



City of Gainesville Agenda Report

File #: 2022-752

Agenda Date: December 1, 2022

Department: Sustainable Development

Title: 2022-752 Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan – Downtown Management Organization (B)

Description: The adopted Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan indicated an immediate implementation priority being formation of place management organization. Staff has conducted a review of potential options for a Downtown Management Organization (DMO) and is bringing forward recommendations for Commission consideration and direction.

Explanation:

On October 20, 2022, the City Commission adopted the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan. The Plan incorporates an Implementation Matrix designating time horizons and details associated with each of the Plan's sixteen (16) Big Ideas.

Of immediate concern is formation of a place management organization designed to represent the interests of downtown stakeholders (property owners, business owners, neighbors) and to serve as the primary organization for activities and investments associated with various projects and initiatives.

Recently, City staff held a two and half (2 ½) day retreat focused on various pending items regarding the Downtown. Internal staff reviewed status and then received input from various downtown stakeholders invited to participate in the proceedings.

With respect to the Downtown Management Organization, staff conducted interviews with the four (4) Downtown Management Organizations (Jacksonville, Miami, Columbus and Louisville) identified in the Plan in order to learn about their structure, activities and best practices.

Some of the identified commonalities are:

- Each has a governance structure that is independent of routine City operations and control

- A funding mechanism that is distinct and supplemental to City financial contributions
- A vibrant Ambassador program designed to promote outreach to downtown stakeholders and creation of a welcoming Downtown environment
- A vital marketing/communications presence that advocates on behalf of the downtown and reiterates the downtown brand
- Provisions of enhanced services inclusive of clean/safe; business development; real estate curating, events/programming and place making

Out of the four Downtown Management Organizations interviewed, the structure and organization of the Jacksonville Downtown Vision organization was identified as the strongest potential fit for establishing a similar management organization for Downtown Gainesville. The not-for-profit organization is a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Jacksonville and is funded mainly by Downtown's commercial property owners through a self-assessment. The organization is independently governed by a large board of directors representing diverse Downtown stakeholders.

In order to move forward, additional time is needed to review the potential DMO legal structure and enhanced services, as well as identifying a sustainable funding source. Staff estimates these next steps to cost approximately \$70,000, \$20,000 for additional review of recommendations and setting aside \$50,000 in seed money to support initial development and implementation of the DMO.

Strategic Connection:

Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience

Fiscal Note:

It is currently estimated that next steps to implement the DMO would cost \$70,000 with funding yet to be identified.

Recommendation:

The City Commission: The City Commission: 1) hear a presentation; 2) direct staff to identify \$20,000 of funding for further development of recommendations concerning the Downtown Management Organization legal and funding structure and a suite of enhanced services; 3) direct staff to identify initial seed funding for a future Downtown Management Organization in the amount of \$50,000 for initial implementation costs; and: 4) direct staff to present the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan and Downtown Management Organization implementation concept emphasizing "clean and safe" as the first organization priority to partners for equal levels of seed funding.