



**THE SAULT STE. MARIE
DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
STRATEGIC PLAN
2017 TO 2020**

VISION

The Sault Ste. Marie Downtown: Is a unique place to experience dynamic community that is vibrant, healthy and a prosperous destination where people want to be and want to invest.

MISSION

The Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association will deliver value to its membership, be a catalyst for, and support, them in creating a self-empowered downtown that thrives through the activation of its spaces, places and people.

VALUES

Respect

We value the dignity and uniqueness of every individual in our organization and membership, and act courteously and with an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Integrity

We behave with honesty, integrity and fairness in all our interactions. Our words, decisions and actions must comply with all applicable legislation, Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association policies, processes, principles of integrity and must also be ethical.

Excellence

We are committed to the highest standards of service delivery and membership fulfillment. We value and recognize the contribution that each individual makes to this end. We are engaged in the constant and passionate pursuit of quality people, programs and services, including ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.

Teamwork

We value each other's ideas and are not untowardly judgmental. We work collaboratively to achieve shared goals through participatory decision-making, promote cooperation and encourage strong partnerships. We promise respectful attention to the ideas and opinions of others

Accountability

We are committed to personal and team accountability for outcomes. We make evidenced-based decisions, and implement appropriate management techniques to ensure that we provide optimal value for the investment made by the membership

Transparency

We value an environment of reciprocal dialogue and open and transparent decision-making. We respect and promise active and honest sharing of information and ideas.

Sustainability

We hold ourselves accountable to ensure the future fiscal viability of the Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association and strive for responsible stewardship of the Mission, Vision and Values of the Sault Ste. Marie Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association of Commerce.

Innovation

We are committed to keeping pace with rapidly changing society and workplace, and strive to be leaders in innovative and creative business practices. We pursue collaborative partnerships and entrepreneurial opportunities to achieve our Mission and Vision.

CREATE:

Engagement

The DTA will engage the membership in developing a sense of cohesion to advance the needs of the membership, whether it be in advocacy, education, promotion, assistance with applications to the City for infrastructure programs and grants.

1. **Priority Initiative:** Create an exclusive member online portal which members can interact, share success stories, create content, reach out for assistance, promote each other, get information, perform surveys, and receive Board reports, organizational activity updates and reports.

Expected Outcome: Membership will feel part of the organization leading to more volunteers and sense of cohesion amongst the diverse membership through the development of an exclusive asset for the members.

2. **Priority Initiatives:** Ensure informal opportunities exist for all members to communicate and connect with the Board, DTA staff and socialize with each other at times that complement their operating hours.

Expected Outcome: Face to face connections that will assist in the development and advancement of the downtown and the Association programs and services that the membership values.

3. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA will identify priority needs of its members and advocate in support of those needs.

Expected Outcome: The DTA, in collaboration with its stakeholders, will become the key resource for its members to build capacity for their success.

4. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA will measure engagement success through increased volunteerism, regular communications with its membership, survey Data, and social media analytics.

Expected Outcome: The ability to measure successful methods of communication, engagement and cohesion. Identify areas for improvement, discontinuance or advancement.

Market (Based Action)

The DTA will develop the tools and mechanism in which to market the DTA business community, create opportunities for business expansion and achieve zero vacancy rate. It will perform research into the best practices to develop the downtown and achieve high impact economic wellbeing and attract consumers to the DTA area.

1. **Priority Initiative:** Conduct market research with stakeholders to activate the downtown by developing market based strategies and tactics that bring customers into the DTA area.

Expected Outcome: Economic stability and prosperity.

2. **Priority Initiative:** Conduct a best practices review, competitive analysis and Benchmarking of downtowns of similar size and circumstance.

Expected Outcome: Firm understanding of what the DTA must do to create a successful downtown economic engine and community place.

3. **Priority Initiative:** Create a branding initiative with stakeholders and community partners.

Expected Outcome: Fully developed downtown branding strategy.

4. **Priority Initiative:** Promote vacant properties within the DTA including preferred property purpose, façade expectations, primary market analytics and market attributes, customer attraction strategies, and potential funding mechanisms.

Expected Outcome: Zero vacancy rate through controlled market development.

5. **Priority Initiative:** Through creative and collaborative partnerships create a downtown that is more active with people, experiential opportunities and fun.

Expected Outcome: A vibrant downtown with more people and more opportunity.

Passion

The DTA will build, advance and champion the passion for the downtown so that it creates opportunity, resonates with the community and attracts partnerships and collaborations.

1. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA is the consolidated voice of all members advocating for a solutions based approach to resolving issues and concerns that affect wellbeing of the Downtown.

Expected Outcome: The community will be inspired to make the vision happen by mobilizing themselves, their creativity, community resources stakeholders and partnerships to make the vision reality.

2. **Priority Initiative:** the DTA will assist in making the make Downtown more fulfilling, active, and economically successful by making the Downtown community and workplace environments an outstanding destinations for new investment, as a place to establish a business, and as a place to live, work, and play.

Expected Outcome: More, private sector led, investment will be invested downtown and evidenced through capital improvement to buildings, façade enhancements, new business growth and the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Opportunity

The downtown will create opportunities for participation in events, cultural activities and creative opportunities that will lead to the activation of the downtown.

1. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA will work with the City and stakeholders to host and enable more events downtown.

Expected Outcome: Increased frequency of events and extended season for events that bring more people downtown.

2. **Priority Initiative:** Seek more funding opportunities and partnerships to hold more events.

Expected Outcome: Build capacity of the DTA to market events.

3. **Priority Initiative:** Partner with the City to advance the traffic study as pertaining to the Downtown, coordinate event management and streamline the event hosting process.

Expected Outcome: Dedicated resource and commitment to the Downtown at the City to ensure event based assistance, removal of red tape and expedited process for approval; of events held within the DTA boundaries.

Welcoming Experiences

The DTA will create an environment that makes downtown accessible by all modes of transportation in a safe and pleasant environment to ensure enjoyment by all.

1. **Priority Initiatives:** The DTA will work to lead the development of a “brand” and coordination of appearance based capital improvements, streetscape, way finding signage, ease of pedestrian traffic, Accessibility For Ontario with Disabilities Act as well as enhancing mobility and connectivity.

Expected Outcome: Removal of barriers to implement to accessing downtown, increased transit connectivity to and within downtown, enhanced pedestrian linkages and improved pedestrian and cycling mobility.

2. **Priority Initiative:** Assist in the implementation of a ‘Downtown Trolley’ transporting passengers between the variety of tourism destination, community

gathering places, event locations and other anchor areas identified in the Community Investment Plan.

Expected Outcome: A connected downtown based on asset use, attraction and economic enabling activity.

3. **Priority Initiative:** Encourage use of all funding opportunities to that enhance the appearance of downtown

Expected Outcome: Visually a more attractive downtown.

4. **Priority Initiative:** Partner with DTA members to develop a market based approach to enhanced service levels, hours of operation, accessibility and tourism services.

Expected Outcome: Increased positive response from local consumers and tourists.

5. **Priority Initiative:** Partner with the City to resolve issues of parking, general maintenance, snow removal and snow removal efficiencies.

Expected Outcome: Increased positive experiences of local consumers, visitors and tourists resulting in enhanced use of downtown throughout all seasons.

Economic Opportunity

The DTA will through its advocacy, partnerships and actions bring customers to the DTA to ensure that all members benefit from the financial commitments they have made.

1. **Priority Initiative:** To develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Economic Development Corporation and the Sault Ste Marie Public Utilities Commission (P.U.C.)

Expected Outcome: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities to streamline and coordinate downtown events and initiatives such as streetscaping, parking and utilization of space in the most efficient means possible to the benefit of members and the general public

2. **Priority Initiative:** Provide means to all the membership to enhance their business skills and abilities, create a shop downtown campaign, build all members online presence, create sector specific campaigns and enhance overall customer service downtown.

Expected Outcome: Greater opportunity sales generation from outside the community, economic growth, building the capacity for e-shopping.

3. **Priority Initiative:** Provide opportunity for all members to take advantage of the activation and events held of downtown by creating unique marketing initiatives, group buying of advertising and service sector participation.

Expected Outcome: Increased economic success, reduced vacancy rates, and less business/tenant turnover.

Relevance

The DTA will deliver to the membership value through building its capacity to deliver on the strategic commitments, be the voice of Downtown and create a Downtown that Sault Ste. Marie can be proud of.

1. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA is the consolidated voice of all members providing solutions to all levels of Government that ensures the advancement of the Downtown Associations Strategic Plan, Mission and Vision.

Expected Outcome: Greater influence and impact into the decisions that affect Downtown.

2. **Priority Initiative:** Through collaboration bring prioritization to the issues that affect the wellbeing of the downtown and its community such as, graffiti, safety, beautification, socio-economic challenges and shared prosperity.

Expected Outcome: Downtown will be a place of community pride that is beautiful, safe, and vibrant. A true community that everyone is happy to be a part of.

3. **Priority Initiative:** To partner with our members to define and quantify value and return on investment.

Expected Outcome: A tool that measures outcomes and identifies opportunities for continuous improvement

4. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA Board will investigate opportunities to extending the DTA boundaries to ensure representation of all businesses and residents in the area defined by the City's Downtown Strategy.

Expected Outcome: Consideration by the membership of the results from the investigation

5. **Priority Initiative:** The DTA will engage the First Nations in the fulfillment of its Mission, Vision and Values to create a new memory for the peoples of Bawating.

Expected Outcome: The recognition of an inclusive downtown community that advances partnerships and shared prosperity.