



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

# MISSION

**Portland Downtown stimulates a thriving, vibrant, and sustainable downtown community.**

We are a 501c4 nonprofit **downtown improvement district** (DID). Our **founding purposes** – established in 1992 – still guide our work today:

- 1** We represent the business, cultural, and residential community in the on-going development and management of downtown Portland.
- 2** We create a cleaner, safer, well-managed downtown so that Portland can successfully compete as an environment in which to live, do business, shop, and visit.
- 3** We stimulate commercial, retail, and cultural activities through marketing and promotional initiatives that enhance the image of downtown Portland.

**Portland Downtown** is funded through a supplemental tax paid by property owners within the district. In addition, many of our events are made possible thanks to the support of generous sponsors and community partners.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Portland Downtown's strategic planning process was comprised of two phases: **Strategic Research** and **Plan Development**. The process was conducted over the course of one year (February 2019 – January 2020) during which the **Strategic Planning Ad-Hoc Committee** met twice per month as well as for additional work sessions as needed. Committee Co-Chairs Doane Dorchester and Dawn Homa reported regularly to the Board of Directors about the committee's process and progress.

The committee developed a master poll of strategic questions that was presented to a variety of stakeholders, including downtown property owners, business owners, nonprofit leaders, City of Portland officials, and the general public through **surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews**. Research was conducted through a broad-reaching survey (1,249 respondents), three focus groups (40 participants), and nine one-on-one stakeholder interviews.

Following internal and external information gathering and data analysis, the committee began developing the framework for the strategic plan: identifying major themes and priorities, evaluating the organization's mission statement, and determining the organization's key objectives and strategic goals for the next five years. Over the course of four months, many drafts, and feedback from the Board of Directors, the committee expanded on the plan framework to create **a roadmap for Portland Downtown's work from 2020-2025**.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Board Members

Doane Dorchester, Co-Chair  
Dawn Homa, Co-Chair  
Bob Keegan  
Sue-Ellen McClain  
David Packard

### Staff Members

Casey Gilbert  
Amy Geren  
Adam MacDonald  
Taffy Eaton

### Strategic Planning Consultant

Elizabeth Hall

# STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following **guiding principles** reflect organizational best practices, build upon themes that emerged from external and internal data collection, and provide guidance as a result of the strategic planning process as a whole:

- 1 Portland Downtown is a community builder.** Survey respondents, focus group participants, and interviewees highlighted the work that the organization does to create a strong sense of community through fun and welcoming events, clean and safe initiatives, efforts to convene stakeholders, and working to promote community resources.
- 2 Portland Downtown is a key advocate for the downtown community.** The organization's reputation as a respected representative of the downtown district's interests, and its ongoing efforts to field input and collect data from its constituencies, make it a lead voice for downtown merchants, business owners, downtown property owners, employees, and residents.
- 3 Portland Downtown is a strong partner and collaborator.** External research respondents recognized the strong partnerships that the organization has built with the City of Portland, fellow non-governmental organizations, media and event partners, and the trusting relationship the organization has with its many

constituencies. They appreciate that Portland Downtown works to bring people together to find consensus and solutions for community issues.

- 4 Portland Downtown strives to be increasingly environmentally sustainable.** The general public and Portland Downtown staff and board members raised concerns about the downtown's environmentally sustainable practices as a whole. Portland Downtown is well-positioned to encourage and create opportunities for the downtown community to take steps to become increasingly environmentally conscious and apply planet-friendly practices. The organization will continue to examine its practices through an environmental lens, and make improvements as determined.
- 5 Portland Downtown believes in organizational sustainability.** The organization will uphold fiscally responsible practices, regularly evaluate its programs and partnerships for mission-alignment, and ensure that adequate staffing and resources are allocated to accomplish its work.







## STRATEGIC GOAL:

# ADVOCACY

**Serve as a lead representative and advocate for the overall health and prosperity of the downtown district and the downtown community.**

**WHY THIS MATTERS** Portland is facing a time of growth and change, and the past decade of prosperity for the city has been accompanied by many challenges: traffic, transportation, and parking demands; rent increases for residents and businesses; workforce shortages; homelessness; substance use disorder; and climate change. Portland Downtown is uniquely positioned to field input from its stakeholders and represent their interests, as well as the long-term interests of the downtown community.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Serve as the representative for the downtown community's interests.
- 2 Expand opportunities for district stakeholders to provide input to the direction of Portland Downtown's advocacy.
- 3 Be a proactive convener of area nonprofit organizations and agencies to address issues that challenge the health and prosperity of the downtown district community.
- 4 Support area institutions whose expertise and work are dedicated to addressing priority advocacy issues for the district.
- 5 Create education and awareness initiatives that activate the public in creating a healthy, clean, safe, and vibrant downtown district.

## STRATEGIC GOAL:

# CLEAN, SAFE, AND WELCOMING

## Enhance the downtown district to create a positive experience for all.

**WHY THIS MATTERS** Increased interest and investment in downtown Portland has created opportunities for commercial and residential growth in recent years. Many sectors are thriving, including fisheries/marine/aquaculture, tourism, and food & beverage. The notoriety of Portland's culinary scene has made it a global destination and must-visit locale. Downtown also boasts a diverse mix of retail, professional services, and nonprofit organizations, which add to the economic health and vibrancy of the city. Portland Downtown's efforts to support high standards for a clean, safe, and vibrant city center has contributed to the city's economic vitality and its earned successes over the years. Maintaining these exemplary standards that the downtown community and visitors appreciate is a mainstay for long-term prosperity in the downtown district and the Greater Portland area.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Work with partners to make downtown increasingly clean and safe.
- 2 Increase the number of murals and public art in the district.
- 3 Provide events that are engaging, fun, and sustainable.
- 4 Enhance placemaking efforts and beautification to create a welcoming environment and define the downtown district through wayfinding tools.

## STRATEGIC GOAL:

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

**Engage the general public in Portland Downtown's initiatives, resources, work, and promotion of the downtown district.**

**WHY THIS MATTERS** Communicating the value of our work is paramount to advancing Portland Downtown's mission. It's how the organization builds trust and loyalty among its many constituents, including downtown business and property owners, city officials, nonprofit partners, volunteers, sponsors, and more. In addition to outbound communications via print, digital, and social channels, Portland Downtown offers year-round opportunities for stakeholders to convene and become active participants in conversations that matter to them. Through fostering a healthy dialogue and rapport with various audiences, we're able to instill confidence, secure "buy-in," and tackle challenges creatively and collaboratively.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Create, maintain, and review Portland Downtown's resources and tools that promote downtown.
- 2 Continually inform the public about Portland Downtown's mission, programs, and services.
- 3 Engage the downtown community in Portland Downtown's work.
- 4 Increase visibility and awareness of Portland Downtown and its work.



## STRATEGIC GOAL:

# ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Achieve organizational excellence through sustainable and best practices and strong collaborations.**

**WHY THIS MATTERS** Portland Downtown's organizational and programmatic excellence is recognized by its collaborators and partners, national groups, downtown improvement districts across the country, and the Greater Portland public at large. Sustainable and responsible practices, meaningful partnerships, and staff and board support are the foundation for excellence.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Ensure financial stability through fiscal responsibility.
- 2 Establish and refine internal practices to ensure organizational sustainability.
- 3 Maintain and build strong, sustainable relationships with collaborators and partners to achieve mutual goals.
- 4 Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) best practices.
- 5 Strengthen board governance, recruitment, onboarding processes, and engagement.







## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chair:** David Packard, *P K Realty Management & Investments*

**Vice Chair:** Doane Dorchester, *Portland Stage Company*

**Treasurer:** Dawn Homa, *Portland Properties*

Sara Brown, *David Wood*

Karen Coffin, *Machias Savings Bank*

Krista Cole, *Sur Lie*

Michael Erickson, *Holiday Inn by the Bay*

Kim Farrar, *Avesta Housing*

Bob Keegan, *Dirigo Management Co.*

Erin Kiley, *Portland Flea-for-All*

Sarah Martin, *The Bar of Chocolate Café*

Sue-Ellen McClain, *McClain Marketing & Interactive*

Dan Mirabile, *City of Portland Public Works*

Palo Peirce, *Bricklight Properties LLC*

Neil Reiter, *R&J Partners LLC*

Kim Volk, *Maine Advisory Associates Inc.*

Gillian West, *J.B. Brown & Sons*

## STAFF

Cary Tyson, *Executive Director*

Amy Geren, *Program Director*

Adam MacDonald, *Marketing Director*

Taffy Eaton, *Office Manager*

*Photos by Corey Templeton, Sarah Beard Buckley,  
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