

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2024 BUDGET & PROGRAM OF WORK

Approved 10/25/23



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

CITY OF SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mission Statement: To actively pursue, support, facilitate and welcome initiatives that aid and encourage private development. Promote and coordinate public development within the Downtown Development District of Shreveport, Louisiana.

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Introduction

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was established by Act 554 of the State of Louisiana in 1978. The provisions of Act 554 provide that an annual plan of work be submitted to the Shreveport City Council for review and adoption within 30 days from the date of submission. The 2024 Program of Work reflects the activities to be undertaken during 2024 and significant events from 2023.

Downtown is comprised of numerous stakeholders, each with different opinions and ideas about how to improve downtown and each with varied priorities regarding those improvements. Each organization and business contributes to the improvement of downtown in accordance with its own strengths and abilities, so this diverse environment requires a complex development strategy to ensure success. It has been demonstrated that not all development is good or positive so plans and projects must be considered in the context of downtown as a whole.

This document seeks to define activities, improvements, goals, and objectives that move downtown forward. Included in this Program of Work are portions of the *Downtown 2010 Redevelopment Strategy* which was approved by the City Council and is the basis for the twenty-five-year DDA millage extension approved by citywide vote in November 2002. DDA funding under the millage extension is provided through 2027.

The year 2023 saw downtown businesses and buildings continuing to deal with occupancy and foot traffic that is not yet at pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic created significant uncertainty, and downtown businesses faced the same problems as others throughout the city trying to maintain employees, source products, and attract customers. Business model changes in the banking sector, as well as supply chain issues, rising inflationary pressures and higher interest rates also negatively impacted businesses and property owners. Though the city center did see new businesses and the addition of residential units, the challenges continue to be a serious concern. Developers have already abandoned the Every Man a King distillery project at the old Arlington Hotel and the residential conversion of the Rubenstein/Lanford buildings. Other larger-scale private developments are on hold.

In spite of ongoing concerns, there were positive developments to celebrate. Buildings were leased, purchased, and renovated for a wide range of projects and new businesses opened. These businesses include but are not limited to: Shreveport-Bossier Advocate (Louisiana Tower), Riverwalk Café at the Shreveport Aquarium, the Glass Hat restaurant, 423 Crockett adjacent to the new City Center Flats which includes apartments and retail spaces, The Cardio Spot fitness center at 854 Texas Avenue, PHD Homes/Palmer Hale Realty & Legacy Home Loans at 400 Texas Street, and Ashley's Tiers of Love, 420 Marshall Street. Downtown welcomed other new businesses including Street Dreams Louisiana at 1229 Texas Avenue, Fun Zone Family Entertainment at 400 Texas Street, and Waddell's Gallery of Distinction at 1200 Marshall Street. Cooper's Corner, the newly renovated property at 700 Texas hopes to open in early December. Work began in a big way on the new Northwest Louisiana State Office Building at 500 Fannin Street. While the former PPG building at 525 Cotton Street sold in late 2023, the anticipated use is a double-edged sword. The new owner applied for, and received, a zoning change over the protests of the DDA. The new zoning allows the owner (and all in the future) to use the building for storage which means an empty building devoid of activity that creates no foot traffic or reason to come downtown. Requests for zoning changes and building uses that do not add to the vibrancy, job prospects, business creation or pedestrian interest downtown will need to be continually monitored- and opposed- as necessary.

Residential development continues downtown. The Bayou Grand Apartments, anchoring downtown on the north, opened in the summer of 2022 with 122 additional units and retail that will be joining the mix in late 2023/early 2024. The long-awaited, 34-unit Uneeda Biscuit Lofts at 711 Milam officially opened in October 2023. Additional investment at 417-429 Crockett added three one and two-bedroom apartments to downtown's residential inventory. Efforts between the city and developer continued in 2023 on a proposed residential conversion scheduled for the Petroleum Tower at 425 Edwards. Other developers began work on the former Creswell Hotel on Milam Street. The owner of the former Centerpoint Building at 525 Milam, had to reposition his project from student housing to residential apartments. The status of both the Petroleum Tower and Centerpoint Building is on hold at present.

Several downtown retail businesses celebrated their 1-year anniversaries including The Grove at 107 Spring Street, Refine Design at 616 Texas Street, and Clean Slate Botanicals at 717 Crockett Street. Dripp Donuts at 421 Market continued to grow with additional types of donuts, kolaches, drinks and downtown's newest sidewalk patio café. Hundreds of Downtown events, both large and smaller, drew crowds. The Shreveport Regional Arts

Council (SRAC), the DDA's partner in artspace, hosted a series of events and installations at 708 Texas. The popular Bakowski Bridge of Lights neon display on the Texas Street Bridge drew people at their first Friday Glo Fests and other events on the riverfront. The Hilton Shreveport's multi-million rehab brought a new look, feel and amenities to the 17-year-old hotel at 104 Market Street.

Caddo Common Park continued to host programming showcasing downtown's west end. Spooky Symphony on October 22, 2023 drew the largest crowd ever, and as people are learning more about the park and events there, numbers are increasing at SRAC's monthly Thirsty Thursdays, Big Band Jazz in the Park, and Saturday Exercise in the Park. The Common adds much-needed greenspace to Downtown and helps create a more 'family' feel.

New restaurants that opened in 2023 included The Glass Hat at 423 Crockett and Ashley's Tiers of Love at 420 Marshall Street. The Noble Savage, 417 Texas Street, celebrated its one-year re-opening anniversary. The Shreveport Aquarium rebranded their dining experience as Riverwalk Café. Taco Wars drew a large crowd to the area around Shreveport Municipal Auditorium, the popular Farmer's Market saw another good year, Food Prize garnered rave reviews and BREW, Mudbug Madness and other events featured downtown's food options front and center.

Lake Street Bar at 315 Lake Street celebrated its 6th anniversary in 2023, but challenges continue across the nightlife front. High profile shootings and other crimes caught on social media and widely circulated worked to present a view of a downtown that is unsafe at any time, a perception that is hurting all Downtown businesses. A hotly debated noise ordinance has been vetoed by Mayor Tom Arceneaux, and the final outcome is uncertain. DDA continues to work closely with SPD and other law enforcement partners to deal with both downtown crime and the perception of criminal activity. In 2023, the DDA donated close to \$15,000 to purchase SPD security cameras for installation in locations determined by them to be helpful in curtailing crime.

The DDA's commitment to the arts continued in 2023 with the popular monthly DDA Artwalk, Second Saturdays Downtown, and exhibits and shows at art partner locations including artspace, Central ARTstation, Southern University Museum of Art, Bailey Gallery, High Gravity Glassworks, Sanctuary Glass, the Agora Borealis, Big Sun Studios, C&C Mercantile & Lighting, the Gallery at Andress, the Artists at Andress, J&R Performance Gallery, Waddell's Gallery of Distinction, the Strand Theatre, Emmett Hook Performance Center, RiverView Theater, and the Bakowski Bridge of Lights. Our venues, along with the Red River Revel continue to make downtown Shreveport an arts destination.

DDA pushed for an insurance settlement resulting from an auto accident that seriously damaged the 'Quilt Kiosk' public art piece at the NE corner of Texas and McNeill Streets, and it was brought back to life in 2023. Work is ongoing in the 1600 block of Marshall Street where Muralist Eric Francis is working on 'Ruby Bridges'.

Caddo Common Park in Shreveport Common continued to be popular for events, installations, and unique happenings imagined and presented by the SRAC. On the east side

of downtown the J. Bennett Johnston Visitor Center began opening for regular hours. The Center, along with Riverview Hall, Riverview Theater, Sci-Port Discovery Center, and the Shreveport Aquarium drew thousands of families to experience unique entertainment and hands-on experiences.

The Shreveport Convention Center brought thousands of visitors and conference goers to downtown including 500 attendees for the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Louisiana meeting in early 2023 and will end 2023 with the important National Tour Association conference, which DDA is helping host.

Downtown's aging tree inventory received financial support from DDA and the Shreveport City Council in 2023. Seventy-seven trees were planted in 2023, and as the drought and unseasonably hot summer hit, DDA hired a third-party watering service to try to save the new plantings. Unfortunately, a number of them were lost as were other existing trees, so a new planting is planned for late 2023.

Construction began with demolition of the former Joe D. Waggoner Federal Building and the official ground-breaking was held in October. The State of Louisiana is moving its state offices to the property bringing approximately 400 employees from Fairfield Avenue to 500 Fannin Street. Local firms have been retained for demolition and design. Phase I, which began in 2023, included the removal of asbestos and internal/external demolition. When demolition is completed, only floor slabs and the steel structure will remain. The DDA will continue to work with State officials in 2024 as needed on this major project that will improve downtown's northern edge.

DDA also heavily marketed downtown properties, businesses, and projects to keep downtown top of mind to developers, shoppers and those looking for a wonderful place to live. Festivals and events continued their return to prominence in 2023, and DDA supported these with marketing, technical support, and financial assistance where possible. A survey was conducted by Town Square Media in late 2023 to help identify downtown challenges and opportunities. To heighten security DDA partnered in late 2023 with the Shreveport Police Department and donated funds to purchase cameras for installation in specific downtown locations. DDA continues to hire off duty officers to supplement security as needed.

To highlight visibility and enhance security, DDA began offering \$2000 lighting grants through its Façade Improvement Micro Grant Program. Xtreme MW Business Center, 800 Texas Avenue, and William O'Brien, Cooper's Corner, 700 Texas Street were among the first to receive the grant. The lighting grants were part of the beautification project funded by \$75,000 from DDA and matched by \$75,000 from the Shreveport City Council.

The Downtown Streetscape and ShrevePark Parking Services contracts were renewed with the City in 2023 and DDA will perform these functions in 2024 to continue to keep downtown clean and provide accessible parking spaces for downtown visitors. Also helping clean up downtown, volunteers participated in the Love the Boot Cleanup Party held in April in conjunction with the Shreveport Aquarium, and additional large cleanups in November. Other beautification efforts included the installation of large self-watering Earth Planters in various

locations throughout downtown. DDA furnished the pots and plants, guided by Tim Hoover, Shreveport Aquarium horticulturist.

The Shreveport City Council approved new district lines in 2022 that resulted in a small slice of downtown, the riverfront area that includes Downtown's two casinos, being moved into District A. DDA continues our vital work with the two City Council members who represent downtown, Councilman Gary Brooks (District B), and Councilwoman Tabatha Taylor (District A) and Mayor Tom Arceneaux's administration. Though reinvestment is needed in Shreveport's two casinos, Sam's Town and Bally's, they were among only four in the state that saw increases in 2023. This increase could be due to the change in the smoking ban at the casinos. The City Council's approval of Ordinance 46 allowed 75% of casino gaming space to allow smoking. 25% of the gaming space as well as the pavilions, restaurants, hotels, and event centers remain non-smoking.

Downtown is not without challenges and work in 2024 will continue to focus on these issues. Joe Minicozzi of Urban 3 conducted a year-long data driven study that pointed out challenges and opportunities and reiterated that the greatest market value per acre is found downtown. Several takeaways were directly aimed at downtown including the following: to continue to aggressively fight demolition, prioritize for-profit businesses, continue to be vocal about downtown's needs, attempt to again engage the Parish of Caddo for financial support, and be intentional in deployment of money. Vacant buildings also continue to plague downtown and work to finalize, approve, and institute a Vacant Property Ordinance will continue in 2024. The State of Louisiana identified three of the most dangerous intersections in Louisiana: downtown Shreveport's Crockett, Spring, and Market Streets. Work continues to get the City to allow bollards to be placed around Blind Tiger Restaurant, the scene of multiple crashes, several of which have seen cars come through the restaurant's walls. Shreve Memorial Library at 424 Texas Street had a small fire on the fourth floor of the library but thousands of gallons of water from the sprinkler system caused large scale damage. Renovations were still ongoing in 2023 and the library is still uncertain about whether it will reopen there or in another downtown location. Other changes saw the former First Methodist Church at the head of Texas Street disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church.

Business incentives specifically for downtown development districts and cultural districts continue to help businesses grow. One of the most valuable for downtown has been the state Historic Tax Credit, and the DDA has played a large role in Baton Rouge in keeping the credit alive. The program was successfully extended in 2023 to sunset on January 1, 2029. DDA will continue to work with businesses to access state and federal tax credit programs in 2024 and to help them navigate the many government requirements to both open and stay legal. Small Business Saturday and the new Pink Weekend helped downtown's retail sectors, and kicked off the Have Lunch on Us lunch coupon program in November and December. The DDA Mini Grant program also assists businesses with smaller items such as flyer production, refreshments, and events. DDA was the recipient of a state Cultural Grant to produce Art in Unexpected Places in the Spring of 2023.

DDA helps promote the City Center through marketing, mini grants, lighting grants, events and promotions, and touring potential developers and business owners through available

downtown properties. Efforts to bring multimedia mogul and musician Curtis Jackson (50 cent) to Millennium Studio and former Expo Hall gained traction in late 2023 and will continue in 2024.

DDA's 2024 millage rate remains at 9.04 mills.

Sadly, there were some tragic losses. Downtown lost a valued team member in early 2023 with the death of long-time Streetscape Supervisor Herman Chapple. Chapple, a DDA employee since 1996, continues to be sorely missed. Downtown partners also mourned the passing of three well-known Downtown property owners: Address Artist and Entrepreneur Center developer Jim Malsch, Big Sun Studios founder Lewis Kalmbach, and ML Bath owner Keith Todaro.

Development Priorities

The DDA strives to improve the economic vitality of the Central Business District and our historic downtown as a whole by focusing efforts on a wide range of activities. These activities work to strengthen the existing business base, attract new businesses, and improve property values while simultaneously highlighting the district's historic charm and urban appeal.

- **Residential** - DDA continues to be the lead agency in identifying residential opportunities and in approaching, encouraging, and assisting developers/funders. The process can be complicated, and we work to assist developers with parking and zoning issues, building and life/safety codes, assisting with information about financing and insurance partners, and the many other things needed to be able to move forward in a project. Downtown continues to be underbuilt in market rate units, whose salary demographic is helpful in attracting businesses, retail, and other Quality of Life components to downtown.

Residential conversions could be an option as large downtown office buildings search for ways to increase occupancy. Though construction costs to rehab office space into residential space are significant, the numbers could make sense in the face of an anemic office market. The DDA meets and talks regularly with economic development officials, bankers, and elected officials about smart ways to help incentivize needed residential developers through the potential use of TIF, PILOT, parking help and other assistance, which has become especially important as interest rates and the cost of construction and supplies continue to increase.

Restoration and residential conversions continue or have been completed at numerous downtown properties including the Lofts at 624 (624 Texas Street), The Standard (509 Market), Ridgeway Square (719 Marshall Street), Hughes Tool (816 McNeill Street), Southern Bell (627-629 Crockett Street), the apartments at 800 Texas Avenue, 716/718 Edwards Street, the Hutchinson Building (504 Texas Street), Uneeda Biscuit

Building (711 Milam), Ogilvie Hardware Lofts 217 Jones Street, City Center Lofts (423 Crockett) and others. A significant renovation of downtown's popular Lee Hardware and United Jeweler's Apartments (Edwards and Crockett Streets), which began in the summer of 2021, was completed in 2022. The \$7.8M renovation was the first major restoration since the apartments were originally developed in 1998. The long-vacant Petroleum Tower was sold in 2021 with plans for residential use. The conversion of the Uneeda Biscuit Building (711 Milam) to apartments was completed in 2023. The former Creswell Hotel sold in 2022 with the new owners exploring possible residential conversions. These projects join other existing residential apartment properties downtown: 710 Crockett Lofts, Fairmont, Jefferson, condominiums at 229 Milam Street and several single-family units. The Centerpoint Building at 525 Milam's new owner was planning in late 2023 to convert the office property to residential use, but that project is currently on hold.

Downtown residential occupancy rates are consistently in the 90% range, and new properties like the Standard and Lofts at 624 Texas are often at capacity which indicates a continued strong public desire for downtown market rate housing options.

- **Downtown Infrastructure-** DDA advocates for city funding to be allocated on an ongoing basis to keep downtown infrastructure repaired and safe, knowing that a vibrant and attractive downtown reflects positively on both downtown and the rest of the city. Broken and inoperable infrastructure creates a feeling of neglect and lack of care and concern, and has caused developers in the past to re-think investment in Shreveport. Tree trimming and replacement and removal of dead shrubs at downtown entrances added to downtown's appeal. Partnerships to plant flowers and lighting grants to keep the lights on at night also improved the look of downtown and will continue in 2024. DDA continues to believe that there should be recurring yearly funding for Downtown infrastructure needs, such as sidewalk, street and lighting repair.
- **Historic Tax Credit Support-** The DDA and non-profit Downtown Shreveport Development Corporation (DSDC) continued their ongoing support of the State and Federal Commercial Historic Tax Credit programs in 2023. The popular tax program was extended through January 1, 2029 and returned the rate to 25% on eligible costs. The program remains significant to the continued revitalization of downtown Shreveport and is a valuable tool for developers of historic properties. Several properties currently under construction or soon to be would not have been possible without the tax credit. DDA will continue to be an educational resource on the importance of the credit and will assist developers interested in utilizing it.
- **Downtown Performance Code** – DDA will continue efforts in 2024 to help businesses locate in the City Center through a partnership with the State Fire Marshal's Office and City of Shreveport to facilitate timely and informative plan reviews to assist developers with renovation. At DDA's request, the Fire Marshal's Office, Permits and Inspections and MPC participate in meetings to answer questions and provide personal assistance for developers and building owners downtown.

- **Homelessness** – The issue of homelessness is challenging to all, and local law enforcement has relatively few tools at their disposal. Arrest is an option, but not a long- term solution. SPD is working with mental health professionals to create more options for individuals dealing with drug and mental issues or a combination of both. While Homelessness is not a crime, it creates a perception of lack of safety, and issues attributed to it: panhandling, petty theft, vagrancy, disturbing the peace, and other nuisance calls continue to be complaints heard by the DDA. Inactivity on this front could lead to fewer investments downtown and revenue losses to businesses already located here. DDA works with social service agencies, elected officials, local non-profits, law enforcement and the business community on the limited solutions that appear to exist. This work should continue to be of significance to the City and DDA in 2024.
- **West Edge** –DDA and DSDC continue a combined commitment to strengthening the West Edge (the area around the 600/700 blocks of Texas Street) as a center of arts and cultural activity. Successes include the development of artspace, Setting the Standard Barbering Academy, Robinson Film Center, Lofts at 624, PepitoXO @ artspace, Rhino Coffee downtown, Kevin Bryan Architect, Emmett Hook Performance Center, the Louisiana Film Prize, and Southern University Museum of Art. The former Tipitina’s Music Co-Op property (700 Texas) sold to O’Brien Energy in the fall of 2021. Renamed Cooper’s Corner, conversion of the building into a business hub was completed in late 2023. 709 Texas, the former Percy Alexander CPA office, was sold to Drayden Dunn as a future home for his Envision Media and Marketing business. DDA will continue efforts in 2024 to support the anchors and attractions already located in the West Edge and promote available buildings to businesses and developers.
- **Shreveport Common** - The DDA is a member of the Shreveport Common Board of Directors and works to support efforts as downtown’s newest Arts & Culture District is developed. The residential development at Uneeda Biscuit Lofts, 711 Milam, was completed and leasing began in October 2023. The Address Artist & Entrepreneur Center in the former Address Ford at 717 Crockett has become an important anchor for Shreveport Common and Downtown.
- There is strong proof that arts districts can be catalytic in creating revitalization. So-called ‘Creative Placemaking’ is a way to intentionally leverage the power of arts, culture, and creativity to help drive a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation while building a quality of place. A key anchor in Shreveport Common is Caddo Common Park which has become a popular location for outdoor events such as concerts, plays in the park and more. The Food Truck Bosque area, the lit sculptural ArtisTrees, and the pavilion/performance stage have all been completed.
- **Other Art and Entertainment-** Installation of the new LED lights on the Texas Street Bridge began in September 2021 and was completed in 2022. Local optometrist Dr. George Bakowski and wife Sandra donated \$1 million to jumpstart the effort.

Other partners who stepped up with dollars were the Downtown Development Authority, Red River Waterway Commission, Louisiana Public Service Commission, cities of Bossier City and Shreveport and private donor Will Atkins. Thanks to the generosity of the Bakowskis and the partners, the LED-lit Bakowski Bridge of Lights will shine brightly for years to come.

The Downtown Shreveport Art Walk, Second Saturday Downtown, art venue openings and art exhibits, theatrical performances, live music, and other events that were cancelled or cut back because of the 2020 Pandemic continued their return to downtown in 2023. Patrons and visitors enjoyed productions and events at Robinson Film Center, artspace, Emmett Hook Center, The Agora Borealis, The Missing Link, The Noble Savage, Fatty Arbuckle's, Korner Lounge, Festival Plaza, Red River District, High Gravity Glassworks, C & C Mercantile and Lighting, Central ARTstation, Big Sun Studios, Bailey Gallery, The Gallery at Andress, Shreveport Common, and other downtown locations.

Mudbug Madness, Good Times/Juneteenth, the Red River Revel, BREW, and other festivals filled Festival Plaza with celebrators in 2023. Productions also enlivened the Strand Theatre, Aseana Garden, and Municipal Auditorium, among others. Conventions and events were held at the Shreveport Convention Center, and the Louisiana Prize Fest returned to the streets celebrating, music, comedy, fashion, food, and film. The DDA will continue to support these events in 2024 with publicity and other types of assistance.

- **Historic Texas Avenue-** The 800 through 1200 blocks of Texas Avenue are in the Downtown Development District and offer an area ripe for re-development. Restoration to this key area began in earnest in 2020 and continued in 2022. 1110 Texas Avenue (former Schorr Furniture Store) was rehabbed as the C&C Mercantile and Lighting and ArtiFact artisan's factory. Owners Lauren Ross Simmons and Derek Simmons also acquired a lease from the city for the adjacent parking lot and Nolan's building with the intention of making developing step one of an avenue revitalization. C&C Mercantile held numerous artist events in 2022 and is continuing to serve as a new anchor for the western part of downtown. The DDA will continue to support C&C Mercantile and other businesses in this historic part of downtown in 2024.
- SporTran was the catalyst for changes in the 1200 block of Texas Avenue. The acquisition of the former Sun Furniture building and an adjacent building in the next block helped create SporTran's Multimodal Resource Center across from the Murphy Street Transit Hub. The property on the corner of Murphy Street and Texas Avenue, which has served Shreveport citizens for more than 120 years as a variety of options including a car dealership and furniture store, has been transformed into SporTran's transit mall, employee wellness center, safety training facility, and a public food court.
- **Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse**
Preservation and Adaptive Reuse of historic structures continue to be imperative to a thriving downtown. DDA staff interacts frequently with developers and other

interested parties in providing market and traffic data, commercial rental rates, sales comps, and other information to get vacant buildings into the hands of those who have the means and imagination to return them to active commerce.

- DDA remains committed to preserving and maintaining our inventory of unique historic properties. We hired consultants in 2015 to update and expand the Downtown Shreveport National Register District. In doing so, more downtown properties became eligible for state and federal tax historic credits.
- DDA partners with the Louisiana Trust, Metropolitan Planning Commission, Louisiana Historic Preservation Office, Main Street, and others to promote the significance of redevelopment and adaptive reuse of downtown's historic properties.
- In 2023 DDA resumed production of events aimed at promoting the City Center's past such as the popular History in 5 talks at the Downtown Artwalk, events at the Shreveport Water Works Museum/Railroad Museum and other history-driven programs.
- DDA continues to serve on the boards of the Shreveport Water Works Museum, Shreveport Common, and Cross Bayou A-Truss Bridge Committee and assists, as possible, in grants, fundraisers, and other ways to highlight their facilities and share their stories with a broader audience.
- **Cross Bayou** – the DDA recognizes this area as both valuable and underutilized and is supportive of appropriate and well-planned development that features prominent public access to the waterfront and a strong connection to historic Downtown. The Great Expectations Master Plan outlined the need to take steps to prepare the area for development- correct zoning, design guidelines, park planning and brownfields cleanup. DDA supports the City's ongoing efforts to acquire properties in the area to be able to issue a nationwide Request for Proposals to see what developers and ideas would be the best fit for Shreveport and downtown. Whatever is eventually developed here should be site planned to 'face' our historic downtown and interact with it, not sit as an island unto itself.
- **Red River District** – The DDA continues to believe that the Red River District can be an attractive venue for businesses and events alike. DDA developed an action plan in 2008 to transform the former entertainment district into a place that would draw patronage from locals and visitors and has continued to assist the City in these efforts. In 2022, DDA hosted the Harvard Field Immersion Study that culminated in the 'Revitalizing the Red River District' report. We believe this report should prove helpful in future planning for, positioning of, and marketing for the district. In 2024 DDA staff will continue to interact with tenants and promote events that will highlight the area and downtown as a whole.

- **Downtown Programming** - Though DDA operates with a small staff, we are aggressive in our desire to support events aimed at drawing people downtown. We know that when exposed to all that downtown has to offer, people will make the decision to live, work, and play here. DDA plans and executes events, assists others with their events and provides monetary assistance through the DDA Mini-Grant program. Events as diverse as tours that pair beer and historic buildings and art walks have been conceived and presented by DDA, bringing thousands to downtown who might not normally have a reason to visit. Our programming push will continue in 2024 with Art Walks, Small Business Saturday, and other partnerships.
- **Downtown Marketing & Promotion**- DDA believes that people who experience what downtown offers will be much more likely to consider it as a place to invest, work or live. At any given time, DDA is engaged in marketing outreach via social media and blog posts, videos, and weekly/monthly columns, articles and news and feature stories and paid advertising/marketing. In late 2022, the Shreveport DDA and Downtown Shreveport pages, both of which are managed by the DDA, had more than 21,000 likes and more than 24,500 followers.

Our Thursday Shreveport DDA eBlast newsletter has attracted a strong following and results in interest from the public, developers, the traditional news media, and elected officials.

Grants to Promote Downtown –\$175,000 approved by the City Council paid for tree removal and replacement in 2023. The focus for the balance of the remaining funds will be on art maintenance and wayfinding signage in 2024. Previous grants have funded downtown marketing, the creation of a downtown garden, conversion to LED lighting, assistance to businesses locating downtown, structural repairs to historic buildings and a market study of Shreveport Common.

- **Communications Partnerships for a Stronger Downtown**- DDA staff works hard to strengthen downtown partnerships and believes a free-flow of information is imperative. Communication with governmental entities, businesses, developers, non-profits, learning institutions, and media are employed to share information and increase the vitality of downtown overall. Communications outreach includes the weekly e-Blast, community speeches and talks, tours, a wide range of social media including Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and the downtownshreveport.com website, press releases and columns in Forum News, The Times, Shreveport-Bossier Advocate, SB Focus and BIZ magazine, among others.
- **Riverfront Development** – The DDA’s sister organization, DSDC, has supported both the Shreveport Aquarium and Sci-Port Discovery Center with grants in the hopes of helping them become more self-sufficient. DDA supported major legislation in 2018 that added additional gaming space and allowed the downtown casinos to move out of the water 1200’ from their existing berths to assist in them becoming more

competitive. DDA will continue to support downtown’s two riverfront casinos and advocate for improvements to help them continue to improve their market.

Summary: Goals and Objectives

A. Basic Services

Ensure and, if required, supplement the effective delivery and management of basic municipal services such as police services and litter removal on the public streets and spaces in downtown. Advocate for the continued installation of security cameras in downtown and investment in infrastructure upgrades and repairs.

B. Development and Marketing

Actively pursue and support initiatives that promote quality public and private sector development in downtown. Promote the downtown experience and our abundant history. Continue to position the city center as a place to “Live, Work, Play and Invest.” Promote downtown residential, retail, office markets, and downtown events and programs.

C. Image and Communications

Actively promote opportunities in downtown and reinforce that downtown is a welcoming address, filled with unique businesses, opportunities, events, and festivals. DDA will also continue to maintain communication between downtown property owners, businesses, advocates, elected officials, the public, and the media by informing them of downtown’s needs, opportunities, plans, and assets.

D. Legislation Action and Leadership Support

Provide necessary support services to various non-profit downtown improvement organizations and recruit key leaders to become involved in the downtown revitalization process. Encourage City, Parish, State, and Federal agencies to participate in the revitalization of downtown. Work with elected officials on the local, state, and national level to advocate for downtown enhancements and continuation of historic tax credits and other downtown and/or historic incentives. Provide recommendations and input relative to continued improvements in the DDD.

E. Parking and Transportation

Improve accessibility to and within downtown. The DDA, through its parking contract with the City of Shreveport, manages the on-street metered parking program through ShrevePark and analyzes parking demand, locations, and funding. We strive to make parking easier with parking apps and park cards and online payments to make ticket payment options accessible and convenient. The DDA will continue to work with the City of Shreveport and others to identify additional parking spaces and to thoughtfully consider future locations for parking facilities.

- DDA and ShrevePark continue to engage in changes in parking technology, App Parking, and learn new methods of parking management to make downtown parking as seamless as possible.
- ShrevePark continues to manage a downtown curb re-painting program that assists parkers in identifying app and other types of spaces.

F. Retail and Business Support

We work with downtown retail businesses and commercial buildings to promote their goods, space, and services through networking and traditional and social media. We host such initiatives as Small Business Saturday, Pop Ups, and Art Walks to promote businesses, we hire marketing experts for informational sessions for our business owners and create professional marketing campaigns to promote our downtown businesses year-round.

G. Downtown Office Building Support

DDA will continue to support local real estate companies and downtown brokers to help promote the downtown office market. Staff is engaged in conversations with downtown property owners and managers on how to best position their properties, property amenities and provide information, advice, and assistance to tenants. We share information with those looking for downtown space and with those who are already downtown. DDA engages with other entities such as Main Street, Strong Towns, and other downtown associations to be aware of Best Practices and to determine best ideas in repositioning office space that may not be needed post-Covid. DDA will work closely with partner DSDC in an Absorption/Market Study to help answer developer questions and position properties for sale or different uses. A 2022 study and a 2023 report by Urban3/Strong Towns will also play a key role in promoting and positioning our historic DDD.

H. Planning

DDA will continue to implement the Strategic Framework 2010-2015 plan priorities as approved by the DDA Board of Directors and continue implementation of the 2010 Redevelopment Strategy. DDA works with the Metropolitan Planning Commission on the Unified Development Code (UDC) and makes suggestions on how to tweak the code as needed in ways that make sense for downtown.

I. Quality of Life

Enhance the overall livability of downtown for workers and visitors by promoting and facilitating special events, encouraging historic preservation, pedestrian amenities, additional retail and entertainment, and ensuring that downtown is safe and secure. DDA will continue working with DSDC in 2024 to manage a downtown Graffiti Removal program.

J. Urban Design

Encourage and support high quality urban design and continue to work with such organizations such as Re:Form Shreveport, Strong Towns, Verdunity, and others to encourage engagement, incremental growth and projects that are people oriented. DDA will support the improvement of the aesthetic qualities and character of downtown through public space development and historic preservation efforts, and actively oppose the construction of metal buildings, the demolition in general of historic buildings and structures, and the demolition of non-historic structures unless other structures are built to take their place. Density in a downtown matters, and the DDA shares that message with developers, the public and elected officials.

2024 ACTIVITIES

Note: Activities include, but are not limited to, the following. It should be noted that there may be administrative costs and/or direct project development and implementation costs in each area.

A. Basic Services

Ensure and, if appropriate, supplement the effective delivery and management of basic services such as police, sanitation, and general non-repair maintenance of the public streets and spaces in downtown.

Enhance and Improve Downtown Security

Continue support of Downtown Police and the Downtown Mounted & Bicycle Patrol with budgeted line items dedicated to this. Advocate for continued installation of security cameras in downtown and additional police presence. As possible, fund hiring Shreveport Police officers to walk the beat in the Central Business District while talking with SPD and City officials about the need for additional officers assigned to Downtown. DDA will also assist SPD in efforts to continue to purchase and install security cameras and other technology in specific downtown locations.

Improve the Maintenance of Downtown Public Spaces

Subject to City or other contract, participate in the maintenance of public spaces in downtown through litter pickup, street-sweeping and vacuuming, grass cutting and other public space maintenance. Also provide supplemental funding for special planting, maintenance, or other beautification projects within downtown as possible.

Continue to meet with the City, SWEPCO and other partners on repairs, maintenance and upgrades to downtown lighting and improved access to electricity, with the City Engineer and Public Works on sidewalks, curbs, and other street issues, with the City Technology department on security cameras and other crime-fighting tools, and with the City Council and Mayor's Office to find the resources to make critically-needed downtown infrastructure improvements.

B. Development and Marketing

Actively pursue development initiatives to promote quality public and private sector development initiatives in downtown.

West Edge District and Shreveport Common Redevelopment

Initiate/support West Edge and Shreveport Common quality of life initiatives.

Cross Bayou/Riverfront/Convention Center Development

Encourage City efforts to further acquire property and remediate Cross Bayou for eventual use, and promote and encourage greater use of the Riverfront, Red River Entertainment District, and Convention Center areas.

Business Support

Coordinate and implement programs to position downtown as a good environment for retail and business services. Continue to provide specific help to businesses; promote and market these businesses and their services. Continue to assist restaurants in downtown to secure sidewalk café permits and downtown bar and club owners to identify issues and needs and facilitate additional security possibilities.

Office Space

Work with property owners and managers to position their spaces for lease. Make suggestions for opportunities to overcome issues that may be negatively affecting particular buildings and encourage attention to trends which will help position properties more positively. Promote spaces on DDA website and social media.

Stimulate Individual Development Opportunities

Foster other development opportunities for downtown, especially those with a strong residential component.

Client Services

Provide client services to existing downtown businesses or prospective businesses concerning market data, economic and historic tax incentives, and space needs.

Economic

Administer, foster, develop and/or coordinate economic incentive measures to spur continued development of downtown. Assist in providing information about all tax credits and other help available and work with the City of Shreveport in sharing details about the Downtown Opportunity Zone and other incentives.

C. Image and Communications

Promote a positive image of downtown and maintain effective communications between downtown property owners, businesses, advocates, elected officials and citizens of the City by informing them of the needs, opportunities, plans, and assets of downtown. Elevate the public's awareness of downtown and its offerings and explain the DDA's role in both.

Continue publication of the weekly e-blast that highlights ongoing activities in downtown, maintain an aggressive social and traditional media outreach, and initiate creative marketing strategies to highlight downtown businesses and properties.

Provide Information to Educate and Inform Downtown Businesses and Professionals About Downtown Issues and Important City/Regional Issues Which Impact Downtown

Publish reports for DDA/DSDC as appropriate and prepare and distribute marketing materials designed to share correct and updated information about downtown.

Educate and Inform the Community about the Importance of Downtown and Present An Image That Downtown Is A Desirable Place in which to Live, Work, and Play

Provide information relative to downtown attractions and update materials that promote downtown. Continue to work with Strong Towns, Urban3 and other national organizations that promote the continue importance and potential economic strength of downtowns.

Participate in select Shreveport initiatives that will enhance the national image of our city and promote increased civic pride.

D. Legislative Action and Leadership Support

Provide necessary support services to various non-profit downtown improvement organizations and recruit key leaders to become involved in the downtown revitalization process. Participate in providing information to local, state, and federal lawmakers on legislation that impacts downtown growth and development.

Support and Participate in State and National Associations Which Are Concerned With Revitalizing Downtowns

Participate in organizations dedicated to downtown revitalization and, as appropriate, attend Louisiana Cultural Connection, Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation, and Main Street Conferences.

Support and Encourage the Participation of Local Entities Who Also Have Interest in the Revitalization of Downtown

Provide contract DDA staff services to Downtown Shreveport Development Corporation (DSDC) and DSDC2, Inc. to enable their programs of work. Maintain relationships with Downtown Shreveport Unlimited, Shreveport Regional Arts Council, Shreveport Common, Robinson Film Center, Shreveport Aquarium and Sci-Port, the Shreveport Convention Center, Community Foundation of NW Louisiana, LaDOTD, Shreveport Casinos, Visit Shreveport Bossier, the Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, Shreveport-Bossier African American Chamber of Commerce, and many others.

E. Parking and Transportation

Improve the accessibility to and within downtown.

Former SporTran Terminal

DDA will continue efforts to work with the current lessee and/or future lessee of the former SporTran facility- in efforts to program and promote live music events, a food truck court, and creative events. DDA will also engage the new owners of the former Greyhound Bus Terminal, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, as they repurpose the facility for a new use for the church.

Pedestrian/Vehicular Circulation/Bike Lanes

Work to improve and maintain effective and safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation in downtown. Manage the creation and installation of wayfinding signage throughout downtown Shreveport per funding in 2022 by the Shreveport City Council. Encourage the installation of amenities that will enhance the pedestrian environment, and work with the City and others to promote the development of multi-story parking in downtown on existing surface lots. Work with the City on the expansion of bicycle lanes or sharrows throughout downtown and continue to advocate for additional bicycle racks in locations where needed. Encourage the city and state to consider creative ‘traffic calming’ solutions to fight excess speeding seen on Spring and Market Streets which make the areas dangerous to pedestrians and bicyclists. Work with the city and state to slow speed and make the area of Texas Avenue from Cotton Street to Murphy Street a ‘Complete Street’ concept that will make it safer, more attractive, and more pedestrian friendly. Encourage the City to return to a system of two-ways streets that will make travelling downtown less daunting and confusing. Work with the State of Louisiana to secure funding and remediation for three of the most dangerous intersections in the state: Crockett, Spring, and Market.

Off-Street Parking

Promote the development of thoughtful additional off-street parking facilities on existing surface lots and consider which surface lots might be prime locations for parking garages. Provide staff support via contract to DSDC to manage the First Methodist Church parking lots. By contract, administer the City of Shreveport’s on-street parking program and advise the City on use of funds from the parking enterprise fund.

Curbside Parking

Develop and encourage the effective use of curbside parking. Continue to develop opportunities to create additional vehicle and motorcycle spaces in downtown.

F. Planning

Plan for the growth, development, and occupancy of downtown by early identification of opportunities and potential problems. Provide comment to City Administration, City Council, Caddo Parish, MPC and Zoning, NLCOG and other appropriate agencies regarding planning and development issues.

Maintain Downtown Maps and Develop Data that Communicates Pertinent Information Concerning Downtown Property and Its Use

Participate in commercial office space research consortiums where possible. Provide information as requested to encourage residential, office, and retail development in downtown.

Maintain a Set of Goals, Strategies, and Objectives for Downtown

Continue to review and update downtown goals and strategic objectives. Prepare and adopt for DDA and DSDC a work plan which reflects the strategic objectives that are to be addressed by the primary downtown economic development and advocacy organizations. Facilitate meetings as appropriate to update downtown stakeholders on downtown projects.

Represent Downtown's Interest in Citywide Planning Issues for Adjacent Neighborhoods and Regional Planning Activities

Monitor and evaluate city-wide and regional planning efforts for impact on the downtown area such as the city's Choice Neighborhoods plan, which affects a portion of the Downtown Development District. Participate in planning activities as appropriate. Work with the City of Shreveport on its projects and developments outlined in the \$24.2M HUD Choice Neighborhood grant that was awarded in 2018.

G. Quality of Life

Enhance the overall character, environment, and attraction of downtown Shreveport by supporting, promoting, and facilitating special events and cultural activities.

Festivals and Special Events, Sponsorships

Assist in the development and production of special events. Provide support to organizations and entities that will enhance the downtown experience through the funding of mini-grants, insurance coverage or other sponsorship assistance. Manage the street vendor permitting program, street performers, and sidewalk café programs.

Art as Industry

Give downtown Shreveport a unique sense of place by fostering the art industry as a place-making collaborative. Monitor progress and participate in the process of both temporary and permanent art components of the streetscape project. Work with SRAC, Robinson Film Center, Bailey Gallery, Agora Borealis, Artipsy, C & C Mercantile, Address Art & Entrepreneur Center, Waddell Gallery of Distinction, the Strand Theatre, and other entities to create the ongoing presence of the arts in downtown as an industry. Increase public art installations in downtown through partnerships with local, regional & national artists, SRAC, City of Shreveport and other entities and advocate for maintenance of such. Promote ways to highlight the importance of art in the community.

H. Urban Design

Improve the urban design, aesthetic quality, and character of downtown and work with appropriate agencies as opportunities are provided. Continue support of Re-Form Shreveport in bringing nationally known speakers to Shreveport to speak on issues of Urban Sprawl, the importance of Downtowns, livability, the importance of a walkable-friendly community, and more.

Implementation of Desired Urban Design Concepts

Monitor minimum sidewalk standards in accordance with the design criteria of the downtown streetscape projects, participate in the design of downtown streetscape projects, and provide input to the City Administration and MPC as to the appropriateness of design of proposed projects. Administer the sidewalk café permit process and assist businesses in the application process.

Plan and Promote the Development of Public Places, such as Plazas, Fountains, Green Space and Pop-Up Parks in Downtown

Continue support of projects/events that promote a positive image of downtown. Work with the City and others to identify opportunities for green space enhancement and other public developments. Provide support for the continued enhancement of Caddo Common Park.

Plan and Implement Improvements to Downtown Gateways

Monitor gateway concepts and make specific recommendations regarding planned improvements at key downtown entry ways.

Identify and Encourage the Preservation and/or Renovation of Historic or Architecturally Significant Buildings in Downtown

The DDA staff continues to provide assistance and coordination between developers and the State Historic Preservation Office to qualify properties for participation in the state and federal tax credit programs. DDA will also continue efforts to encourage and assist historic preservation work of DSDC, encourage - financially and otherwise - adaptive re-use of historic buildings in downtown, promote redevelopment incentives, and work with the State Fire Marshal's Office and other cities to determine "Best Practices" in historic building codes.

2024 DDA Budget – Approved 10-25-23

		2024 Revenue
1	2023 DDD Property Tax	\$ 710,000
2	Streetscape Contract	\$ 279,830
3	Streetscape Misc. Income	\$ 6,300
4	Parking Contract	\$ 416,700
5	Parking Misc. Income	\$ 500
6	DSDC Management Contract	\$ 30,000
7	Interest	\$ 70,000
8	Downtown Beautification Carry Over from 2023	\$ 115,000
9	Miscellaneous Income	\$ 10,000
10	FMC Lot Management	\$ 2,400
11	Carry Over - COS-Wayfinding Signage, Mural	\$ 31,682
Total Revenue		\$ 1,672,412

		2024 Expense
12	Salaries, Admin.	\$ 332,000
13	Retirement	\$ 10,000
14	Medical Insurance	\$ 65,000
15	Payroll Taxes (.0765)	\$ 28,000
16	Worker's Comp	\$ 3,000
17	Staff Parking & Validation	\$ 2,500
18	Legal	\$ 8,000
19	Accounting	\$ 25,000
20	Professional Dues & Subscriptions	\$ 6,000
21	Postage	\$ 800
22	Office Supplies & Expenses	\$ 22,000
23	Office Rent (416 Cotton)	\$ 39,048
24	416 Utilities	\$ 12,000
25	Dining & Entertainment	\$ 3,000
26	Seminars & Training	\$ 5,000
27	Insurance - General	\$ 18,000
28	Travel Expense	\$ 3,000
29	Telephone	\$ 11,000
30	Marketing/Publications	\$ 30,000
31	Mounted Patrol Funding	\$ 12,000
32	Downtown Security	\$ 18,000
33	Streetscape Maintenance	\$ 286,130

34	Carry Over COS 2022 Wayfinding Signage, Mural	\$	31,682
35	Events/Sponsorships	\$	10,000
36	Parking Services (Contract)	\$	416,700
37	Artspace Support	\$	30,000
38	Mini-grants	\$	5,000
39	416 Cotton	\$	10,000
40	Downtown Beautification Carry Over from 2023	\$	115,000
41	Long-term Projects	\$	114,552
	Total Expense	\$	1,672,412