



DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE

DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION & ACCESS INITIATIVE

Equity Framework Work Plan



A Message From Our Co-Chairs

As Co-Chairs of DLBA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Steering Committee, we are delighted to present this Equity Framework Work Plan. This framework is intended to guide DLBA's policies, programs, and activities as the organization strives to better represent and serve the diverse communities that are Downtown Long Beach.

These communities each have a rich heritage. Today they make up our diverse cultural fabric of natives, long-time residents, newcomers, immigrants, investors, and customers. Together, our communities can shape an eclectic, authentic, equitable, and prosperous future for Downtown Long Beach.

Our Steering Committee began its work with the DLBA Board and staff leadership completing education and grounding in diversity, equity, inclusion, and access challenges, and making a firm commitment to principles and actions (statement appears on page 4). After reviewing the organization's commitment statement, our Steering Committee of community representatives toured Downtown, visiting special places that embody Downtown's rich culture and present challenges. We then spent time assessing the current state of DEIA in Downtown Long Beach before fleshing out the framework presented here, with its focus areas, guiding principles, actions, and accountability measures.

We are proud of this work and impressed with DLBA's commitment to follow through on implementation toward a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible Downtown. We are committed to ongoing partnership in this effort, while also watching closely to hold all of us accountable to our communities and our futures.

Please join us in this important work!

Denise Carter
Griselda Suarez
Michael Vitug



Photo by Stephen Carr via LBpost



Photo by José Cordon



Photo by Jose Cordon. Mural by @natiobaker



Photo by Jose Cordon. Mural by @francesca_quintano




Table of Contents

- 4** Equity Commitment Statement
- 5** Process Summary
- 6** Organizational Equity Assessment and SWOT
- 7** Community & Place Assessment
- 9** Race and Social Equity Framework
- 18** Acknowledgments



Photo by Drew A. Kelley

DLBA Equity Commitment Statement



The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) is committed to adopting and implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) as a priority tenant of its mission to, “cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe and prosperous downtown for all.”

We prioritize DEIA to strengthen our existing impact as stewards and advocates of Downtown Long Beach and to foster a community that is **economically prosperous**, offers an **affirming place experience**, and is **aligned with a diverse network of partners** seeking solutions through collaboration.

DLBA recognizes that to meaningfully support a Downtown, we must acknowledge and reconcile certain societal, environmental, and economic policies that have perpetuated discrimination of marginalized communities in Long Beach. It is our responsibility to identify and implement ways DLBA can improve the work we perform every day to meet the diverse needs of historically underserved populations while delivering services associated with management of two improvement districts. In collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and community members we can work towards a Downtown that is inclusive, welcoming and a place where all can thrive.

To achieve this vision, we make the following commitments toward continual learning, reflection, partnership, and organizational action. We acknowledge these commitments are intentionally flexible and not finite and look forward to evolving them as we expand our understanding of community and progress as an organization.

DLBA commitments:

- Build trust and relationships with community partners also committed to DEIA and better understand the needs of diverse communities in Downtown
- Develop clear organizational DEIA, goals in collaboration with local community partners and leaders.
- Set attainable measures for success and accountability in evaluating the organization’s progress.
- Follow best practices to embed guiding principles of DEIA in DLBA’s board and staff recruitment procedures.
- Incorporate DEIA objectives into each of the organization’s programming and administrative committees.
- Offer and coordinate programs, services, resources, and events that are targeted and effective at addressing diverse community needs.

(Signed by DLBA Board of Directors)



Process Summary

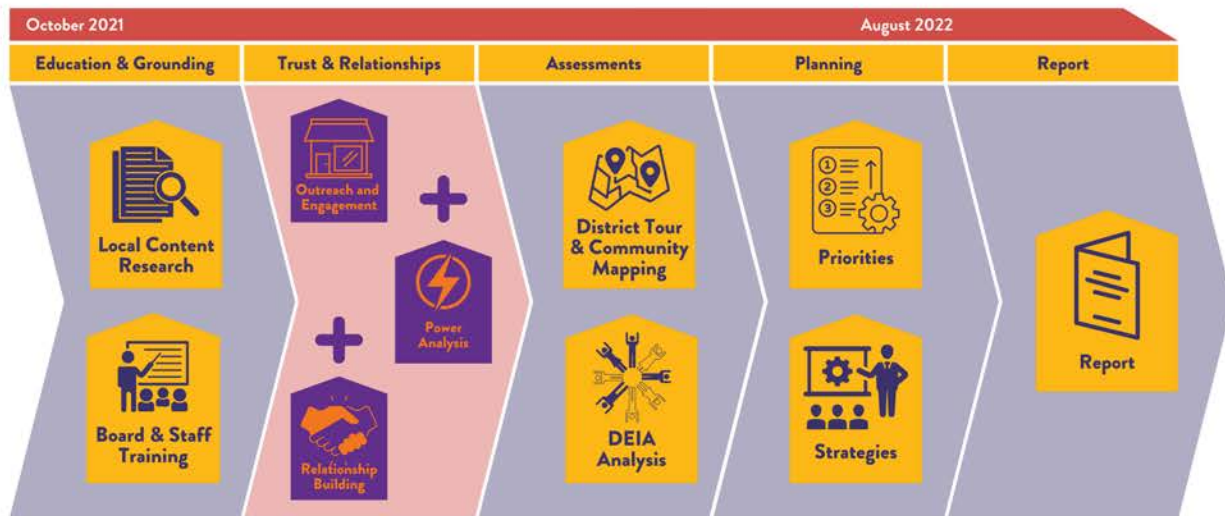
DLBA is committed to adopting and implementing DEIA as a priority tenant of its mission to “cultivate, persevere and promote a healthy, safe and prosperous Downtown for all”



In the fall of 2021, DLBA embarked on a comprehensive education, engagement, and planning effort to develop its inaugural DEIA Framework & Work Plan.

To facilitate the initiative, DLBA contracted with BDS Planning & Urban Design, a Seattle-based consulting firm specialized in training and planning efforts at the intersection of racial equity and place management.

The process evolved over five key phases: Education & Grounding, Trust & Relationships, Assessments, and Planning. Each phase built upon each other in an iterative process to ensure diverse voices were at the table and critical conversations were elevated.





To begin, all DLBA staff and executive board members participated in a three-part training series to ground everyone with a shared language and purpose for the effort. The series, delivered by BDS Planning and Jackie St. Louis of D-Fine Consulting, included conversation on the history of race and identity in America and Long Beach including statehood and colonization of Indigenous peoples in the LA Basin, Spanish Missions, Redlining, and other practices impacting modern-day community development in Long Beach. From this engagement, DLBA drafted an equity commitment statement (found on page 4 of this report) to serve as its guiding “why” to investing in DEIA.

Over the course of the process, several key stakeholders were identified and a DEIA Steering Committee was formed to drive the critical path toward the development of a final framework. This product is a collective effort of extensive staff and community collaboration and is the catalyst at the start of the organization's race and social equity journey.

Baseline Organizational Equity Assessment

The baseline organizational equity assessment consists of two components: an Organizational assessment and a Community & Place assessment. The Organizational assessment, including a SWOT analysis, examines DLBA’s current position and readiness to identify DEIA opportunities. The Community & Place assessment examines the historical and current context of Downtown Long Beach and its communities to inform DLBA’s external DEIA impacts.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Strengths - Internal assets DLBA should leverage to support its DEIA work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and Board represent a variety of lived experiences & identities • There’s trust in DLBA as an entity with impact • Strong sense of Long Beach communities • Willingness to lean into the work • Block by Block and DLBA Ambassadors are doing it right • DLBA has meaningful levers it can pull  | <p>Weaknesses - internal circumstances limiting DLBA’s ability to be successful in its DEIA work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can oftentimes be neutral on advocacy issues • Response to DEIA issues more reactive than proactive • Staff and Board capacity spread thin among competing projects • No CEO in leadership role ... and legacy of past CEO  |
| <p>Opportunities - external factors that can help increase DLBA’s impact in its DEIA work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of aligned and organized partners • Ethos of creativity and innovation • Downtown’s “urban form” is inviting and walkable • Reputation can lead to funding, recruitment, and coalitions • Become credible in community ... “walk the talk” • Spotlight existing business & community efforts • New CEO sets the tone  | <p>Threats - external factors (likely beyond the organization’s control) limiting DLBA’s ability to be successful in DEIA work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratepayers not all on board with DEIA initiatives • Difficult to justify resource needs • Unintended outcomes of well-intended efforts • Potential political polarization • DEIA seen as an “add-on” • Current effort won’t be sustained  |

Baseline DEIA Assessment

DLBA’s Impact



Affirmation of place experience, economic prosperity, & alignment with partners

DLBA’s Accountability



Tensions of community benefit vs. ratepayer desirability

DLBA’s Role



When/how does the organization insert itself and leverage its position?

DLBA’s Credibility



Taking care in-house & “walking the talk”

Community & Place Assessment

Downtown Long Beach (and its surrounding areas) are home to a rich history and diverse presence of cultures and communities. The identity of the Downtown is a reflection of these populations and their contributions to Long Beach. Understanding the intersection of place, culture, and identity in Long Beach is critical to DLBA's role and success in the community.

The DEIA Steering Committee explored three of eight significant Downtown places as part of its analysis toward exemplifying a downtown that is economically prosperous, offers an affirming place experience and is aligned with a diverse network of partners.*

*tour locations with an asterisk are represented in the map on the following page

Downtown's Culture & Communities

- **Cesar E. Chavez Park:** A large park located along Downtown's Western boundary with the LA River and 710 Freeway. This large park serves the West Gateway and Willmore neighborhoods and is home to an amphitheater hosting a variety of local cultural events.
- **Lincoln Park:** Designated as the City's first park in 1880, the park recently reopened after being closed due to the redevelopment of the Civic Center block. The space is located directly next to Billie Jean King Main Library.
- **Numero Uno Market*:** Former Mexican grocery store, central to Latino, low/moderate income, and elderly residents of the West Gateway and Willmore neighborhoods. Currently, there are plans to redevelop the space into mixed-use multifamily housing with ground-floor commercial space.
- **400 Pine Ave Block:** This block marks the transition point between the core Downtown entertainment district along Pine Avenue and the more residential North Pine neighborhood. This block has historically struggled to maintain an active commercial and community presence, but recently local neighborhood associations and tenants have organized activations of the block (ex. Juneteenth, 3rd Fridays)
- **Partake Collective*:** Future site of short-term innovative commercial space housing part ghost kitchen, food hall, test kitchen, and retail market space in former Mental health America building. Partake aims to attract early-stage businesses with lower overhead costs and ready access to commercial spaces and local clientele.
- **East Village Arts Park*:** A unique pocket park in East Village Arts District home to community & city-led activities and events. Issues such as homelessness and ingress/egress have made it difficult to operate the park on a continual basis.
- **Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum & Robert Gumbiner Park:** Located between St. Anthony's High School and the Museum of Latin American Art, Gumbiner Park features a skate park and outdoor performance space for students and residents.
- **Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA):** Founded in 1996, MOLAA is the only museum in the US to focus on Latino and Latin American contemporary art. Beyond exhibitions, the museum regularly hosts Latino cultural events and contributes to area arts & cultural projects.

This list is not exhaustive of all cultural places of meaning in Downtown Long Beach.



Lincoln Park

DLBA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access Downtown's Cultures & Communities

Numero Uno Market

Former Mexican grocery, central to Latino, low/moderate-income, and elderly residents of the West Gateway and Willmore neighborhoods



Takeaways & Discussion

- Food is an important component of identity building ... it's loss has potential cultural, economic, and health impacts for the neighborhood
- Striking an alignment between private interest and community benefit is complicated
- Where should DLBA insert itself among private, community, and political stakeholders?

East Village Arts Park

Unique pocket park in East Village Arts District home to community & city led activities and events



Takeaways & Discussion

- Placemaking rooted in arts-based community organizing and advocacy
- Flexible community-led opportunities support a range of audiences and activities
- Balancing desire for public access with the need for safety and care of all populations

Partake Collective

Future site of short-term innovative commercial space housing part ghost kitchen, food hall, test kitchen, and retail market space in former Mental Health America building



Takeaways & Discussion

- An entry point to uplift and catalyze diverse entrepreneurship
- Emphasis on participatory community development including: intentional outreach, recruitment, and funding
- Attention on what is needed to support success, longevity, and scale

Race and Social Equity Framework

The DLBA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Access framework will help the organization plan and be accountable to a focused implementation of DEIA actions. The framework provides DLBA with a tactical guide to connect action to DEIA outcomes and measure progress. There are five key components to the framework: Equity Commitment Statement, Guiding Principles, Priority Focus Areas, Milestones, and Actions & Accountability Measures.

DLBA prioritizes DEIA to strengthen our existing impact as stewards and advocates of Downtown Long Beach and to foster a community that is economically prosperous, offers an affirming place experience, and is aligned with a diverse network of partners seeking solutions through collaboration.

Priority Focus Areas

- Ratepayer Engagement
- Small Business Investment
- Community Capacity Building
- DLBA Internal Development
- Accountability



Photo by Brian Scott



Photo by Kelsey Mader

Guiding Principles:

- Innovative
- Inclusive
- Connected
- Sustainable
- Action Oriented
- Authentic



Photo by Jose Gordon

Race & Social Equity Framework - Work Plan (2022 - 2024)

Organizational Buy-In

Organizational Growing

Organizational Sustaining

| DEIA Actions | 2022 - December | 2023 - June | 2023 - December | 2024 - June | 2024 - December + |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Publicly share DLBA's history, governance, and ratepayer structure | Research and leverage partnerships to understand diverse history of downtown | Create DLBA historical context statement in concert with the City of Long Beach on implications of downtown community development including DLBA's involvement. | Include historical context statement in DLBA DEIA Commitment Report | | |
| Hire a new CEO aligned with DEIA principles | Develop a priority list of DEIA implementation for the new CEO's first 100 days as informed by the DEIA plan | | Create Annual "State of DLBA DEIA Commitment" Report | Evaluate & update DEIA implementation workplan | |
| Track small business, residential, ownership, and community organization diversity within the downtown to inform recruitment and relationship building | Analyze household diversity collected from census data including but not limited to race & ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and languages spoken | Analyze community equity & diversity survey to identify baseline, gaps, and needs from Downtown Long Beach's diverse communities. | Publish a Downtown Long Beach identity study in annual "State of DLBA DEIA Commitment Report" | Establish and share DLBA best practices for DEIA data collection and procurement Include DLBA's procurement data tracking in annual DEIA Commitment report | Establish DEIA strategy / policy for recruiting/hiring/promoting staff |
| Increase small business diversity throughout and beyond downtown Long Beach through targeted relationship building & recruitment | Develop an annual community equity & diversity survey for businesses & their staff, residents, and vendors. Work with community partners to expand reach. | Develop a business equity criteria framework to help prioritize business resource allocation. Informed by community equity & diversity survey. | Use business equity criteria to select X number of businesses or amount of \$\$ to distribute. Aim to increase grant funding/resource distribution for minority-owned businesses by 50% | Actively recruit diverse businesses into and near downtown. Leverage relationships and partnerships built in diverse communities over this time. | Fully distribute business recruitment resources according to identified priorities Track impacts of programs and resources on small business diversity |

Staff Resources 
Community Resources 
Financial Resources 

Race & Social Equity Framework - Work Plan (2022 - 2024)

Organizational Sustaining

Organizational Buy-In

Organizational Growing

| DEIA Actions | 2022 - December | 2023 - June | 2023 - December | 2024 - June | 2024 - December + |
|--|---|--|--|--|-------------------|
| Address Board and Committee representation across all areas of diversity (e.g. race/ethnicity, age, ability, language, gender, etc.) | Evaluate board and committee representation & lived experiences  | Plan to increase representation at the board level to better reflect the updated governance structure and/or representation requirements  | Increase external recruitment and publicize pathways to committee and board membership. Combine the application process and invitations. Make this as accessible as possible  | Ensure the board represents all areas of diversity (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, ability, language, gender, etc...) and empowers diverse committees to have voting seats on DLBA board  | |
| | Plan for targeted recruitment from existing diverse members of committees  | Evaluate the board governance structure with a DEIA lens to improve accessibility and better value social and cultural capital representation  | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Prioritize long-term relationship building in diverse communities | Assess gaps in relationships rooted in strong social and cultural capital  | Establish an equity-centered community engagement process to engage underserved communities. Co-develop with existing social & cultural organization partners.  | Host regular information, resource, and networking exchange with diverse communities  | | |
| | | | | | |
| Make access to meetings, surveys, documents, website, and events "universally accessible" | Develop a priority list of existing communications to translate into most commonly spoken languages in Long Beach  | Translate existing annual surveys into most commonly spoken languages in Long Beach  | Create a fully multilingual website  | Pursue direct interpretation/language diverse business development services  | |
| | Identify other universal accessibility barriers to participating in DEIA activities  | | Establish accessibility best practices for DLBA communications  | | |

Staff Resources 
Community Resources 
Financial Resources 

Race & Social Equity Framework - Work Plan (2022 - 2024)

Organizational Sustaining 

Organizational Growing 

Organizational Buy-In 

| DEIA Actions | 2022 - December | 2023 - June | 2023 - December | 2024 - June | 2024 - December + |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Create shared governance model between DEIA steering Committee and DLBA governance committee | Identify opportunities for DEIA steering committee members to sit on Governance Committee  | Reconvene DEIA steering committee for an update on DEIA workplan process  | Explore creating an ombudsman position and hire locally  | Establish a standing DEIA committee or create a DEIA staff position/department  | Staff Resources  Community Resources  Financial Resources  |
| | Regularly share information and resources with other Business Improvement Districts & non-profit partners | Identify and collect DEIA plans from comparable BIDs and non-profits.  | Meet with local and national BID partners to exchange best practices and progress on DEIA.  | Host or participate in local and national BID industry forums on DEIA topics  | |
| Continue Supporting Downtown Cultural Events | Develop directory of existing business resources  | Host local resource information sessions for business and non-profit partners  | Expand entrepreneurship workshops by 50% participants  | Partner & support cultural organizations to host additional (or expand upon) events downtown  | |
| | Participate and document local cultural events within and near Downtown.  | Create an events page on DLBA website including calendar of "must have" annual events (Juneteenth, Dia De Los Muertos, PRIDE etc.). Include links to organizations to increase support from visitors  | Connect businesses and residents around local social and cultural events around Long Beach  | | |
| Integrate DEIA Work Plan with Strategic Plan | Identify and align complementary DEIA plans and strategic plan actions in annual workplan  | Present areas of integration to DEIA Steering Committee for feedback  | Identify additional areas of research, engagement, or development to DEIA implementation work plan in concert with strategic plan evaluation  | Evaluate & update DEIA implementation workplan  | |
| | Identify gaps between DEIA plan and strategic plan actions  | | Evaluate & update DEIA implementation workplan  | | |



Photo by Jose Cordon. Pictured @blissful_nana

Acknowledgments

DEIA Steering Committee

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Pictured: Austin Metoyer and Kelsey Mader



Downtown Long Beach Alliance's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access work plan amplifies DLBA's mission and thoughtfully evolves the organization toward being more responsive to community issues, including racial justice and equity.

The DLBA DEIA plan is the product of collective action between DLBA and the community and is a model for ongoing relationship building with a diverse network of local partners.



Get Involved - visit
<https://downtownlongbeach.org/about-dlba/get-involved/> to learn more about opportunities at DLBA and Downtown Long Beach



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DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION & ACCESS INITIATIVE**

Document design by Natalie Scott GreyScott.com

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