



DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE

# DTLB *Vision* 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





**DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE**

## **Downtown Long Beach Alliance: From Placemaking to Changemaking**

There's only one Downtown – and it serves as the civic, economic and cultural pulse of Long Beach with a vibrant mix of businesses, people and ideas. This infectious combination is driving a full-fledged embrace of urbanism that's resulted in new commercial and residential development, distinctive special events and a reimagining of the public realm focused on the pedestrian.

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) has undergone its own rebranding over the last year, including a name change (from Associates) that reflects our role as a community-driven organization committed to leading, creating, cultivating and connecting with our many partners. In addition, we added fresh imagery with a new logo, a reimagined website and creative messaging.

More importantly, we updated our mission, driving principles and core values that serve as the foundation for a revised set of DLBA's strategic goals and actions. In doing so, we've set a clear path for ourselves that not only reinforces our role as a clearinghouse of information, but inspires us to evolve as placemakers to changemakers in our Downtown.

DTLB: Vision 2020 is the culmination of several months of analysis and strategic planning with stakeholders, elected officials, DLBA committee members and our Board of Directors. For the next three to five years, Vision 2020 will serve as a result-driven organizational blueprint that lays the foundation for leadership to develop measurable indicators and evaluates DLBA's performance. The Strategic Plan Executive Summary is a jumping off point for those who wish to learn more about DLBA, its purpose and vision for reaching a healthy, safe and prosperous Downtown.

To that end, we appreciate your interest in Downtown Long Beach and look forward to serving as your partner and celebrating in our collective success.

Sincerely,



Kraig Kojian  
President & CEO



Toliver Morris  
Board Chair, 2016-17

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# DTLB *Vision* 2020

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# INTRODUCTION

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*DTLB: Vision 2020* provides a clear path forward for Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA). The organization's leaders and stakeholders have identified a bold vision for Downtown Long Beach as a regional economic powerhouse with a strong local character. To work towards that future, DLBA created this innovative, strategic and tactical plan, *DTLB: Vision 2020*.

*DTLB: Vision 2020* provides an assessment of current assets, needs and opportunities in Downtown Long Beach and establishes a strategic framework to guide actions for DLBA over the next four to five years. It articulates the organization's mission and core values, and presents a series of goals and strategies for accomplishing those goals. *DTLB: Vision 2020* builds on the past strategic planning efforts of the DLBA – including the successful 2007, 2010 and 2013 plans – as well as extensive leadership input, community input and market research.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

TO CULTIVATE, PRESERVE AND PROMOTE A HEALTHY,  
SAFE AND PROSPEROUS DOWNTOWN.

## DTLB: VISION 2020 OBJECTIVES

The three primary goals of *DTLB: Vision 2020* are:

1. Update the goals and actions identified in the 2013 DLBA Strategic Plan Update
2. Leverage DLBA resources to achieve the greatest impact possible
3. Align DLBA's leadership and governance structure to ensure efficient implementation of the plan



# PLANNING CONTEXT

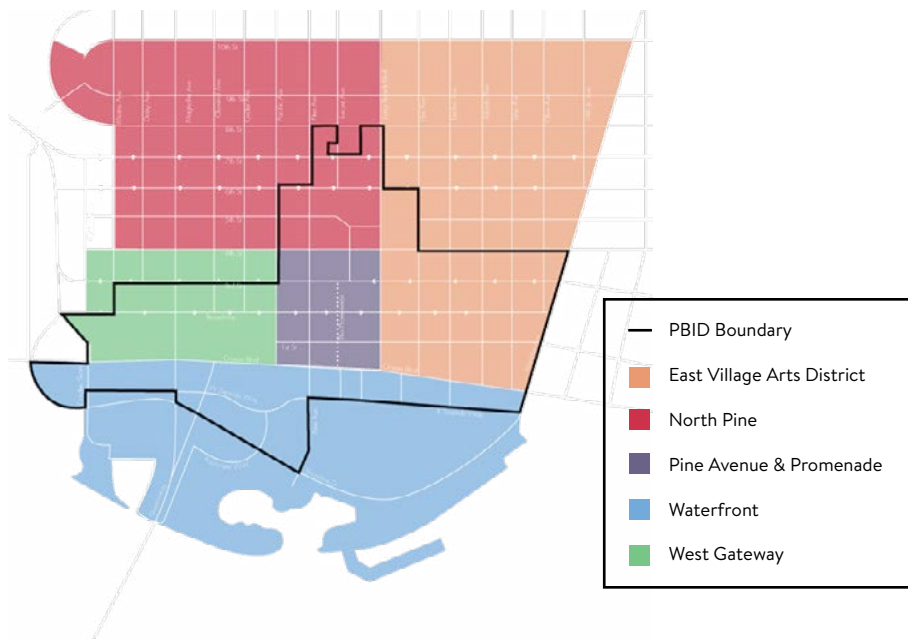
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## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

DLBA is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that operates on behalf of tenants and commercial and residential property owners in Long Beach's Downtown. DLBA has been serving the Long Beach community since 1937 and is dedicated to the management, marketing, security, maintenance, advocacy, economic and community development of its two assessment districts in cooperation with the City of Long Beach and the private sector. The Downtown Parking Improvement Area (DPIA) is a self-assessment on Downtown business owners, while the Property Based Improvement District (PBID) is a self-assessment on property owners and incorporates areas surrounding the Downtown core. DLBA is governed by its Board of Directors, a 32-member body represented by a cross section of Downtown stakeholders.

DLBA provides the following services:

- **PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**
  - Capital Improvements
  - Placemaking Grants
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **CLEAN AND SAFE**
  - Clean Team
  - Downtown Safety Ambassadors
  - Homeless Outreach
- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**
- **MARKETING**
- **SPECIAL EVENTS**
- **COMMUNICATIONS**
- **ADVOCACY**



## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In early 2016, DLBA began the process of updating its strategic plan. DLBA retained MIG, a Berkeley-based firm with extensive experience in strategic planning and with the Long Beach community, to facilitate the planning process. The process included engagement of DLBA leaders, key stakeholders, and community members, who provided insights into DLBA's needs, strengths and direction. This input informed the direction and details of the plan, which will guide DLBA and Downtown Long Beach through the next few years and beyond. The plan was completed in December 2016.



## SNAPSHOT OF DOWNTOWN

This section summarizes key assets, challenges and opportunities in Downtown Long Beach. This summary provides a snapshot of the environment that DLBA is working in and forms the foundation of the plan. The plan is designed to optimize Downtown's assets, address challenges, and capitalize on opportunities.

### ASSETS:

- Investments in the urban landscape such as new bike lanes, the Loop, murals and parklets bring vitality, texture and uniqueness to Downtown.
- New residential, municipal and commercial developments across Downtown are bringing new energy to the city core.
- Long Beach has begun to establish a name for itself for outstanding cuisines, high quality entertainment and exciting small businesses that give it a feeling of distinctiveness and authenticity.
- Long Beach community members are proud and highly invested in their city's success.
- Long Beach has a central location in the heart of the region with strong freeway and transit access, positioning Downtown Long Beach to play a prominent role in the local and regional economy.
- DLBA events are well attended and its social media presence is well followed.
- The existing urban fabric is walkable and bikable, with a successful local bike share program and many active residential and business uses.
- Drivers have easy access to and within Downtown.
- Visitors, residents and employees can travel aboard the free LB Transit Passport bus.
- Many destinations and events draw visitors and employees Downtown, including the Waterfront, Port of Long Beach, Convention Center, Queen Mary, Aquarium, museums, performing arts venues, and major employers like Molina Health Care.
- The Downtown Plan, adopted in 2012, is a master zoning and development document that established a vision of a sustainable Downtown with increased density, historic preservation, and a strong local economy. The Downtown Plan also streamlines the development process for new projects with a comprehensive program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the area.
- DLBA has an excellent working partnership with the City of Long Beach.

## CHALLENGES:

- The local and regional perception for high levels of crime and a lack of safety in the area continue to be problematic.
- Crime rates remain high, and aggressive panhandling and street behavior are ongoing issues despite 60% reductions from 1990.
- A lack of regional media coverage and support has made it difficult for potential visitors to learn more about the positive events and trends Downtown.
- Parking challenges and confusion about location are seen as a disincentive for some drivers who might visit Downtown.
- The poor quality of the physical environment in some areas is unappealing to pedestrians.
- Ocean Boulevard forms a functional division between Downtown, the Convention Center and the Waterfront. This division keeps visitors from enjoying and patronizing Downtown businesses, and keeps people working and living Downtown from easy enjoyment of the Waterfront.
- There is a concentration of social services in the city core due to a “put it Downtown” mentality and resulting policy direction.
- Some residents and businesses are getting priced out as Long Beach develops and becomes more expensive.
- Downtown lacks a full range of resident amenities such as higher-end grocery stores, resident-serving retail shops, and family-friendly parks and play areas.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Continue to work with the City to streamline the permitting process, bolster the Police Department, and improve the public realm.
- Create a district-wide parking and wayfinding system to address real and perceived parking issues.
- Increase coordination with social service agencies to monitor changes to social service provisions and develop new programs to address the current and anticipated needs of homeless residents across the city.
- Build strong, appealing pedestrian and bike connections between Downtown, the Convention Center and the Waterfront.
- Establish a sense of place and uniqueness in the area between Downtown and the Waterfront to create a mutually-beneficial relationship between the two.
- Create additional programs and events aimed at drawing residents outside of their apartment buildings to bring vitality to Downtown and strengthen the residential community.
- Develop a targeted marketing strategy aimed at increasing regional coverage of Long Beach’s progress and events in mainstream and online news outlets to enhance Downtown’s reputation and regional trajectory.
- Broaden the Downtown economy to include more services, retail options and resident amenities.
- Encourage development on identified opportunity sites as well as in historic buildings and on ground floors throughout Downtown.





## MISSION-RELATED GOAL AREAS

This section details goals and strategies. The goals provide an overarching direction for each goal area and are enduring charges for DLBA, while the strategies are approaches to achieve the goals.

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

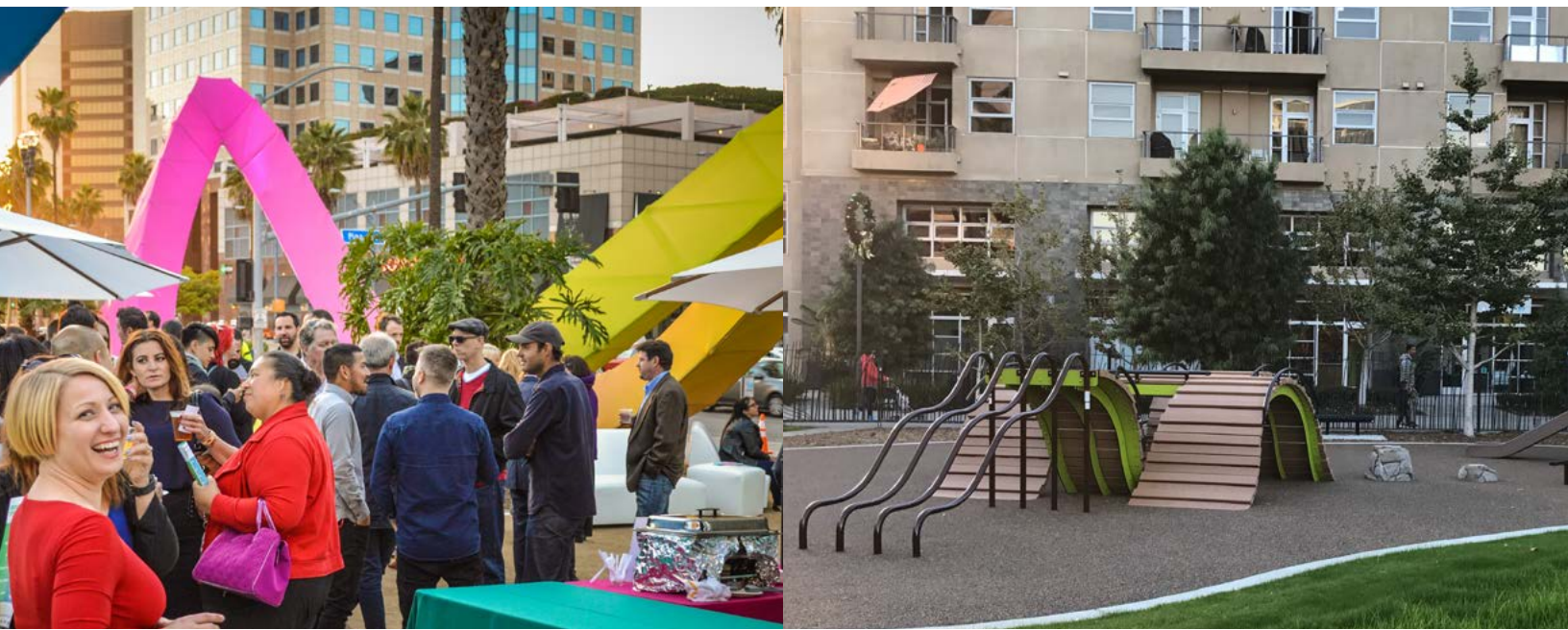
Development in Downtown Long Beach has advanced greatly in the past several years, including the creation of new residential, commercial and retail space, as well as the reuse of existing buildings. DLBA has accelerated its economic development efforts and issued its Annual Report and Quarterly Snapshot, which documents Downtown's successes and market profile for potential investors. Economic development in the Downtown core remains a focal area for future action. **Attracting and retaining quality retail, dining and business employment** will continue to solidify the local economy and position Downtown as a destination for residents and visitors.

#### GOALS

- Develop and conduct an Economic Development strategy for Downtown that identifies tasks associated with driving the greatest amount of economic return for Downtown.
- Promote economic development and vibrancy in Downtown Long Beach by taking advantage of the city's central location and waterfront, while preserving and enhancing a strong sense of place.
- Expand and curate DLBA's community-serving business attraction efforts and provide a complete urban experience for a diverse group of residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Increase job creation in Downtown.

#### STRATEGIES

- Work with the City to streamline the business licensing, permitting and entitlement process.
- Track and evaluate economic and development trends Downtown.
- Promote Downtown housing developments and bring more residents Downtown.
- Support existing businesses and attract new businesses to Downtown Long Beach.



## PUBLIC REALM

Urban design and the form of the public realm play significant roles in shaping Downtown Long Beach. **Connections between streets, amenities such as sidewalks and street furniture, access to transit, and the visual appearance of Downtown** all affect how likely retailers and other businesses are to locate Downtown. They also influence stakeholders' security and how likely residents and visitors are to frequent area businesses. DLBA and Downtown have made significant positive public realm improvements over the past several years, including The Loop (a temporary park and art installation), new bike lanes, a bike share program, public art and parklets. There are many additional opportunities to activate and improve the public realm. The Waterfront and other key Downtown corridors continue to be overly auto-oriented and underutilized, and present strong opportunities to build upon a Downtown vision that draws businesses and visitors from across the region. The redevelopment of Shoemaker Bridge also offers a major opportunity for increasing access to open space and the Los Angeles River.

## GOALS

- Improve livability in Downtown Long Beach by supporting the development of a beautiful, safe and vibrant public realm.
- Develop a highly transit-, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly Downtown.
- Encourage residents and local employees to walk and bike throughout Downtown.
- Pursue recommendations made by the DLBA commissioned Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) study in September 2014, to improve pedestrian connectivity to and future development in the waterfront (PD-6).

## STRATEGIES

- Advocate for stronger pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within and between Downtown's unique districts and neighborhoods through strategic long term capital improvements.
- Develop strategic streetscape improvement and activation programs.
- Promote programs and policies that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Increase funding for improvements to the public realm.
- Promote strategies and programs that address parking opportunities and misconceptions.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety concerns include both actual and perceived safety. **How safe do residents and visitors feel as they navigate streets or travel to Downtown?** Strategies to address public safety include coordination with social services and law enforcement, shifting the tenant mix to make Downtown a destination for a wide range of visitors at different times of day, and design approaches that ensure that Downtown spaces are well-lit and feel physically secure. Each of the proposed actions across all four program service areas contribute to enhancing the social fabric that connects Downtown businesses, visitors and residents to create a safe, vibrant Downtown Long Beach.

## GOALS

- Increase public safety and sense of security throughout Downtown.
- Inform property owners and managers, businesses and residents about the resources and laws that support and promote a safe and healthy community.

## STRATEGIES

- Research and advocate for cutting edge solutions to social services, homelessness and aggressive street behavior.
- Work with the City and local agencies to coordinate public safety efforts.
- Increase and publicize community engagement around public safety and quality of life issues in Downtown Long Beach.
- Improve the quality of life and public safety of Downtown by maintaining clean and orderly public spaces.



## MARKETING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Marketing and Special Events efforts contribute to greater knowledge and a stronger public perception of Downtown Long Beach. To draw more people Downtown, visitors, workers, locals and citywide residents must have a better sense of the activities and amenities. Actions to **expand and enhance the public image** include media, marketing, communications, and special events outreach.

DLBA organizes many successful and well-attended events, and has developed a strong social media presence. There is additional work to be done to capture regional positive media attention, drawing existing residents out to enjoy their city's amenities, and refining events to optimize staff efficiency and event revenue.

### GOALS

- Strengthen the Downtown Long Beach community and economy by holding events and publicizing its successes and emergent character.
- Encourage regional visitors, workers and residents who don't habitually visit Downtown destinations outside of their homes to walk, play and shop Downtown.
- Increase sponsorship revenue to develop new or enhanced events and programs.
- Establishing a brand for Downtown through events and marketing.

### STRATEGIES

- Publicize Long Beach's appeal and promote local events and businesses.
- Produce events that bring energy and positive attention to Downtown.
- Work to increase sponsorships and increase revenue from events.
- Update and integrate the DLBA brand.

# SUPPORTED GOAL AREAS

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## COMMUNICATIONS

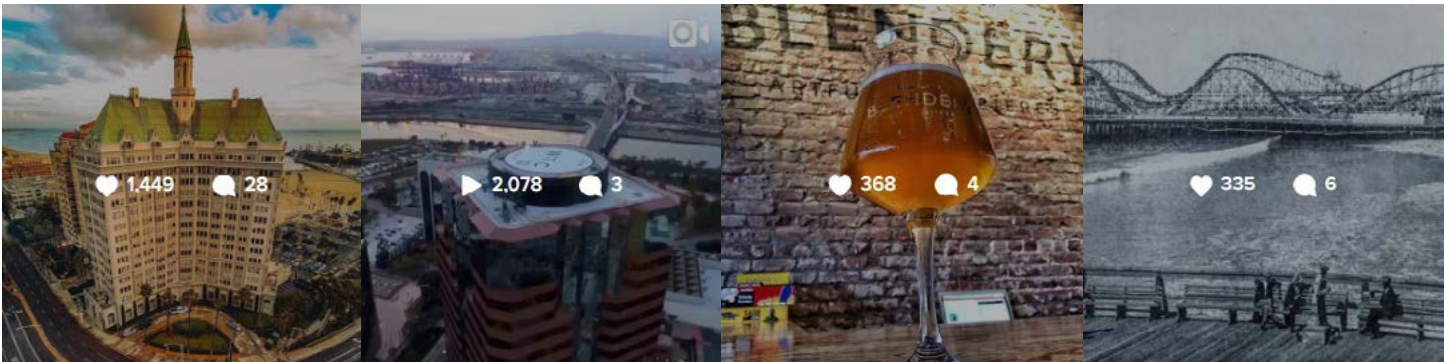
DLBA Communications efforts contribute to greater knowledge and a stronger public perception of DLBA's work. Actions to **expand DLBA's public image and reach** include developing a communications plan and expanding audience size.

### GOALS

- Increase DLBA's public profile.
- Publicize specific programs and outreach efforts as well as DLBA successes.
- Serve as the go-to source for news and information regarding DTLB.
- Increase broadcast and regional coverage of Downtown.

### STRATEGIES

- Publicize DLBA's initiatives and successes.
- Serve as the primary source for news and information about Downtown Long Beach.
- Work to establish a new generation of advocates for Downtown and for urban vitality.



## ADVOCACY, CIVIC LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

DLBA stakeholders and its leadership are a vital and highly engaged part of the Downtown community and must continue to engage the City and the community to **shape City policies and strengthen Downtown**.

### GOALS

- Engage the Long Beach community in strengthening their city.
- Advocate for improvements to Long Beach's Downtown.

### STRATEGIES

- Develop an advocacy, partnership and policy development strategy.
- Work closely with the City to be a strong advocate for an expert on Downtown.
- Be a leading advocate and stakeholder representative on planning, design and development issues in the Long Beach community.



## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DLBA is a highly effective and impactful organization that has been a key player in Downtown Long Beach's renaissance for many years. With the approval of *Vision 2020*, the organization turns its attention to becoming an even more dynamic infrastructure of board members, stakeholders, and other community leaders working together to achieve a common outcome.

As the DLBA advances its mission, demonstrates its value to investors and stakeholders, and pursues each of the directives outlined in *Vision 2020*, a principled approach to organizational development will maintain a focus on:

- **Being viewed as both a “clearinghouse of information” and “learning organization”** whereby people acquire vital information, new skills, and new opportunities through information-sharing;
- **Emphasizing relationship-building** as a shared responsibility amongst all leaders of the organization;
- **Focusing on outcomes** rather than process by delegating and empowering participants at the lowest appropriate levels in the organizational structure;
- **Providing reasonable flexibility to its program leaders** to create infrastructures that each perceives as the best way to carry-out their leadership responsibilities;
- **Incorporating reporting to the board and to the community** that provide a holistic snapshot of all information vital to decision-makers and stakeholders; and
- **Conducting periodic structured assessments and evaluation** to assure a consistent regard for accountability is maintained throughout the organization.

## DLBA COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

There are currently four program committees that drive the DLBA agenda as outlined in *Vision 2020* as well as four additional administrative committees that drive the business and governance obligations of the Board of Directors. Each committee, in addition to the Board, has the option to form temporary work groups dedicated to specific tasks.

The four program committees are:

- Economic Development Committee
- Public Realm Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Marketing and Special Events Committee

The four administrative committees are:

- Executive Committee
- Audit Committee
- Board Development Committee
- Finance Committee

## GOALS

The goal of DLBA's organizational development efforts is to consistently demonstrate a dynamic organization at work that is community-based, data-driven, and results-oriented; and, rooted in shared learning, strategic deliberation, and objective evaluation of its effort to enhance the vitality of Downtown Long Beach.

In order to achieve these aspirations, DLBA must:

- **Reposition the DLBA Board as a “hub and spoke” center** for information-sharing, learning from other organizations, having directed outreach to the Boards and members of other organizations, and focusing Board meetings on strategic deliberation about key focus areas of *Vision 2020*.
- **Develop a means for maximizing Board meeting agendas** around key focus areas, while enabling formal approval of items on the agenda that do not need any discussion or debate either because they are routine procedures or are already unanimous consent.
- **Provide options to expand or contract its committee structures** to meet the needs of *Vision 2020* in a dynamic environment, act as an inclusive organization wherever possible, and give some latitude for Board leaders responsible for committees to create structures, such as work groups or ad hoc teams, to achieve optimal results in the most efficient ways possible.
- **Create a consistent method for efficiently tracking and reporting the incremental implementation of the entire strategic plan** which would involve the creation and use of public and organizational dashboards.
- **Offer a specific set of tools and training** that assist committee chairs and other designated leaders to fulfill their responsibilities as Board members, accountable stewards of DLBA funds, and designated leaders of sub-committees or community liaisons.
- **Further integrate the Long Beach Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) as an essential component to generating leveraged resources** to advance DLBA's mission.

## STRATEGIES

- DLBA will use dashboards or snapshot reports at the Board, Programming Committee and staff levels that graphically display key indicators of success associated with *Vision 2020*.
- The DLBA Board Meeting is positioned as a “learning” and “activity” hub for the advancement of modern progressive urbanism in downtown Long Beach.
- Further enhance the roles and responsibilities of the current Administrative Committees of the board to provide adequate oversight as well as support to the implementation of *Vision 2020*.
- Create and maintain a standard of accountability throughout the organization.
- Each Program Committee is charged with reviewing *Vision 2020*, in concert with professional staff, to recommend an infrastructure to carry out their responsibilities.
- Identify the optimal synergy between the DDC and the DLBA and its *Vision 2020* strategic plan.



# DTLB *Vision* 2020

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## MANY THANKS TO...

DLBA Board of Directors & Executive Committee

DLBA Programming Committee Members

Mayor Robert Garcia

Councilmember Lena Gonzalez (First District)

Councilmember Jeanine Pearce (Second District)

City of Long Beach Management Teams

DTLB stakeholders who participated in

focus groups, surveys & interviews

and

Chris Beynon & Christina Paul, MIG

Jeffrey Wilcox, Third Sector Company

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