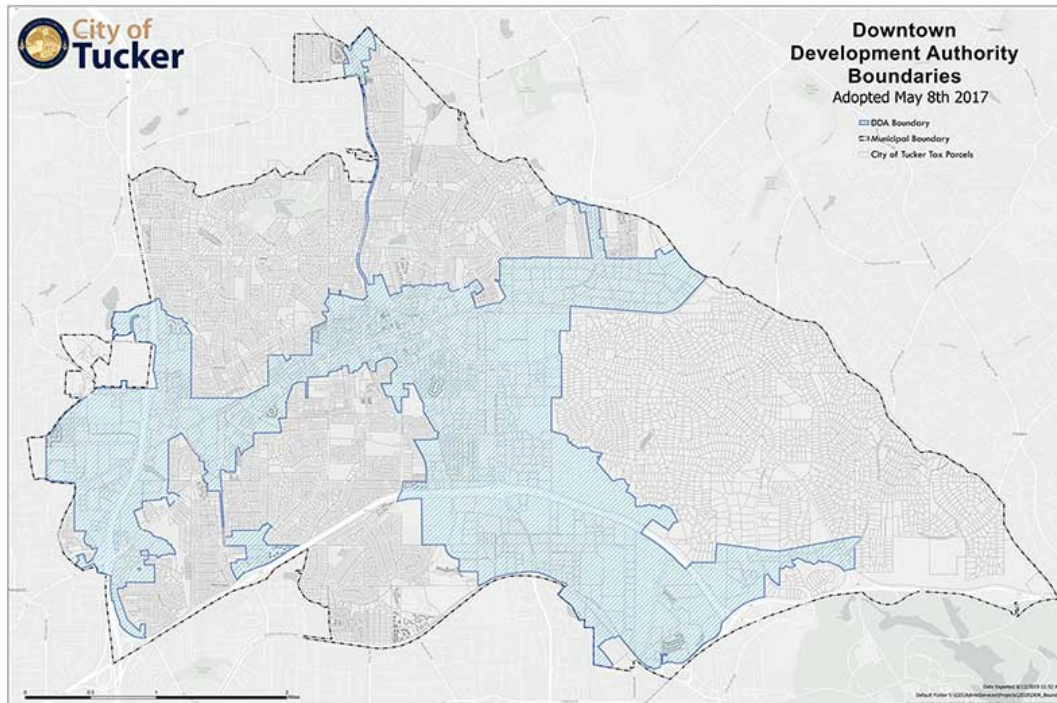


Image: City of Tucker Downtown Development Authority Boundary

## Downtown Development Authorities

DDAs serve an important role in local community and economic development. Authorized by the state and activated through the local community (usually through a resolution), DDAs can be used as the financial vehicles to facilitate projects on behalf of the local government.

Georgia's Downtown Development Authority Law (O.C.G.A. 36-42-1 through 36-42-16) allows municipalities to activate a downtown development authority for the purposes of revitalizing and redeveloping central business districts.

For DDAs to be effective, they must remain active and file appropriate paperwork annually with the State of Georgia. Inactivity from DDAs can be a potential barrier to new business development in a city's downtown and commercial corridors.

DDAs are authorized to exercise financial flexibility for economic development purposes and are primarily focused on the revitalization of the central business district (e.g., Main Street). Examples of the tools they may use include:

- Property tax incentives<sup>1</sup>
- Revenue bonds and notes
- Infrastructure upgrades
- Ad valorem tax incentives
- Own/lease/sell property

### Community Improvement Districts (CIDs)

Prior to its incorporation, the City of Tucker already had several entities in place to fund improvement projects in the area: the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District (CID), established in 2013, and the Tucker Summit CID established in 2011 (formerly the Stone Mountain CID). CIDs and DDAs are entities that have certain legal capabilities to facilitate various projects and developments in a community. These entities are uniquely positioned to work together to accomplish tasks for the overall betterment of the city and will be addressed in further detail later in this report.

### Nonprofit + Community Organizations

As a widely recognized and well-established community, Tucker has many dedicated volunteers from the community to help activate and improve the downtown area. The framework of community volunteer organizations with energetic and engaged citizens already exists, and the DDA recognizes that it's important their work continue.

While the roles and responsibilities of these organizations were discussed during the visioning process, it may still benefit the DDA to further clarify their purpose and roles in the city. This includes considering:

- Why does the organization exist?
- What are the kinds of projects they pursue?
- How can the DDA be an effective partner to this organization?

Recognizing the value and function that these organizations provide to the city, elements of the DDA's five-year work plan could be assigned to the appropriate volunteer groups. For example, the Tucker DDA is already responsible for downtown development efforts and should be encouraged to meet and partner with the Old Town Tucker Merchants Association. The DDA could partner with the Tucker Rotary club to explore establishing an Adopt-A-Highway program, constructing attractive gateway entrances into the city, or raising private funds to sponsor a new downtown park. There could be opportunities for the DDA to facilitate new or existing volunteer groups to address other initiatives, like downtown beautification projects, music, a farmer's market, or public art/mural installations.



Image Sources: City of Tucker community organizations (l-r: Friends of Kelly Cofer Park, Main St. Theatre, and Henderson Park Community Garden).  
[https://www.tuckerga.gov/community/community\\_organizations/index.php](https://www.tuckerga.gov/community/community_organizations/index.php)

## 2. VISIONING SESSIONS

# VISIONING SESSIONS

## Introduction

The cornerstone of any organizational planning effort, **visioning** is the process of defining the future of what an organization “wants to be” – its destination or strategic direction. An effective **vision statement** encapsulates the organization’s purpose and presents a clear picture of long-term success and *why* it matters. Most importantly, a vision should be memorable and make a lasting impact to those inside and outside of the organization. Supporting the vision statement is the organization’s **mission**, which states the action steps that the organization will take to achieve its vision.

The Tucker DDA came together over three separate visioning sessions with members of the Tucker City Council and local government to define the DDA’s vision and mission. Georgia Tech facilitated the following sessions:

- Visioning Session #1: November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Visioning Session #2: December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Visioning Session #3: January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

***A DDA is a major decision-making and project-driven entity that plans and manages the downtown business district.***

### Visioning Session #1: Getting to Know You

At this opening session with the DDA (seven members) and their partners (12 total City Council, city staff, and CID representatives), Georgia Tech introduced the visioning process, its purpose, and ground rules for participation. The purpose of the first session was to get a better understanding of the DDA – the talents that comprise the board, the relationships and dynamics between the DDA and other city organizations, their process for conducting business as a board, some of the challenges that they currently face, goals they want to achieve, and opportunities to create a stronger downtown development authority in the City of Tucker.

**“It’s important to create a shared vision for the City of Tucker Downtown Development Authority so that they can effectively communicate their role and responsibilities to the community and be an effective organization moving forward.” – Georgia Tech**

During this session, the group was asked to take a short survey in the online application Mentimeter for Georgia Tech to get a better understanding of some of the perceptions of the DDA and how economic development is currently handled in the community.

In response to how the city approaches economic development, respondents described it as slow, cautious, and lacking direction. Yet, respondents also saw the untapped potential of the DDA whose members have the skills and ability to change some of these views.

In terms of projects that the DDA should be focusing on, a variety of answers were presented at that time:

- Parcel assembly and underutilized properties that will benefit city growth
- Downtown redevelopment
- “Non-organic” growth (i.e., identifying businesses that may not otherwise locate in Tucker without location assistance)
- Affordable housing options
- Quality of life projects to keep downtown active and thriving
- Redeveloping Lawrenceville Highway (beyond Main St.)
- Activating downtown alleys
- Working in accordance with adopted plans
- Establishing development “zones”
- Working in partnership with CIDs, City Council, and city staff

The DDA plays either a lead role or secondary role in many of the city's recent plans and studies, as shown below. But without clear direction or an implementation strategy with other responsible city entities, the DDA is unable to prioritize the tasks in these plans.

Georgia Tech recommended that the DDA meet to review these plans and studies and identify the tasks that are within their purview, and then meet with City Council and the CIDs to ensure that everyone is working together and moving in the same direction.

By the end of this session, it was clear that the DDA faced three main challenges: 1) lack of strategic direction, 2) communication and workflow, and 3) project execution. Together, these challenges stem from a lack of vision. Once the DDA has its vision in place, it can begin to remedy its current challenges and begin to move forward.

### Key Questions Raised in Visioning...

“How do we get the group moving?”

“What tools does the DDA have in its toolbox?”

“How do we get on the same page?”

## Recent Plans + Studies

Study	Date	Purpose	Responsible Parties
<a href="#">Comprehensive Plan</a>	2018	To serve as a “travel guide” for the community’s journey toward the future of its choice.	City Manager, Mayor/City Council, County, CID, CD/ED Staff, GIS, Parks
<a href="#">Downtown Master Plan</a>	2019	20-year blueprint for the growth and redevelopment of Tucker’s downtown.	Tucker-Northlake CID, “City” (entity not specified)
<a href="#">Strategic Transportation Master Plan</a>	2019	Analysis of existing and future transportation needs and identifies policies, projects and programs to remedy transportation issues and meet future needs throughout the City.	DeKalb County Roads Dept., Georgia DOT
<a href="#">Trail Master Plan</a>	2019	To evaluate opportunities for trail connectivity, as well as new trails in the City of Tucker.	Friends of Tucker Parks
<a href="#">Historic Resource Report</a>	2019	Establish a baseline document that lists Tucker’s historic resources as well as a history of the area.	Tucker Historical Society, Tucker Summit CID, Friends of Tucker Parks
<a href="#">Downtown Tucker Grid Plan</a>	2020	To utilize existing alleys and uncover historic alleys to provide quality public space and accessibility that is safer for pedestrians spending time downtown.	Tucker-Northlake CID



### Visioning Session #2: Who Do We Want to Be?

During its second session, the group explored what they desired their future to look like, and their role in the future development of the city. The goal of this meeting was to brainstorm a **“living vision”** which can grow and change as the DDA evolves and gains more experience and trust.

The central question presented at this meeting to drive creation of the vision statement was: **“How can the DDA help to make downtown Tucker the best it can be?”** The participants also expressed a need for strategic direction in order to activate and utilize the full powers of the DDA. From the previous visioning session, it was noted that the DDA can start by identifying and prioritizing projects from the city’s recently completed plans and studies as the lead or co-lead, in communication with City Council, the CIDs, and other city entities, as appropriate.

For example, the DDA can align with and support five key goals from the Comprehensive Plan (adopted prior to the DDA’s formation):

1. Enhance Downtown
2. Improve Transportation Connections
3. Preserve and Improve Neighborhoods
4. Strengthen Rec and Community Resources
5. Bolster the Economic Base

Several concerns were raised during this session, including the existing perception that the DDA can *only* work in downtown, when in fact, the DDA can work on projects throughout the city. To overcome that perception, the DDA should be marketing and positioning itself as a valued partner to the city, with the financial tools and legal authority to execute projects that are unique to a DDA. However, the DDA needs initial “seed” resources to begin to establish itself as a valued asset to the community.

Georgia Tech recommended that the DDA’s next steps should include a board work session to review all recently completed plans and studies to identify priority tasks, timelines, identify staff/support to execute projects, and budgets. After this work session, it was recommended that the DDA hold a work session with City Council and the CIDs to come to a consensus on these activities and prioritize short/medium/long-term projects and budgets for completing the work.

## Tucker DDA Vision Statement

**The Tucker Downtown Development Authority is a quasi-governmental organization that values investing in and fostering community development projects that result in the long-term vitality of commercial areas throughout the City of Tucker.**



### Visioning Session #3: How Do We Get There?

During this final visioning session, the group built on the vision statement created in the previous session and created action steps to achieve their vision. These steps are included in the DDA's **mission statement** and support the vision by communicating the actionable ways that the DDA will "get there," or achieve its vision.

Based on three primary areas of concern identified throughout the visioning process, the DDA developed actions that would address the following:



**Mission:** The Tucker Downtown Development Authority will fulfill its vision in the following ways:

1. Partnering with and assisting the City and the CIDs in key development projects by using the full powers and authority of the DDA.
2. Identifying new business locations using tools to utilize real estate parcels, vacant commercial buildings, find niche markets for businesses, and create a feedback mechanism to better understand the needs of local businesses.
3. Forming collaborative partnerships with the City Council, the CIDs, and other organizations to fund projects that better the City of Tucker.
4. Growing Tucker by facilitating assistance to local businesses through marketing, promotion, investment, and partnership.
5. Improving commercial corridors through proactive DDA-established improvement programs.

### 3. COMMUNICATION + COLLABORATION

# COMMUNICATION + COLLABORATION

## Introduction

Throughout all three visioning sessions, common issues surfaced concerning the Tucker DDA's communication/messaging and the extent of collaboration occurring between elected officials, city staff, CIDs, community organizations, and the business community. These efforts are always difficult for newly created authorities and are further compounded by the creation of a new city government which faces similar challenges.

For Tucker to become a success story, there are some key communication and collaboration approaches that should be incorporated into the DDA's standard operating procedures.

## Collaboration

Because the Tucker DDA is not a self-funded organization, it will rely primarily on the City of Tucker, CIDs, existing community organizations, foundations, businesses, and fundraising efforts for financial assistance to accomplish many of its goals. This is not unusual; most authorities in Georgia rely on outside sources for financing, making it of paramount importance to build strong relationships and establish trust throughout the community.

The Tucker DDA has broad powers that the city government and CIDs do not; therefore, the authority should be viewed as a powerful partner that can be called upon to accomplish community and economic development objectives. Because the City of Tucker and the CIDs are self-funded and have staff, these organizations will often serve as the "lead" or "prime" in many projects and the DDA will serve as "sub" or "secondary" partner assigned to carry out a specific task within a much larger effort. For programs created and managed by the DDA, the authority will assume the "lead" role and depend on others for secondary support.

## Know Your Role:

*Whatever the collaboration looks like, identify the "lead" organization and the "secondary" support groups up front.*

## Collaborative Projects

As an example, the DDA's 501(c)(3) non-profit (if established) may be called upon to help implement alley projects initiated by the Tucker-Northlake CID in the downtown area. The non-profit organization could accept land donations as a gift to provide the owner with a tax deduction. The DDA might be asked to retain ownership of alley right-of-way because the authority has much more flexibility with property acquisition, disposition, and improvements than the City of Tucker. Successful implementation of the alley improvement program will involve the CID, the City of Tucker, and the Tucker DDA working in concert to accomplish the goals of the plan.

Another example of collaboration would be a marketing and promotion strategy initiated by the DDA with partial funding from the City of Tucker, matched by interested community organizations, and sponsored by the local realtor's association. The effort could involve the Old Town Tucker Merchant's Association, Tucker Business Association, and the Tucker Civic Association. Because each of these organizations have a vested interest in the promotion and success of Tucker businesses, they could each contribute expertise, time, and funding to accomplish marketing and promotion goals.



***"What can the Tucker Downtown Development Authority do to help?"***

### Communication

For the DDA to collaborate, members must be able to communicate with one united and consistent voice. Effective communication is vital while interacting with elected officials, appointed boards, businesses, developers, and the community. Programs, projects, plans, and strategies should be thoroughly vetted and determined feasible by the DDA *before* the topic is discussed with elected officials, media, and citizens. In public forums, the Chair and/or Vice Chair should be the face and voice of the DDA.

Discussions about property acquisition strategies should only be discussed in closed session. Planned real estate purchases can drive values higher with speculative development and make a successful project more difficult to execute. Furthermore, if a potential project does not move forward, it may be viewed as a “failure” of the DDA rather than external circumstances.

To help foster an environment of collaboration, cooperation, and transparency, the DDA should send a representative to public meetings of the City Council, the new Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Planning Commission, and both CIDs who can then report back to the DDA with updates at its regular meetings. This is especially important when agenda items include topics such as new development, redevelopment, tax allocation districts (TADs), streetscape improvements, or other relevant topics within the DDA boundary. To prevent each individual organization from operating in silos, consistent communication is vitally important. Fortunately, many DDA members already work with or serve on boards for other community groups and can share information with the rest of the board at regular meetings.

Utilizing traditional press, social media, and actively updated websites are effective means of communicating with Tucker citizens and attracting the attention of potential new businesses. The DDA should continue to build on efforts to utilize online posts and press releases for media coverage to announce new programs and grants, promote special events, and to highlight success stories of local small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Perhaps the most important aspect of communication for the DDA is clearly articulating to the Mayor and City Council which projects the DDA is focusing on and the costs associated with successfully implementing the pieces those plans. During the visioning sessions, DDA members explored the existing plans and studies and identified specific tasks that should be assigned to the DDA. By focusing on tasks already identified in previously approved plans, the authority will be supporting efforts that have already received significant public input and the support and approval of elected officials.

### New Project Implementation: An Example

The Tucker Downtown Development Authority could create and administer a façade grant program to assist property owners and businesses with upgrades to the storefronts of historic buildings in the downtown central business district and other commercial buildings in targeted areas. The façade grant program would provide matching funds to property or business owners at appropriate levels, i.e., 80% private and 20% grant, or even 50% private and 50% grant for early users of the program to generate interest and produce immediate results.

The intent of a façade grant program is to assist property owners with the restoration and enhancement of existing commercial buildings that are in poor condition. Eligible projects should visibly improve the unique historic and architectural character of the storefront. Examples include but are not limited to replacing damaged facade signs, installing new awnings, exterior painting, window or door repair/replacement, wiring and installation of exterior lighting, and other general storefront restoration activities. In addition to providing DDA grant funds for exterior improvements, the City of Tucker could agree to waive any permit and inspection fees for grant recipients as an additional monetary incentive.

The façade grant program should not be utilized for interior improvements, routine maintenance like roof repair/replacement, soft costs and contractor fees (i.e., architectural blueprints), or other activities that do not significantly improve the exterior appearance of the building. Grant funds should not be utilized for alterations that are not historically appropriate, that remove or damage historic architectural details, or for buildings that are less than fifty years old until a majority of the downtown historic buildings have been restored.

All façade grant applications would be processed and approved by the Tucker Downtown Development Authority through impartial project evaluation based on clear scoring/ranking criteria in order to avoid the arbitrary and capricious awarding of funds. Establishing a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of Tucker's history and the revitalization of downtown and other commercial areas will allow program donations from individuals and businesses to be eligible for tax deductions.

### **Façade Grant Program Funding Sources**

1. City of Tucker general funds transferred to DDA through an Intergovernmental Agreement
2. Tucker Downtown Development Authority reserve funds
3. Allocation in conjunction with a larger bond issuance
4. Private foundations, banks, area businesses, community organizations, fundraisers
5. Community Improvement Districts

### **Façade Grant Program Action Items**

1. Survey within the DDA boundary to determine which buildings would benefit from a façade grant and identify potential costs of likely improvements.
2. Identify façade improvement grant program budget and secure committed funds.
3. Create and administer the façade grant program including application forms and fees, maximum grant award amounts, matching fund requirements, impartial application scoring system, and conditions of grant awards.
4. Identify directors and/or interested citizens with a design background to participate in a façade advisory capacity including architects, designers, historic preservationists, consultants, etc.
5. Ensure grants awarded are NOT used to diminish the historical integrity of buildings or to fund inappropriate alterations.
6. Promote the façade grant program on websites, local news outlets, and social media.

## 4. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TOOLBOX



# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TOOLBOX

## Introduction

In order to be prepared to respond to the needs and concerns of the citizens and businesses of Tucker, the DDA should focus on building and promoting a toolbox of incentives and programs. Some programs may not be needed today but could be invaluable in the future as economies recover from Covid-19. The most appropriate tools for the Tucker DDA include a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for tax deductible donations/funding, façade grant program, non-conforming sign replacement program, Downtown Revolving Loan Fund (DCA), Public Art Program, as well as marketing and promotion efforts to support local businesses and events. Once created, each of these tools should be promoted through the DDA's webpage and social media to make people aware of the opportunities to participate.

### Establish a Legal Non-Profit 501(c)(3) for Revitalization

The creation of a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the revitalization of Tucker is important because it allows financial and in-kind donations from individuals and businesses to be eligible for tax deductions. The 501(c)(3) should be integrated into a public/private partnership (P3) between the Tucker Downtown Development Authority, dedicated individuals, and the private corporate sector. The board of directors for this non-profit could have a much broader and effective constitution than the downtown development authority board by including influential members from local banks, utility companies, and corporations interested in the revitalization of Tucker who may not be eligible to be appointed as a director on the authority due to residency requirements. Such a collaborative P3 effort has the potential to raise a significant amount of private and corporate funds to assist with restoration and revitalization projects throughout the city.

If possible, this 501(c)(3) non-profit should be created and managed under the umbrella of the Tucker DDA in order to ensure the organization remains politically impartial and focused entirely on revitalization efforts.

## DDA Toolbox

### Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Action Items

1. Create and file required paperwork to form a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
2. Appoint non-profit board of directors (can be same as downtown development authority).
3. Create separate banking accounts to hold funds for the non-profit independently from downtown development authority or City of Tucker accounts.
4. Hold meeting as needed to establish bylaws, mission, vision, goals, and work plan.

### Façade Grant Program

The Tucker Downtown Development Authority should create and administer a façade grant program to assist property owners and businesses with upgrades to the storefronts of historic buildings in the downtown central business district and other commercial buildings in targeted areas. The façade grant program should provide matching funds to property or business owners at appropriate levels, i.e. 80% private and 20% grant, or even 50% private and 50% grant for early users of the program to generate interest and produce immediate results. Funding sources and action steps are on page 17.



## Sign Improvement Grant Program

The Tucker Downtown Development Authority should create and administer a sign improvement program to assist property owners and businesses with upgrades to non-conforming signage that is grandfathered in such as pole signs, internally illuminated plastic signs, improperly scaled signage, billboards, and other signs that do not adhere to the sign ordinance or design guideline overlays. The sign improvement program could be used to purchase and remove existing signs or to assist with construction costs for new monument signs that are more appropriate for area and help decrease the amount of visual clutter along major corridors.

The sign improvement grant program should provide matching funds to property or business owners at appropriate levels, i.e. 100% grant for purchase and removal of blighted signs, 80% private and 20% grant, or 50% private and 50% grant for early users of the program to generate interest and produce immediate results. The City of Tucker could agree to waive any permit and inspection fees for sign grant recipients as an additional monetary incentive.

All sign improvement grant applications would be processed and approved by the Tucker Downtown Development Authority through impartial project evaluation based on clear scoring/ranking criteria in order to avoid the arbitrary and capricious awarding of funds. Establishing a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of Tucker's history and the revitalization of downtown and other commercial areas will allow program donations from individuals and businesses to be eligible for tax deductions. The non-profit organization would also allow business owners a tax deduction to donate the value of the physical sign upon removal.

### Sign Improvement Grant Program Funding Sources

1. City of Tucker general funds transferred to DDA through an Intergovernmental Agreement
2. Tucker Downtown Development Authority reserve funds
3. Allocation in conjunction with a larger bond issuance

4. Private foundations, banks, area businesses, community organizations, fundraisers
5. Community Improvement District

### Sign Improvement Grant Program Action Items

1. Survey within the DDA boundary to determine which non-conforming signs would benefit from a sign improvement grant and identify potential costs of removal and replacement.
2. Identify sign improvement grant program budget and secure committed funds.
3. Create and administer the sign improvement grant program including application forms and fees, maximum grant award amounts, matching fund requirements, impartial application scoring system, and conditions of grant awards.
4. Identify directors and/or interested citizens with a design background to participate in an advisory capacity including architects, designers, sign fabricators, consultants, etc.
5. Promote the sign improvement grant program on websites, local news outlets, and social media.



## Downtown Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to provide financial assistance to cities, counties and development authorities involved in downtown development. The RLF provides below-market rate gap financing to fund projects in core historic downtown areas and adjacent historic neighborhoods where investment will spur commercial redevelopment.

The City of Tucker and the Tucker DDA meet eligibility requirements to participate in this program, which requires a city's population to be 100,000 or less with active projects in a historic central business district. The users of RLF funds may be a private business or a public entity such as a city or development authority. Loan amounts range from a minimum loan of \$50,000 to a maximum amount of \$250,000 per project, not to exceed 40% of total eligible project costs.

Applicants for the DCA program must demonstrate they have a viable downtown development project and clearly identify the proposed uses of the loan proceeds. Once approved, funds may be used for a variety of redevelopment activities including real estate acquisition, development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and new construction; the rehabilitation of public buildings (on a limited basis); the purchase of equipment and other assets (on a limited basis).

RLF interest rates are typically below-market; Main Street designated cities currently receive a 2% rate, and all other undesignated cities qualify a 3% rate. The repayment period of the loan is 15 years with a fifteen-year amortization. Security is typically project collateral and/or personal guarantees. RLF applications are accepted throughout the calendar year and awarded as loan funds become available. A copy of the Initial Project Assessment form can be downloaded at [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov).

## Downtown Revolving Loan Fund Action Items

- Contact Cherie Bennett at DCA to explore project financing options with the RLF for downtown development projects.
- Discuss the RLF funding option with property owners, businesses, and developers to assist with project gap financing if standard loans do not fully meet project costs.

## Public Art Program

Goal 1 in Tucker's Comprehensive Plan seeks to enhance downtown Tucker by "allocating funds to create a culturally-rich arts community through collaborative relationships, financial support, and strengthening local arts organizations, artists and cultural activity."

Public Art is also mentioned frequently in the Tucker Downtown Master Plan with 'painting exterior wall murals' receiving the highest rating from respondents in a Visual Preference Survey. While the city put out an RFP for a Public Arts Master Plan, proposals came in at a much higher cost than budgeted. More importantly, as it currently stands, no public art is permitted in Tucker. Existing zoning and overlay districts should be updated to allow for and encourage/incentivize public art installations, especially in the historic downtown district.

***Private development chases public improvements. Developers are more likely to take risks investing where public improvements are being made.***

## Downtown Tucker Marketing + Promotion

The main responsibility of a DDA is the management and promotion of the city's historic downtown central business district (CBD). While the Tucker DDA's boundary was drawn to include commercial areas outside the CBD in case redevelopment opportunities arise, the authority's initial focus should be the downtown and immediately adjacent areas. Promoting downtown Tucker's unique character and one-of-a-kind restaurants and stores to shoppers, business owners, visitors, investors, and developers helps to foster a positive image of the historic downtown core and the entire city. These efforts increase community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in an unproven market. Initially focusing efforts on the downtown area will allow the DDA to build a solid foundation of knowledge, success, and trust.

Marketing and promotion efforts for downtown Tucker require thorough knowledge of market conditions, demographics, consumer demand, and potential opportunities. At minimum, this includes:

- Market Analysis
- Retail Leakage Assessment (to identify retail needs that are not addressed in the city)
- Building Vacancy Inventory (including identification of issues keeping the building empty)
- SWOT Analysis (to determine the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)
- Branding and Image Development
- Marketing Plan

A partnership between University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ohio State University, and University of Minnesota Extension has developed an excellent downtown marketing analysis and implementation strategy called "Downtown and Business District Market Analysis" that could serve as a guide for the Tucker DDA.

This market analysis toolbox provides best practice techniques and technologies that should be used to conduct a market analysis for the downtown district and other commercial areas in the city. The toolbox has been designed as a self-help tool to help the community: 1) understand the market; 2) analyze opportunities by business or real estate sector; and 3) put the research to work to strengthen economic activity:

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtown-market-analysis/>

***Economic development does not happen overnight. A thriving downtown requires a concerted long-term effort involving the entire community including elected officials, appointed boards, volunteers, and most importantly the citizens of Tucker.***

# Proposed Project and Task List

## City of Tucker Downtown Development Authority

#	Project	Description	Timeframe
1	Economic Development Manager/DDA Executive Director hire	The City of Tucker is currently planning to create a new economic development staff position for FY2022. This new hire aligns with goal G5-1 from the Comprehensive Plan and provides support for the creation of an Economic Development Toolkit which is noted as the #1 priority project in the Downtown Master Plan (see task ED-4).	FY2022 In progress
2	Formation of Legal Non-Profit Entity — 501(c)(3)	By forming a 501(c)(3), the DDA would be equipped to receive tax-deductible donations and funding from businesses and individuals	FY2022
3	Sign Improvement Grant Program	From DDA Strategic Visioning Report: DDA should create and administer a sign improvement program to assist property owners and businesses with upgrades to non-confirming signage which is currently grandfathered. Funding for grants could flow through DDA's non-profit entity with donations provided by individuals and businesses.	FY2022–23
4	Façade Grant Program	From DDA Strategic Visioning Report: DDA should create and administer a façade grant program to assist property owners and businesses with upgrades to the storefronts of historic buildings in Downtown. Funding for grants could flow through DDA's non-profit entity with donations provided by individuals and businesses.  The Downtown Master Plan references (pg. 36) the 2015 Tucker-Northlake CID Master Plan: "Work with the development community to implement the Main Street Building Expansion Program which would help to create a more vibrant Main Street by allowing building facade expansion."	FY2022–23
5	Sponsorship of Building Murals and Public Art	Aligns with Goal 1 in Comp Plan to Enhance Downtown Tucker by "allocating funds to create a culturally-rich arts community through collaborative relationships, financial support, and strengthening local arts organizations, artists and cultural activity."  Public Art mentioned frequently in Downtown Master Plan and building murals received the highest rating from respondents in a Visual Preference Survey. DDA could provide incentives for property owners to have art installations/murals on their property.	FY2022-23  ARC CDAP "Art in the Alley" study underway
#	Project	Description	Timeframe
6	Alley/Street Right-of-way Donation	From the Downtown Tucker Grid Plan: The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City of Tucker could provide incentives to business owners, property owners, and developers to donate the alley ROW via 501(c)(3) donations to DDA	FY2022-23

7	DDA Website (or dedicated section on Tucker's website)	Part of the Economic Development Toolkit and aligns with goal G5-2 of Comp Plan	FY2022-23
8	DDA marketing collateral	Need to develop and maintain "one pager" marketing materials per goal G5-6 of Comp Plan	FY2022-23
9	Incentive Program for redevelopment of large parcels south of Lawrenceville Hwy	From Comp Plan goal G2-2, the DDA can develop an incentive program focusing on the redevelopment of large parcels along the south side of Lawrenceville Highway in the vicinity of the downtown area, that requires buildings be located closer to the street, parking behind the buildings, landscaping, and other streetscape improvements.	FY2023-24
10	4 <sup>th</sup> Street Extension and Lawrenceville Hwy parcel redevelopment	<p><u>Goals from Comp Plan:</u></p> <p>G1-8 - As part of the Transportation Master Plan, evaluate the need for an extension of 4th Street from Lawrenceville Highway south to Cowan Rd.</p> <p>G2-2 - development of incentive program focused on redevelopment of large parcels along south side of Lawrenceville Hwy</p>	FY2023-24
11	Promote Medical-Related and Mixed-Use at Lawrenceville Hwy Medical Area	From Comp Plan Goal 5 – "Bolster Economic Base" (pg. 44): Along with new healthcare-related investment at the Lawrenceville Medical Area, it would be beneficial to locate ancillary and support services in this area that will make the entire area more attractive to potential healthcare businesses and their employees.	TBD
12	GIS database of property values and occupational tax revenue	From goal G5-3 in the Comp Plan: Consider developing GIS databases of both property value and business license revenues for each of the economic development priority areas. Conduct annual assessment and use results to evaluate overall effectiveness of economic development program.	TBD



#	Project	Description	Timeframe
13	Start-up/Entrepreneurial Incubator Program	<p>From G5-8 in Comp Plan: Consider the establishment of an entrepreneurial program that focuses on encouraging start-up businesses in downtown.</p> <p>Such a program could align with purchase/investment in commercial real estate by DDA; see Avondale Estates purchase of real estate and subsequent lease to Co-working space Edwin Jarvis at 88 N. Avondale Rd. <a href="#">Peachtree Corners is a great model for this.</a></p>	TBD
14	Business Incentive Plan	From Comp Plan goal G5-5, Consider the development and adoption of a Business Incentive Plan which focuses on the attraction of the desired types of businesses and the creation of high paying jobs within Tucker (unless it involves a real estate transaction, the DDA can likely only offer advice/guidance to City staff and council)	TBD



## MEMO

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
**From:** Ken Hildebrandt  
**CC:** Tami Hanlin, City Manager  
**Date:** August 23, 2021  
**RE:** Discussion of Intersection Improvement – Mountain Industrial Boulevard @ Hugh Howell Road

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**Issue:**

Discussion of Intersection Improvement – Mountain Industrial Boulevard @ Hugh Howell Road

**Recommendation:**

Proceed with final engineering plans.

**Background:**

A traffic analysis has shown that the addition of turn lanes at the MIB/Hugh Howell intersection will provide significant operational and safety benefits. The City of Tucker in partnership with the Tucker Summit Community Improvement District has contracted with Lowe Engineers to provide design services. Preliminary plans are being developed and construction is scheduled for late 2023.

**Summary:**

The intersection will be improved to provide an additional northbound and southbound left turn lane from MIB onto Hugh Howell, and an eastbound right turn lane (in front of the Wells Fargo Bank).

**Financial Impact:**

No impact at this time. An analysis of the funding will be discussed during the presentation.

# Proposed Improvements

