



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Main Street Advisory Board Agenda

October 13, 2026, 9:00 AM

McCullough Council Chambers – City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision – Dahlonega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlonega, a City of Excellence, will provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability, in full partnership with the people who choose to live, work, and visit. Through this commitment, we respect and uphold our rural Appalachian setting to honor our thriving community of historical significance, academic excellence, and military renown.

Vision Statement

Downtown Dahlonega will retain its role as the heart of the region and the center for community and economic development. It will have an inviting appearance, highlighted by historic architecture. It will enhance the civic, cultural, and economic vitality of the entire community.

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Organization

- a. Review of Existing Work Plan
Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director

Promotion

- a. Christmas Season Program
Suzy Kelly, Board Member, Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director
- b. Extension of Farmers Market Season
Ariel Alexander, Main Street Program Director
- c. Partner Events

Partner Agencies

- 1. City of Dahlonega
- 2. Downtown Dahlonega Business Association
- 3. Tourism/Visitors Center
- 4. Chamber of Commerce/DALC
- 5. University of North Georgia

Adjourn

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlonega will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlonega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!

2025 Work Plan

Transformation Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure; implement small infrastructure projects with the DDA's control				
<i>Why? The Dahlonaga DDA is aware of a perceived parking problem, including not enough parking and the desire to remove parking from the square. There is also a city-owned property that the DDA would like to convert into a community space for live entertainment and a farmer's market. Additionally, the sidewalks throughout downtown need to be expanded, repaired, added, and connected.</i>				
Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Four Point Approach
Develop 147 North Park Street for community space Lead: Awtrey	Education of Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) Lead: Ariel	Develop Parking Facilities Plans Lead: Allison	Implement Housing Plan Lead: Ariel	Promotion: Marketing and Education of TADs and new projects Economic Development: Developing and implementing plans to create new community space and add parking Organization: re-structuring processes, collaborative initiatives with community partners and business owners Design: Visioning, working together to design the desired downtown area



DAHLONEGA DDA PLANNING RETREAT

Friday, January 31, 2025, 9:00AM



Transformation Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure; implement small infrastructure projects with the DDA’s control	
Goal 1: Develop 147 North Park St for Community Space for entertainment and a farmer’s market	Define Success: Will have the TAD legislation on the May 2026 ballot and will have a public relations campaign to implement for the community space
Partners: DDA, City Council, City Administration, Downtown Business Owners, Private Investors	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. At least one board member is present at every city council meeting	All participants	Ariel	February	Not Started	Time
2. Ask the City Council to deed 147 North Park Street to DDA	Awtrey	Ariel	February	Not Started	Time
3. Determine and develop a list of funding resources	Awtrey	Ariel	March	Not Started	Time
1. Use the City's grant consultant to identify/apply for funding sources	Awtrey	Ariel	July	Not Started	TBD
2. Commission and work with UGA design services to create concept rendering	Zach	Ariel	Have the product by September	Not Started	\$6,000
3. Engineering services to develop a cost estimate	Zach	Ariel	February 2026	Not Started	TBD
4. Develop a construction schedule	Zach	Ariel	March 2026	Not Started	Time
5. Create and implement a public relations campaign for the project	Awtrey	Ariel	March 2026	Not Started	Admin costs
6. Develop RFP and put the project out for bids	Zach	Ariel	April 2026	Not Started	Admin Costs
7. Perform NEPA and environmental requirements	Zach	Ariel	April 2026	Not Started	TBD
8. Begin Construction	Zach	Ariel	July 2026	Not Started	TBD



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Transformation Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure; implement small infrastructure projects with the DDA's control	
Goal 2: Education of Tax Allocation Districts (TADs)	Define Success: Will have the TAD legislation on the May 2026 ballot and will have a public relations campaign to implement for the community space
Partners: DDA, Chamber of Commerce, CVB, Downtown Business Owners, Private Investors	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Research TAD, read the law, and determine how the law could best suit the city and county.	Awtrey/Zach	Ariel	March	Not Started	Time
2. Work with the city to agree to apply for legislation and determine what areas would be best suited	Awtrey	Ariel	April	Not Started	Time
3. Research and include a list of best practices and other communities using TAD for projects	Awtrey	Ariel	March	Not Started	Time
4. Work with Economic Development Partnership and create collaborative efforts to help educate the public	Melanie	Ariel	April	Not Started	Time
5. Ask State representatives to consider passing legislation for redevelopment powers	Awtrey/whole board	Ariel	December	Not Started	Time
6. Create presentation and ask to speak at civic club meetings and other key organizations	Melanie	Ariel	February 2026	Not Started	Time
7. VOTE!	Everyone	Everyone	November 2026	Not Started	Time



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Transformation Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure; implement small infrastructure projects with the DDA's control	
Goal #3: Create a parking facilities plan	Define Success: New properties identified and grant funding applied for
Partners: DDA, City Council, City Administration, Downtown Business Owners	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Identify potential parking opportunities	Deb	Allison	April	Not Started	Time
2. Determine how to work with state and private agencies to eliminate and/or create on-street parking off the square	Deb	Allison	July	Not Started	Time
3. Work with business owners and state agencies to work toward pedestrian-only square	All participants	Ariel	July	Not Started	Time
4. Finish and implement existing parking facilities plan	Deb	Allison/Ariel	November	In Progress	\$500K



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Transformation Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure; implement small infrastructure projects with the DDA’s control	
Goal #4: Implement Housing Plan	Define Success: Recruitment of developer
Partners: DDA, City Council, City Administration, Downtown Business Owners, Private Investors	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Finish the existing Housing Plan	Awtrey/Zach	Ariel	April	Not Started	Admin Costs
2. Work to educate the Planning Commission on goals for the housing plan	Zach	Ariel	April	Not Started	Time
3. Work with the City Council to ensure the new zoning ordinance allows for goals in the housing plan	Everyone	Ariel	August	Not Started	Time
4. Collaboratively investigate the draft of the Zoning Ordinance and recommend changes before the adoption process begins	All partners	Allison	April?	Not Started	Time
5. Research and contact developers who have experience in building desired developments and schedule meetings	Zach	Ariel	August	Not Started	Time
6. Get at least one developer to agree to build	Zach	Ariel	April 2026	In Progress	Time



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Transformation Strategy 2: Redevelopment of Downtown

Why? The Dahlonega DDA is very concerned about preserving downtown's historic character. Because the square is so successful, the DDA is also interested in expanding its vitality into the blocks leading up to it. There are also some vacancies and infill properties that are ripe for redevelopment.

<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Four Point Approach</i>
Finish and advertise business expansion plan considering opportunities for DDA to acquire spaces or find buyers for redevelopment of spaces Lead: Ariel & Zach	More cohesion, improved relationships, and collaborative decisions between the community, the DDA, and city leaders Lead: Ariel & Deb	Promotion: public relations, community engagement Economic Development: Collaborative initiatives with partners and business owners, recruitment of new investors, acquisition of space Organization: Partnerships, collaborations, volunteerism Design: placemaking, beautification, code enforcement, creating functional space out of underutilized properties



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Transformation Strategy 2: Redevelopment of Downtown	
Goal 1: Finish and advertise business expansion plan	Define Success: Will have acquired or sold spaces outside of square
Partners: Dahlonega DDA, Dahlonega City Council, Downtown Business owners, investors	

Task	Board Member	Staff	Due Date	Progress	Budget
	Responsible	Responsible			
1. Identify and create list of potential investors with contact information	Zach	Ariel	March	Not Started	Time
2. Educate investors about incentives offered such as DDRLF (Downtown development revolving loan fund)	Zach & Awtrey	Ariel/Skyler	July	Not Started	Time
3. Develop spreadsheet with vacancy inventory (address, owner, sq ft, condition)	Zach	Skyler	April	Not Started	Time
4. Revisit 2008 Downtown Master Plan to determine which features can still be utilized	Everyone	Ariel	May	Not Started	Time
5. DDA to research and explore ways to fund property acquisition for redevelopment	Zach	Ariel	November	Not Started	Time
7. Work with Code Enforcement to begin having property owners bring blighted properties to code	Everyone	George	October	Not Started	Time
8. Recruit one new high-end, fine dining restaurant	Awtrey/Zach	Ariel	December	Not Started	Time



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Transformation Strategy 2: Redevelopment of Downtown

Goal 2: Increased engagement of community members, increased capacity for more goals to be implemented

Define Success: The City of Dahlonega has increased community engagement and more educated public

Partners: City of Dahlonega, Dahlonega DDA, Chamber of Commerce, CVB, City Council

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Reach out to each individual board member at least once per 1-2 weeks to make sure they are keeping up with assigned deadlines for tasks	Awtrey	Ariel	Weekly/bi-weekly	Not Started	Time
2. Monthly Newsletter distributed by Board and Director	Awtrey	Ariel	Weekly and/or as needed	Not Started	Time
3. Quarterly meetings with all participating agencies and organizations to update progress on work plan	All participants/Deb	Deb	January, April, August, December	In progress	Time
4. Create a task list for each board member so that it is easier for each person to know exactly what is expected of them for that time period	Awtrey	Ariel	Monthly	Not Started	Time



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Transformation Strategy 3: Update Ordinances

Why? The DDA realizes that the ordinances adopted by the city council are crucial for allowing specific things in specific places and, more importantly, NOT allowing uses that are not in alignment with the city and DDA's vision. The DDA must have the city's support to preserve and maintain the small-town, historic character of the downtown boundary.

<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Four Point Approach</i>
Write, amend, and/or establish a public art ordinance or expand current art projects Lead: Melanie & Ariel	Make downtown more appealing by removing barriers to entertainment and increasing foot traffic in businesses Lead: Deb & Skyler	Promotion: creation of social media content, tourism marketing Economic Development: placemaking, historic preservation, addressing housing needs Organization: Partnerships, collaboration, volunteerism, public engagement, ordinances Design: beautification, historic preservation, aesthetic consistency



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Transformation Strategy 3: Update Ordinances

Goal 1: Write, amend, and/or establish a public art ordinance or expand current art projects

Define Success: New ordinance adopted and new public art installation

Partners: DDA, Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses, Lumpkin County and/or UNG students, CVB, City Council

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Identify places and create spreadsheets of potential spaces to install public art	Melanie	Skyler	April	Not Started	Time
2. Research other communities' mural ordinances and best practices	Melanie	Ariel	April	Not Started	Time
3. Draft proposal to present to City Council to adopt ordinance if needed	Everyone	Ariel/Doug	June	Not Started	Time
4. Identify artists (preferably local) to install public art	Melanie/Deb	Skyler	June	Not Started	Time
5. Design public art and include design in council proposal	Melanie	Ariel	May	Not Started	Time
6. Apply for \$5,000 grant from Georgia Council for the Arts	Melanie	Ariel	July	Not Started	Time
7. Reveal and dedicate new public art installation	Everyone	Ariel/Skyler	November	Not Started	Time



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Transformation Strategy 3: Update Ordinances					
Goal 2: Make downtown more appealing to investors and consumers by removing barriers to entertainment and increasing foot traffic in businesses			Define Success: Adoption of alcohol ordinance amendments and adoption of new zoning ordinance		
Partners: DDA, Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses, CVB, City Council, Community members, Planning Commission, Local Health Department, State Representatives					
Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Enhance the First Friday by lifting restrictions on alcohol sales and making it like the other festivals	Deb	Allison/Ariel	April	Not Started	Time
2. Research other communities and how they work around state partners for entertainment districts	Deb	Skyler	May	Not Started	Time
3. 4. Create a proposal to the city council to amend the alcohol ordinance, including recommended changes (% ratio, places, hours, etc.)	Zach & Deb	Skyler	August	Not Started	Time
4. Work collaboratively with the local health department and state representatives to improve relationships, work together, and make progress on downtown initiatives involving food service	Deb	Ariel	October	In Progress	Time
5. Research blight tax ordinances and consider adopting one to help incentivize redevelopment	Erick	Ariel	November	Not Started	Time