



DOWNTOWN SQUAMISH

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

2021 - 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Prepared by The Downtown Squamish Business Improvement Association Board with assistance from PacificaBlue Consulting

Chet kw'enmantúmi (We are grateful) to the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) that we get to live, work and play on the unceded ancestral territory of the Squamish Nation.



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Introduction

The Downtown Squamish Business Improvement Association (DSBIA) Board undertook a strategy process in February to April 2021 to develop the Downtown Squamish Business Improvement Association Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026. The fundamental purpose of strategic planning is to align an organization's mission with its vision. Where a vision sets out the ultimate destination, the mission is the starting point for planning. This strategic plan is a road-map that will help the DSBIA navigate from its vision to its mission. As a road-map, this plan serves as a guide for directing the organization's broad priorities and specific actions given limited resources. Resources such as people, time, effort, materials and funds will be used towards the successful outcomes of the organization's commitments over the next five years.



What is in this Plan?

This plan sets out the DSBIA's vision, mission and program and operational directions. The Board identified its five-year priorities to ensure it will achieve its vision and deliver on its mission. The Board is both excited and proud to offer its members programs and services that will continue to build on members' financial successes, and positively influence the experiences and opportunities of the broader community and visitors to Downtown Squamish.

Relevant & Responsive

A strategic plan is not set in stone. In order to allow an organization to respond to its changing environment, the DSBIA will annually review progress towards strategic plan goals and objectives and make refinements as required.



Current Environment (SWOT)

Strengths

- Diverse Board with high levels of knowledge, experience and individual strengths.
- Flexible organization, proven through COVID. We can adapt quickly to change.
- Strong social media support is available and can be capitalized upon.
- Passionate businesses. We have maintained the small town - small business feel.

Internal Weaknesses

- Transportation planning integration with the District needs to improve.
- We have become a social media outlet and we are much more than that.
- We need to improve how we communicate internally to be more effective.
- We need to be a bigger voice at the business sustainability table. We should own the table.
- Unsure if the community or our membership knows who we really are and what we really do and what we can do for our members and the wider community impacts.
- We can increase outreach/knowledge/buy-in from businesses who know little about the BIA.
- Most work is done by our Executive Director without help from the Board.
- Board engagement can be enhanced to provide more direction on BIA priorities.



Opportunities

- Transportation planning offers opportunities to address the movement of people in and out of downtown Squamish during and post events.
- Grants exist for beautification that we can more greatly capitalize upon and share with our members.
- The DSBIA can increase its input/advocacy on zoning matters on behalf of its members.
- Want to build and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations with a similar mandate or jurisdiction.

Threats

- Not receiving District support or funding is a threat in the future.
- Busy schedules for our members and businesses can lead to an disengaged/ uninformed membership. We will find ways to interactively keep all key parties up to date and more deeply involved.
- Loss of employment space with the new zoning bylaw means we'll lose more professional space for new businesses and expanding stores.
- There is an increasing loss of the small business climate in the downtown core with all the new higher rise condos and residential buildings coming on line.
- The Oceanfront development is seemingly dictating transportation planning with a consequence being that our downtown core business interests may come second.
- Without a rail line, diesel trucks are going through town daily. Diesel is among the top worst environmental polluter. There seems to be no plans for a truck route where 7th Avenue is an approved connector in the Transportation Plan to move trucks safely and environmentally out of downtown.



VISION

Downtown Squamish is a thriving business district; culturally and economically vibrant, promoting an inclusive and diverse community that is welcoming to all.



MISSION

Our mission is to provide value to our members, to keep our downtown beautiful and to support our businesses in achieving economic success. We advocate on behalf of our businesses and collaborate with others to create a sustainable, equitable and culturally accessible Downtown Squamish.



About Our Mission

FINANCIAL SUCCESS

We promote our downtown businesses to achieve financial success.

- We promote the economic success of our downtown Squamish businesses.
- We create awareness for the downtown core, entice people to want to **eat, shop, stay and explore**.

SUPPORTIVE

We support and engage our business membership.

- We encourage and support community-based local economic development.
- We maintain and continuously engage with an enthusiastic, diverse membership that takes an active part in the programs, services and events that benefit them and all participants.
- We exist to provide support, tools, resources, and information in a collaborative and inclusive way for our members.

ENHANCING BEAUTIFICATION

We engage the community & enhance beautification of downtown.

- We support and continuously help to maintain our thriving downtown commercial businesses by offering and promoting exciting events and initiatives that connect people of all ages and cultures and keep patrons coming back to our downtown businesses for more.
- We improve the downtown core by beautifying, encouraging and promoting appropriate commercial development that includes local economic development in our catchment.

ADVOCATE

We advocate on behalf of our businesses

- We create and advocate for an equitable, sustainable, accessible, culturally and economically diverse climate for the businesses in our Downtown Squamish catchment area.
- We are the authority on all things happening in downtown Squamish. We are the go-to support network for local businesses.
- We maintain communications with the District of Squamish, the Chamber of Commerce and downtown Squamish businesses. We advocate on behalf of downtown businesses to Council on topics ranging from land use development, tax rates, public spaces, grant applications and events planning and implementation.



Program Goals

The DSBIA provides four key program and service areas to support its members:

- Promotional Campaigns and Events
- Street Enhancements
- Safety and Crime Prevention
- Advocacy and Member Relations

The following are the priority directions that will guide our efforts over the next five years. We have added the following timelines for starting and ending initiatives:

1-3 years = Short Term

2-4 years = Medium Term

3-5 years = Long Term

Promotional Campaigns & Events

The DSBIA provides and promotes campaigns and events that are marketed and become known throughout the community to ensure the local community and visiting public will be aware of, and come out to support, the services and retail in the downtown core.

5 YEAR GOAL

Vibrant, inclusive and accessible campaigns and events supporting local economic development where downtown businesses thrive and engage with the community.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Leading and Supporting Campaigns and Events	
<p>1.1. Develop Downtown Squamish as a major destination, hosting campaigns and events to promote local economic development.</p> <p><i>(3-5 years - Long Term)</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 Assess the feasibility in collaboration with the District of Squamish to develop an arts facility that can host live music and large public gathering events.</p> <p>1.1.2 Create and/or support local communities to develop, plan for and hold social, historic, arts and culture events in the downtown core. Examples of events include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live music and local food events.• Events specific for families and children.• Squamish Downtown Mural Walk <p>1.1.3 Increase support for more public art by providing grants and seeking private sponsorship to support local artists.</p>

1.2. With increasing parking challenges, improve accessibility to downtown services, events and campaigns through increased transit opportunities in and out of downtown Squamish.

(3-5 years - Long Term)

1.2.2 Collaborate with the District to develop a transportation strategy that enables public transportation to be available in and out of downtown during the late night hours and at key periods around events.

1.2.2 Collaborate with the District to plan and develop a suitable, centralized parking area permanently and temporarily to support events.

1.2.3 Collaborate with others to develop a subsidized shuttle bus service from other neighbourhoods to downtown, particularly to support downtown events.

1.3. Maintain cleanliness of downtown squamish by developing and implementing a zero - waste management policy.

(3-5 years - Long Term)

1.3.1 Advocate for and collaborate with the District to create a zero-waste policy that can be used generally to guide all downtown events and campaigns.

Marketing

1.4. Develop and implement innovative marketing and social media strategies for key initiatives that will support our members.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.4.1 Collaborate with our members to develop and implement marketing and social media plans for all campaigns and events. Consider sector specific campaigns relating to retail, food and beverage, tourism, and professional services.

Target: Create 2-3 marketing campaigns per year that will promote our downtown businesses.

1.4.2 Collaborate with our members to develop promotional videos to celebrate what our downtown businesses have to offer throughout the year.

1.4.3 Assess and prioritize marketing support needs with board support.

1.4.4 Plan ahead based on resources available to implement priority needs assessment

Collaboration and Partnerships

1.5. Increase collaborations with other organizations that have a similar business mandate in the downtown core by continuing to develop innovative campaigns, share resources and opportunities.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.5.1 Collaborate with Tourism Squamish & The Chamber of Commerce to develop a tourism destination plan focusing on BC Buy Local and attracting people to the downtown core.

1.5.2 Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to offer training in equity and inclusion for all members.

1.5.3 Cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with other Squamish organizations, such as Squamish Farmers Market Association and The Rotary Club to collaborate on campaigns and events.

1.5.4 Collaborate with Quest University to develop a campaign for students to visit downtown on certain days/nights of the week to the downtown hub.

- Collaborate with our members to support this strategy and to consider providing a special youth discount card.
- Collaborate with DOS to provide transit incentives to support students.

1.5.5 Collaborate with our members to assess the feasibility of creating a seniors discounts card for shopping downtown.

1.6. Learn to work and build relations with local Indigenous communities, LGBTQ2S+, and other underrepresented Squamish communities through events, programming, staff, and board.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.6.1 Nurture our relations with local indigenous leaders.

1.6.2 Invite Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) participation in our events and programming.

1.6.3 Encourage Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), BIPOC, and LGBTQ2S+ representation in the organizational structure of the BIA.

1.7. Incorporate corporate sponsorships to support our events, campaigns and our members' businesses.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.7.1 Develop tiered corporate sponsors for each campaign and event the DSBIA provides in the downtown core to help support the initiative through the provision of resources including human resources, materials and finances.

1.7.2 Collaborate with developers to support downtown events, arts and culture, and beautification projects.

Street Enhancements

We lead and support street enhancement projects with our members to maintain a welcoming downtown core and to bring more awareness and more foot traffic into our downtown businesses.

5 YEAR GOAL
Sustainable and innovative street enhancements engage the community and visitors, celebrating the downtown core as a vibrant and thriving destination.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Public Amenities and Community Spaces	
<p>2.1 Increase public amenities for resting, leisure and enjoyment.</p> <p><i>(2-4 years - Medium Term)</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 Support the development of public washrooms in the northern part of downtown, close to senior housing.</p> <p>2.1.2 Support the development of public benches, parklets and gathering areas (e.g., Our Squamish proposed parklet on Winnipeg and Cleveland Avenue).</p> <p>2.1.3 Collaborate with the District to adjust the patio project to a Spring to Fall initiative. Consider removing the patios during core winter months to enable more walking space and parking area, or consider working with the businesses and district to winter-proof and create converted, heated spaces.</p>



Public Art, Performances, and Music

2.2 Increase public art, performances and music as a way to beautify the downtown core, create a welcoming environment and attract more patrons to shop downtown.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.2.1 In conjunction with the Downtown Squamish Mural Walk, create 3-5 permanent murals and 4-5 temporary murals.

2.2.2 Support the development of more useful art spaces for artwork, performances and music.

2.2.3 Create a youth led mural art competition where the successful applicant wins the opportunity to paint their mural on a wall chosen by a BIA member and approved by a special committee.

Beautification

2.3 Develop a new street display beautification initiative along the entrance to Downtown Squamish.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.3.1 Collaborate with the District of Squamish and Squamish Arts Council on a street display beautification initiative along the downtown entrance.

2.4 Promote and support beautification grants to financially help businesses with exterior building and utility infrastructure updates.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.4.1 Seek grant support from the Province for our members interested in updating building facades, building exterior and signage.

2.4.2 Support utility box & waste/recycling receptacle wrapping applications with grants available through BC Hydro and/or other agencies.

Lighting

2.5 Develop an enhanced lighting initiative on 2nd Avenue.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.5.1 Partner with members and the District on winter lighting placement that will enhance 2nd Avenue during winter months.

2.6 Maintain Cleveland Avenue lighting full time throughout the year and expand the lighting initiative further along the road.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.6.1 Consider adding more lighting along Cleveland Avenue that extends to Vancouver Street.

2.6.2 Assess the feasibility of expanding winter tree lighting on trees throughout our catchment area.

2.6.3 Assess the feasibility of a laser light beam show from a key area downtown that can be developed in conjunction with winter events.

Safety and Crime Prevention

The DSBIA supports and promotes a safe and crime-free downtown. We provide the resources needed to keep our members and merchants informed about important matters relating to safety and what is going on in the downtown area in relation to crime.

5 YEAR GOAL

Our members and their customers are safe and informed, offering goods and services in a crime free environment.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Safety	
<p>3.1 Increase BIA presence downtown to provide our members with greater support.</p> <p><i>(1-3 years - Short Term)</i></p>	<p>3.1.1 Collaborate with the District and our members to support safe places in our catchment area for the public to access, including transportation, breastfeeding, safety and healthcare venues, washrooms, and access to a phone.</p> <p>3.1.2 Support the RCMP with their SAFE SPACE Program by recruiting businesses that agree to ensure their business is a safe, inclusive and accessible place for anyone in need.</p> <p>3.1.3 Collaborate with our members and other entities to assess the feasibility of creating elder and Indigenous safe gathering spaces.</p>



Accessibility

3.2 Promote and support safe walkability and accessibility by all ages and abilities throughout our catchment area.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

3.2.1 Support the District in its continued commitment to develop curb letdowns and accessible parking for all ages and abilities to safely enjoy our downtown area.

3.2.2 Collaborate with our members to assess the feasibility of supporting opportunities for shopping and food collection for the more vulnerable in our community.

Alternative Transportation Support

3.3 Promote and support safe transportation modalities throughout downtown.

(2-4 years - Medium Term)

3.3.1 Promote and support bike lane development throughout downtown for safe cycling transportation.

3.3.2 Promote and support greater security for bikes through sheltered bike parking at key locations.

3.3.3 Place bike racks at key areas in downtown, including at all parks and parklets, to create safe places for riders to park their bike while they visit/use downtown services. Appropriate bike parking also creates safety for non bikers.

3.3.4 Collaborate with the District to provide suitable, wider sidewalk space throughout downtown in support of parents safely walking with their kids or pushing strollers in town and generally allowing for more people to walk safely past each other.

Crime Prevention & Resources

3.4 Work with the authorities to maintain a crime free downtown core by sharing appropriate information and resources on safety and crime-related matters to keep members connected and updated.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

3.4.1 Support the equitable and inclusive SAFE SPACE program as noted in section 3.1.2 through promoting visible markings for visitors or locals and conduct awareness around this program.

3.4.2 Lead the development of a QR codes initiative where the public can be directed to the DSBIA website to find where safe public places and resources are available such as the local police, women's centre, and safe injection sites.

3.4.3 Consider the feasibility of a BIA downtown office space that can assist with showing our presence and at the same time being the eyes on the street.

3.4.4 Create a BIA members only facebook group and members only website to provide news, data, reports, safe spaces, accessible transportation, information and updates on crime events, COVID resources and safety protocols.

3.4.5 Facilitate first aid training and assist with identifying resources needed via our website (e.g., where to purchase AEDs, which businesses have AEDs, related first aid information).

Advocacy and Member Relations

We are advocates for our business members on land use planning, developments and related business issues in the downtown core. We work closely with the District of Squamish and other organizations and our members to identify the issues and find solutions together.

5 YEAR GOAL

Promote and support a highly engaged and collaborative membership and successfully advocate for their interests.

OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Member Engagement and Advocacy

4.1 Increase our collaboration with our members to determine how we can best support and serve their business advocacy interests.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

4.1.1 Hold periodic focus sessions with members to determine what their business advocacy needs are and how the BIA can help advocate for them.

4.1.2 Share relevant advocacy resources with members and provide updates to keep members informed.

4.1.3 Create and disseminate an annual BIA Member survey to gain insight into members' wants, needs, and overall interests that can inform DSBIA strategic directions and specific actions.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

4.2 Support and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in all our programs, services, within our organization and membership.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

4.2.1 Promote a transition towards, and increase awareness about, a more inclusive, equitable and diverse employment landscape within our downtown businesses. The DSBIA will share information and related resources related to inclusion and diversity with employment opportunities and access to hiring funding resources on a public facing section of the BIA website.

4.2.2 Increase and support under-represented members through inclusive event representation and culturally diverse programming.

4.2.3 Develop and promote a DSBIA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

Engaged and Collaborative Membership

4.3 Increase member engagement in the BIA's efforts, programs and services.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

4.3.1 Schedule periodic "get-togethers" for members with relevant topics for discussion. Determine together the important issues to work on and how best to resolve them; and what resources are needed to share information and engage in programs and events. Hold BIA virtual Happy Hours featuring certain businesses each time so that members can learn more about each other.

4.3.2 Expand the information available on the DSBIA website for our members to include matters such as COVID-19 support resources; government grants; starting a small business; what businesses are available downtown and their locations.

4.3.3 Expand the information available on the DSBIA public facing website relating to safe and accessible transportation in and out of downtown; our policies on such issues as equity and inclusion; and information on where to access healthcare, safe injection sites, and the food bank. Learn from our members what other information can be included.

Board Governance

Board governance focuses on matters related to the Chair of the Board and Board of Director responsibilities, membership, engagement and succession.

GOAL
A diverse and inclusive Board that is excited and engaged, with innovative, forward thinking perspectives and committed to its role and responsibilities in the DSBIA.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
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Board Responsibility

1.1 The board is knowledgeable of and is committed to its roles and responsibilities in the DSBIA. <i>(1-3 years - Short Term)</i>	1.1.1 Annual chair and board performance review of roles/responsibilities and goals, with discussion on performance, progress and any needed refinements or adjustments to meet goals.
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Board Membership

1.2 Board membership is inclusive of all interests and diversely composed. <i>(1-3 years - Short Term)</i>	1.2.1 The board will structure itself to be inclusive and actively composed of a diversity of members representing the downtown business community.
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Chair and Board Engagement

1.3 The Chair and board maintain a fresh outlook, enthusiasm and positive energy.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.3.1 The chair will hold periodic strategy sessions with the board to identify approaches to continuously improve and refine board engagement in the BIA, in BIA meetings and internal communications.

1.3.2 The board will undertake an annual chair review to assess progress with role and responsibilities and any needed adjustments to achieve satisfaction and positive feedback.

Board and Chair Succession Planning

1.4 Continue to structure Chair and board member service lengths that enable rotations allowing new applicants to join in leadership roles and bring in fresh insights and energy.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

1.4.1 Prior to vacating their director positions, the Chair and the board will undertake a director succession evaluation process to help inform board governance improvements.

Staffing

The BIA is managed and operated by the Executive Director. The role of the ED is to ensure the successful delivery of BIA programs services for its members and the wider community. Key staff for an organization who maintain interest and satisfaction and who are appropriately challenged will be more productive, more engaged and more likely to stay on, reducing turnover. Above all, the right staff streamlines the business of the organization and improves the experience for members, the Board and all who interact with staff.

GOAL
Retain the continual interest, passion and satisfaction of our staff who delivers successfully on the DSBIA mission, program goals and objectives in a quest to achieve the organization’s vision.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Recruitment	

2.1 Develop and utilize a recruitment plan to attract the right personnel who will fit the needs of the DSBIA and its membership, now and into the future, taking into consideration leadership qualities, skills and experience.

(2-4 years - Medium Term)

2.1.1 Develop and continuously review and update the leadership and technical skills and qualities that help the staffing position thrive and succeed in the organization.

Retention

2.2 Develop a retention plan to maintain the interest, satisfaction and continued excitement of that special staff we've worked so hard to find.

(2-4 years - Medium Term)

2.2.1 Board Chair to determine staff training needs and schedule accordingly to determine which needs require access to training programs.

2.2.2 Board Chair to schedule periodic review sessions to discuss satisfaction with the job/position and review progress, success and key challenges with aspects such as staff role, responsibilities and delivery of program action plans, support, and related tasks.

2.2.3 Develop, maintain and periodically review a staffing plan which outlines recruitment and retention; budget; goals. Review with staff to ensure the position can a) continue to keep staff motivated and b) continue to meet and exceed expectations by the Board, members and all who interact with the staff.

ED Support

2.3 As work builds and funding permits, consider hiring contract staff to support the ED in planning and executing program goals and objectives.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

2.3.1 Plan ahead by annually reviewing ED support needs that can be met by hiring contractors.

Volunteering

Volunteers assist with planning for and executing BIA events and initiatives. Volunteers can be called upon as and when needed and will be celebrated and thanked for their dedication and service to the community.

GOAL
A complete, organized database of volunteers that the DSBIA can reach out to for events and initiatives.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Recruitment	
3.1 Recruit volunteers to help promote the BIA, its mission and objectives. <i>(1-3 years - Short Term; based on events)</i>	3.1.1 Reach out to ask for support from members at large such as through a town hall meeting. 3.1.2 Create an online volunteer application form to obtain the help of volunteers in the planning for and executing events. 3.1.3 Reach out to local safety groups such as Search and Rescue to help the BIA with traffic and crowd management at events.

Maintenance and Acknowledgment

3.2 Maintain the interest of volunteers through communications and celebration and acknowledgment for providing their time to BIA events and initiatives.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

3.2.1 Periodically update volunteers with DSBIA volunteer news communications via email or social media.

3.2.2 Thank all volunteers for providing their time and help following event participation through a process of celebration, appreciation, and acknowledgment.

DSBIA Marketing

Marketing includes paid social media advertising, digital marketing, website upkeep, development of new content, marketing campaigns, event marketing and BIA specific marketing.

GOAL
There is greater awareness and understanding of the downtown squamish BIA including its services, resources and support that can be provided from the DSBIA.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Marketing Proposal	

4.1 Create and implement a Marketing Proposal addressing the key marketing needs of the organization.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

- 4.1.1** Undertake a needs assessment for the organization to inform the proposal.
- 4.1.2** Prioritize the needs and implement them based on criteria such as impact, capacity and resources available.



Website Updating

4.3 Maintain the DSBIA public facing and members only website for relevant and important information.

(1-3 years - Short Term)

4.3.1 Undertake bi-annual website review to check content, visibility and reach.

4.3.2 Update website information based on review process priority outcomes.

Building Awareness

4.4 Create a public awareness of the Downtown Squamish BIA locally, provincially and nationally.

(2-4 years - Medium Term)

4.5.1 Identify ways to build greater awareness of downtown squamish BIA during its campaigns and events to capitalize on programming initiatives. Activate social media marketing through DSBIA channels and the sharing of key content through public and member only interfaces.

DOWNTOWN SQUAMISH

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Contact Information

The plan was prepared by Sandra Bicego, PacificaBlue Consulting in collaboration with the Executive Director and the DSBIA Board.

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