



Agenda
City of Clarkesville
Regular Meeting
4:30 PM August 20, 2026

1. *Call to Order*
2. *Approval of the Agenda*
3. *Approve Prior Meeting Minutes*
4. *Review of Meeting Dates*
5. *Discuss DDA and MainStreet Board Strategic Alignment*
 - 5a. *Yvonne Marinelli will Discuss the Strategic Alignment Plan*
6. *Discuss Site Visits*
7. *Sharing from the City of Latest Update on 555 Monroe Street Property*
8. *Open Discussion*
9. *Public Comment*
10. *Consider Going Into Executive Session*
11. *Adjournment*



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY & MAIN STREET BOARD

Defining Roles, Responsibilities & Strategic Alignment

PURPOSE



Why Are We Here?

To clearly define the roles of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Main Street Board so that:

- Resources are used efficiently
- Responsibilities do not overlap
- Both organizations contribute to downtown & city-wide success
- Economic development efforts are coordinated

Create clear roles that maximize effectiveness while supporting a shared downtown vision.

THE CHALLENGE



Common Issues in Small Communities

When responsibilities are not clearly defined:

- Duplication of efforts occurs
- Volunteer fatigue increases
- Board members become frustrated
- Funding opportunities are missed
- Strategic goals become unclear

The goal is not competition - it is collaboration.

A SIMPLE DISTINCTION: MAIN STREET CREATES ACTIVITY DDA CRATES CAPACITY

Main Street

- Activates Downtown
- Builds Community Engagement
- Organizes Events
- Markets Downtown
- Creates Vibrancy

DDA

- Invests City-Wide
- Builds Economic Opportunity
- Funds Improvements
- Develops Downtown & Greater City Limits
- Creates Investment Readiness

MAIN STREET BOARD MISSION



People, Place & Promotion

The Main Street Board focuses on:

Community Engagement

- Volunteer recruitment
- Community involvement

Events & Activities

- Festivals
- Concerts
- Markets
- Seasonal Celebrations

Promotion & Marketing

- Social Media
- Advertising
- Business Promotions

Beautification

- Decorations
- Public Spaces
- Streetscape Enhancements

MAIN STREET RESPONSIBILITIES



What Main Street Leads

- Downtown Events
- Promotions & Marketing
- Volunteer Programs/Recruitment
- Beautification Projects
- Tourism Promotion/Experiences
- Historic Preservation Advocacy
- Community Engagement

Success Measures

- Event Attendance
- Volunteer Participation
- Social Media Engagement
- Visitor Activity
- Foot Traffic

DDA RESPONSIBILITIES



What the DDA Leads

- Business Retention Visits
- Business Recruitment
- Property Development Planning
- Infrastructure Priorities
- Investment Attraction
- Economic Development Planning

Success Measures

- New Businesses
- Private Investment
- Vacancy Reduction
- Grant Dollars Secured

The DDA has power to hold property, offer financing, incentives, and redevelopment tools.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION



A Key DDA Responsibility

The DDA should regularly meet with city-wide businesses to:

- Identify challenges
- Support growth opportunities
- Track economic trends
- Prevent business closures
- Build relationships

Goal

Be proactive instead of reactive.
Prevent closures before they happen.

REDEVELOPMENT READINESS



Preparing for Future Investment

The DDA should maintain:

- Property Inventory
- Vacancy Inventory
- Available Business Spaces
- Development Opportunities
- Property Owner Contacts

Outcome

When an investor calls, the community is ready.

GRANT IDENTIFICATION



Funding for City-Wide Improvements

Potential Funding Sources:

- State Downtown Development Grants
- Rural Development Grants
- Transportation Grants
- Infrastructure Grants
- Historic Building Rehabilitation Grants
- Georgia DCA

DDA Role

Identify, pursue via Grants Manager, and administer funding opportunities.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS



Encouraging Private Investment

Examples:

Facade Grants

Improve building appearance.

Signage Grants

Support business visibility.

Small Business Assistance

Encourage entrepreneurship and connect businesses with local resources.

Revolving Loan Funds

Support redevelopment projects.

INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



Long-Term City-Wide Investment

Potential Projects:

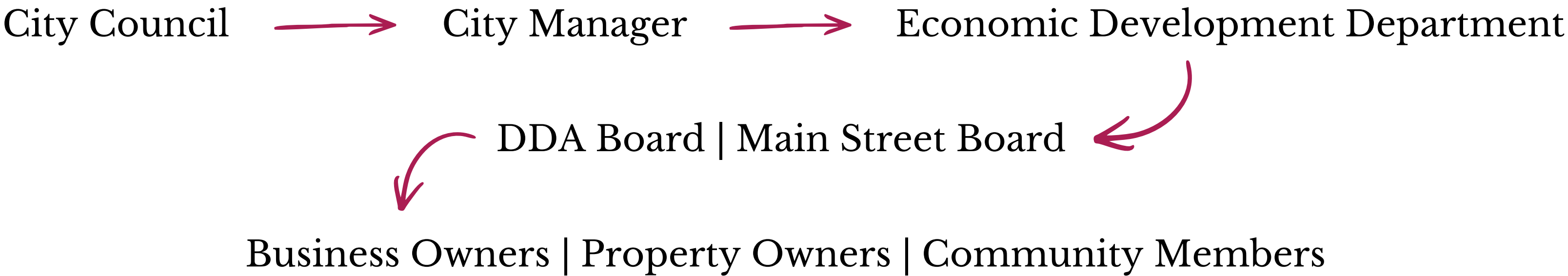
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Streetscape Enhancements
- Decorative Lighting
- Public Parking Improvements
- High-Speed Fiber Internet Expansion
- Accessibility Improvements
- Wayfinding Signage
- Cohesive City-Branded Signage

**These projects strengthen downtown's economic competitiveness.
Investment follows infrastructure!**

RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Lead, Support, & Shared Responsibilities



Key Principle: Separate missions. Shared vision.

DATA & PERFORMANCE TRACKING



The DDA as the Keeper of City-Wide Metrics

Track:

- Business Openings
- Business Closures
- Vacancy Rates
- Property Improvements
- Grant Dollars Secured
- Private Investment Generated

Why?

Good data supports good decisions.

WORKING TOGETHER



Collaboration Without Overlap

Main Street Board

Focuses on:

- People
- Promotion
- Events
- Beautification

DDA

Focuses on:

- Investment
- Infrastructure
- Redevelopment
- Economic Growth

Both groups support the same vision through different roles.

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE



Main Street = Activation

Creates energy and activity downtown.

Focus Areas

- Events
- Promotions
- Beautification
- Tourism

DDA = Investment

Creates conditions for economic growth.

Focus Areas

- Funding
- Infrastructure
- Business Development
- Redevelopment

ANNUAL GOALS



Main Street

- Host Downtown Events
- Increase Volunteer Participation
- Improve Downtown Promotion
- Enhance Beautification Efforts

DDA

- Conduct Twenty Business Visits
- Conduct 10 Region-Wide Site Visits
- Secure Funding
- Reduce City-Wide Vacancies
- Launch Investment Incentive Programs

CITY-WIDE KPI DASHBOARD

Measuring City-Wide Success

Purpose: Demonstrate that the DDA measures economic outcomes while Main Street measures community engagement. Together, these metrics provide a comprehensive picture of city-wide performance.



CITY-WIDE KPI DASHBOARD



DDA Performance Indicators

Goal	KPI	Target
Support Existing Businesses	Annual Business Retention Visits	100% of downtown businesses
Reduce Vacancies	Downtown Commercial Vacancy Rate	Below 10%
Encourage Investment	Private Investment Leveraged	Annual increase
Redevelopment	Building Improvement Projects	2–5 annually
Secure Funding	Grant Dollars Awarded	Annual increase
Business Growth	New Business Openings	2–4 annually
Property Utilization	Occupied Storefronts	95% occupancy
Partnerships	Meetings with Property Owners	Quarterly

Main Street Performance Indicators

Goal	KPI	Target
Downtown Activity	Community Events Hosted	6–10 annually
Community Engagement	Volunteer Hours	Annual increase
Marketing	Social Media Reach	Annual increase
Tourism	Visitor Attendance	Annual increase
Merchant Participation	Business Participation Rate	75%+

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP



Building a Stronger Downtown Governance Model

Phase 1 - Foundation (0-3 Months)

- Adopt mission statements for both boards.
- Approved the Responsibility Matrix.
- Define committee structures.
- Conduct orientation for all board members.
- Establish quarterly joint meetings.

Outcome: Clear governance and accountability.

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP



Building a Stronger Downtown Governance Model

Phase 2 - Alignment (3-12 Months)

- Main Street:
 - Develop annual calender.
 - Expand volunteer recruitment.
 - Increase merchant engagement.
 - Enhance downtown marketing.
- DDA:
 - Complete business retention visits.
 - Develop city-wide commercial property inventory.
 - Identify redevelopment opportunities.
 - Pursue grant funding & private funding.

Outcome: Coordinated work without duplication.

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP



Building a Stronger Downtown Governance Model

Phase 3 - Growth (Year 2)

- Launch Facade/Sign improvement program.
- Secure external funding.
- Recruit targeted businesses.
- Implement priority infrastructure projects.
- Build partnerships with property owners.

Outcome: Visible economic investment.

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP



Building a Stronger Downtown Governance Model

Phase 4 - Long-Term Success (Years 3-5)

- Increase city-wide occupancy.
- Expand private investment.
- Complete redevelopment projects.
- Enhance public spaces.
- Position Clarkesville as a premier mountain town destination.

Outcome: Sustainable economic vitality.

SUCCESS INDICATORS



By the end of the implementation period, Clarkesville should expect to see:

- Higher commercial occupancy
- Increased private investment
- More business recruitment opportunities
- Stronger collaboration between boards
- Improved downtown experience for residents and visitors
- Greater return on public investment
- Increased tax base to ease the burden on our tax paying citizens

The City Council and Mayor establish policy.

The City Manager oversees implementation.

The Economic Development Department coordinates strategy.

The Downtown Development Authority builds economic opportunity.

The Main Street Board activates downtown.

Together, these partners create a community that is economically resilient, historically authentic, and welcoming to residents, businesses, and visitors alike.