



DTLB ALLIANCE

STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH

2026-2031 PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DTLB Alliance or Alliance)** is the nonprofit organization responsible for managing the Downtown **Property-Based Improvement District (PBID)** and the Downtown **Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)**. These districts are funded through assessments paid by Downtown property owners, businesses, and residents. The funds support services and programs designed to improve the experience of Downtown Long Beach for everyone who lives, works, visits, or invests there.

Through these districts, the Alliance provides services and leadership that go beyond what the City of Long Beach delivers on its own. This includes enhanced clean and safe services such as Safety Ambassadors and cleaning crews, outreach efforts supporting people experiencing homelessness, marketing and promotion of Downtown Long Beach, support for local businesses, placemaking and activation, and advocacy on issues that affect Downtown's economic health and quality of life.

In 2021, the Alliance adopted a Strategic Plan as part of the process to renew the Downtown PBID. The renewal process requires demonstrating the value of the district and the services it provides to assessment ratepayers, making it an appropriate moment to evaluate priorities and set direction for the organization. The planning process took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Downtown Long Beach and many urban centers across the country were experiencing significant disruption. Businesses were closing or struggling to survive, office occupancy had dropped sharply, tourism and events had slowed, and uncertainty about the future of downtown districts was widespread. In that environment, the Strategic Plan focused on stabilizing core services, supporting businesses through recovery, and guiding the Alliance through a period of considerable uncertainty.

Since that time, both Downtown Long Beach and the Alliance itself have continued to evolve. Residential growth is bringing more people to live in the district, while shifts in office work patterns have reduced the daily workforce that once supported many downtown businesses. Visitor activity and sales rebounded strongly in the years following the pandemic but have since stabilized as businesses adjust to inflation and broader economic uncertainty. At the same time, the Alliance has expanded and strengthened many of its core programs. Enhanced clean and safe services, coordinated outreach addressing homelessness, and marketing initiatives that promote Downtown as a destination have grown in scope and visibility. Improvements to public spaces and activation efforts, including the reopening of Lincoln Park, have helped shape how residents and visitors experience Downtown.

Downtown Long Beach is also entering a period when Southern California will receive significant international attention. Major events such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 2027 Super Bowl, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games are expected to bring visitors, investment, and visibility to the region. These events create both opportunity and expectation for Downtown Long Beach as a major urban center within the Los Angeles region.

In this environment, strengthening everyday activity, supporting local businesses, and ensuring Downtown remains welcoming and easy to explore will be essential to sustaining long-term vitality. This Strategic Plan update builds on the progress made since 2021 and clarifies how the Alliance will prioritize its work over the next five years. It does not replace the existing Strategic Plan or introduce a new set of

initiatives. Instead, it organizes the Alliance’s existing objectives into three priority areas that reflect where the organization can most effectively lead, coordinate partners, and deliver visible results. By concentrating effort in these areas, the Alliance can strengthen service delivery, clearly communicate its value to ratepayers, and position the organization for the next phase of Downtown Long Beach’s growth and the next renewal of the Downtown PBID.

2. PROCESS & KEY FINDINGS

To determine which priorities should guide the Alliance’s work over the next five years, the DTLB Alliance Board of Directors and staff participated in a focused review of the existing Strategic Plan. The Alliance engaged Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), the firm that prepared the 2021 Strategic Plan, to facilitate this process and help reassess priorities based on current conditions.

The review took place between late 2025 and early 2026. It began with an online survey completed by Board members and staff that asked participants to review the objectives in the existing Strategic Plan and evaluate their relevance looking ahead to the next five years. The survey results provided an initial view of where perspectives were closely aligned and where further discussion would be helpful.

Those results then informed facilitated in-person workshops with both the Board and staff. During these sessions, participants discussed the Alliance’s role in Downtown today and considered which objectives would make the greatest difference if successfully achieved moving forward. The conversations also explored where the Alliance is best positioned to lead work directly, where it is most effective working with partners, and where its efforts can help move broader community priorities forward.

Additionally, board members who were unable to attend the workshop were offered the opportunity for brief, individual meetings to ensure their perspective and feedback was considered when shaping priorities. Draft documents were presented to both staff and the board’s executive committee for a final opportunity to provide feedback.

The purpose of this process was not to create a new list of initiatives. Instead, it was designed to clarify priorities within the existing Strategic Plan and build shared agreement around where the organization should concentrate its time and resources in the years ahead. The sections that follow describe the process used to identify these priorities and outline how the Alliance will focus its efforts through 2031.

WHAT WE HEARD

The survey results and workshop discussions revealed several consistent themes about the Alliance’s role and where its efforts will have the greatest impact in the years ahead:

1. **The Alliance’s core services remain central to Downtown’s success:** Participants consistently emphasized the importance of the Alliance’s core responsibilities, including clean and safe services, support for local businesses, placemaking and activation, communications, and preparation for the next PBID renewal. These areas of work shape how residents, workers, and visitors experience Downtown on a daily basis and are closely tied to how ratepayers evaluate the value of the district.

2. **Greater impact will come from clearer focus:** Participants emphasized the importance of concentrating effort on the areas where the Alliance can make the greatest difference. This includes being clear about when the Alliance delivers services directly, when it works in partnership with the City or other organizations, and how programs such as marketing, activation, and events support Downtown's broader economic and community goals. Across both the survey and workshop discussions, there was strong agreement that focusing on fewer priorities and executing them well will produce stronger results.
3. **Organizational alignment supports effective execution:** Discussions also highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Alliance's governance structure and internal processes support its strategic priorities. Participants identified opportunities to strengthen communication between the Board and staff, ensure committee work aligns with the Alliance's core areas of focus, and better leverage the expertise that Board members bring to the organization.

During the workshops, participants also reviewed the Strategic Plan objectives using two guiding questions. First, if an objective were fully achieved, would the result be clearly felt in Downtown? Second, is the Alliance in a position to lead the effort or help move it forward? The objectives that ranked highest using these criteria form the basis for the priority framework that follows. Board and staff perspectives were **closely aligned** in these rankings, reinforcing confidence in the direction outlined in this Strategic Plan update. These themes helped shape the three priority areas that will guide the Alliance's work over the next five years.

3. FIVE-YEAR PRIORITIES

The Strategic Plan update organizes the Alliance's existing objectives into three priority areas that will guide the organization's work over the next five years. These priorities do not replace the goals established in the 2021 Strategic Plan. Instead, they clarify where the Alliance will concentrate its efforts so that its work remains focused, effective, and clearly understood by ratepayers and partners.

Each priority reflects an area where the Alliance directly shapes the experience of Downtown Long Beach. In some cases, the Alliance delivers services itself, such as enhanced clean and safe programs. In other cases, it strengthens Downtown by coordinating partners, promoting the district, or helping connect businesses, residents, and visitors to the opportunities Downtown offers.

The objectives listed under each priority are drawn directly from the 2021 Strategic Plan. Some represent core responsibilities of the Alliance, while others support that work through partnerships, advocacy, and program coordination. Across all three priorities, the Alliance's role is to create the conditions that allow Downtown Long Beach to function well day to day while positioning the district for continued investment, activity, and growth. Together, these priorities and aligned objectives establish the Alliance's policy direction for the next five years, while staff will translate that direction into tactics and annual work programs that advance outcomes within each priority area.

The three priorities outlined in this section are closely connected and reinforce one another. **Clean and safe services** establish the foundation that allows Downtown Long Beach to function well day to day. Clear **awareness and visibility** help stakeholders understand the Alliance's role and the value of the services the district provides. Building on that foundation, efforts to increase **foot traffic and activity**

support local businesses, activate public spaces, and strengthen the overall vitality of Downtown. Together, these priorities provide a clear framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and communication with ratepayers and community partners while reinforcing the value of the Downtown PBID.

PRIORITY 1: SAFE & CLEAN DOWNTOWN

Overview

Clean and safe services are the cornerstone of the Alliance's work and the most direct way property owners, businesses, and residents experience the value of the district. Through the Downtown PBID, the Alliance provides enhanced services that build on the baseline services delivered by the City of Long Beach. The presence of Safety Ambassadors, regular cleaning, and coordinated outreach and advocacy efforts that address homelessness also play an important role in shaping how residents, workers, visitors, and businesses experience Downtown each day.

Within this priority, the Alliance is responsible for delivering these enhanced services across the district. This includes setting clean and safe service standards, managing daily field operations, deploying Safety Ambassadors and Clean Teams, and coordinating outreach that responds to the specific needs of Downtown Long Beach's unhoused population. The day-to-day work of the Homeless Outreach Program also informs the Alliance's advocacy on homelessness-related issues, providing practical insight that helps strengthen collaboration with the City, County, and service providers. In areas where responsibilities overlap with the City or with social service providers, the Alliance works in partnership to ensure efforts are aligned and advocates for policies and resources that support longer-term solutions.

Over the next five years, the Alliance will continue to focus on delivering these services consistently and visibly across the district. Strong performance in this priority area reinforces confidence among ratepayers, improves everyday conditions Downtown, and supports the long-term stability of the district. For many stakeholders, these services represent the most visible and tangible expression of the PBID's value.

Core Objectives

- Enrich services to further enhance cleanliness and the feeling of safety in Downtown

Supporting Objectives

- Build on the Homeless Outreach Program that is specifically tailored to the needs of the unhoused population in Downtown Long Beach
- Advocate for policies and resources that support enduring solutions to homelessness
- Partner with the City to ensure a clean, safe, and enjoyable experience at the newly developed Lincoln Park
- Establish higher standards for clean services in Downtown
- Enhance lighting levels throughout Downtown
- Improve maintenance of trees, tree wells, and walkways

What Success Looks Like

- Improved perceptions of safety and cleanliness throughout Downtown
- Consistent and visible clean and safe services across the district
- A coordinated outreach approach that addresses the needs of people experiencing homelessness and aligns with City, County, and service provider efforts
- Clear understanding among ratepayers and stakeholders of the Alliance's role in delivering enhanced clean and safe services

PRIORITY 2: AWARENESS & VISIBILITY

Overview

Because many of the Alliance's services operate behind the scenes, helping stakeholders understand the organization's role and impact is essential to the long-term success of the Downtown PBID. The Alliance works on behalf of property owners, businesses, residents, and community partners across Downtown Long Beach, but not all stakeholders are equally familiar with the full scope of its work. In the years since the 2021 Strategic Plan was adopted, the Alliance has made a concerted effort to strengthen its external communications and better promote Downtown Long Beach as a place to live, work, visit, and invest. Continuing to build on that progress will remain an important priority in the years ahead.

This priority therefore focuses on two closely related areas: strengthening how the Alliance communicates with external stakeholders and ensuring that Board members and partners have a clear understanding of the organization's programs and responsibilities. Externally, the Alliance promotes Downtown Long Beach while advocating for policies, investments, and partnerships that support the district's long-term success. Internally, clear and consistent communication helps ensure that Board members, ratepayers, and community partners understand the Alliance's responsibilities, the services it delivers, and the results those services produce.

Communication in this context extends beyond traditional marketing. It includes highlighting the businesses, people, and activities that bring life to Downtown and using digital platforms and partnerships to promote activity across the district. It also involves helping different areas of Downtown feel connected and reinforcing the district's identity as a cohesive place rather than a collection of separate areas. Maintaining clear and consistent communication over time also helps build the foundation for the next renewal of the Downtown PBID. When stakeholders regularly see and understand the work of the Alliance, the process of demonstrating the value of the district becomes a continuation of an ongoing conversation rather than a concentrated effort in the years immediately preceding renewal.

Core Objectives

- Continue implementing the comprehensive marketing & communications strategy
- Pursue all necessary requirements to renew the Downtown Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) for another ten-year term
- Continually seek ways to build awareness of the DTLB Alliance and educate stakeholders about the Alliance's role and value proposition

Supporting Objectives

- Increase use of online platforms to promote the people, businesses, and activities in Downtown
- Re-define, and advocate for, projects, policies, and initiatives that are considered transformative based on community benefit
- Work with partners to improve connectivity throughout Downtown
- Actively track and participate in plans and special projects that impact Downtown

What Success Looks Like

- Clear understanding among ratepayers and stakeholders of the Alliance's role and the services it delivers
- Shared understanding and alignment among Board members of the Alliance's programs, services, and the work supported by PBID funds
- Stronger regional recognition of Downtown Long Beach as a place to live, work, visit, and invest
- Focused and credible advocacy with City leaders and community partners on issues affecting Downtown
- Successful PBID renewal in 2032

PRIORITY 3: FOOT TRAFFIC & VITALITY

Overview

While awareness and visibility help strengthen understanding of the Alliance's role, the everyday vitality of Downtown ultimately depends on people spending time in the district and supporting local businesses. Downtown Long Beach continues to navigate a period of economic transition. Changes in office work patterns, shifting consumer habits, and broader economic uncertainty have affected downtown districts across the country, and Long Beach is no exception. Businesses are adapting to these changes while property owners and community leaders work to strengthen the district's long-term stability.

In this environment, bringing people into Downtown and encouraging them to spend time there remains one of the most effective ways to sustain local businesses and strengthen the district as a whole. Residents, workers, and visitors create the daily activity that sustains restaurants, shops, and services. For the Alliance, working to increase foot traffic is a way to support the overall vitality of Downtown while helping businesses navigate an uncertain environment.

The Alliance contributes to this effort in several practical ways. It works with businesses to connect them with resources, share information, and help navigate City processes when challenges arise. It also works with property owners and community partners to identify opportunities that support activity and investment across the district. This can also include coordinating with the City, InvestLB, and the Port of Long Beach key initiatives that support Downtown economic development, including efforts to align major employment, investment, and workforce development opportunities with Downtown's long-term vitality such as AnchorLB. While the Alliance does not control real estate development or broader market conditions, it can help create conditions that allow businesses to succeed and encourage continued activity across the district.

Placemaking is also an important part of this work. Through programming, public space improvements, and creative activation, the Alliance helps shape how people experience Downtown and encourages residents and visitors to explore different parts of the district. These efforts complement the work of local businesses and contribute to a more active and welcoming environment. When Downtown feels active, welcoming, and easy to explore, people are more likely to spend time there, visit multiple businesses, and return in the future.

Looking ahead, Downtown Long Beach will also be influenced by major regional events that are expected to bring increased visibility and visitors to Southern California, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 2027 Super Bowl, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Strengthening everyday activity and foot traffic helps ensure that Downtown remains active, welcoming, and easy to explore. As visitors come to the region for major events in the coming years, these conditions will help position Downtown Long Beach to capture a greater share of their time and spending while encouraging them to stay longer and explore the district.

By focusing on strategies that increase activity in Downtown, support local businesses, and activate public spaces, the Alliance can reinforce the everyday vitality of Downtown Long Beach while positioning the district to benefit from the opportunities ahead.

Core Objectives

- Assist new and existing businesses in accessing resources and working through City processes
- Work with property owners, developers, and the leasing community in support of Downtown retail and office tenants
- Activate key locations with art, music, and culturally responsive placemaking, including programming and physical place enhancements

Supporting Objectives

- Activate vacant or underutilized storefronts and help prevent future vacancies
- Assist the Downtown office market in evolving to meet the new reality
- Continue to re-think the Alliance's role in the production of events
- Leverage city-sponsored and private large-scale events to attract, engage, and retain people in Downtown

What Success Looks Like

- More people spending time in Downtown Long Beach throughout the day and evening
- Active public spaces and placemaking initiatives that encourage exploration across the district
- Strong support for local businesses as they navigate changing economic conditions
- Collaboration with businesses, property owners, and partners to strengthen activity across Downtown
- Downtown positioned to benefit from increased regional visitation in the years ahead

4. ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

As the Alliance looks ahead to the next five years, its governance and internal practices should support the priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan update. Clear priorities are most effective when the organization's structures and decision-making processes reinforce them. Aligning governance, committee work, and staff reporting with these priorities will help ensure that the Alliance remains focused on the work that has the greatest impact on Downtown.

Strong alignment between the Board and staff also helps protect organizational capacity. When expectations, reporting, and committee work are clearly connected to strategic priorities, the Alliance can maintain consistent progress while avoiding unnecessary strain on staff resources.

GOVERNANCE & PROGRAMMATIC ALIGNMENT

Effective organizational alignment depends on a clear understanding of the distinct roles of the Board, committees, and staff. The Board is responsible for establishing the Alliance's strategic priorities, setting overall policy direction, and providing oversight and accountability, rather than managing day-to-day implementation decisions. Committees support that role by bringing Board expertise to specific issues and helping refine recommendations in areas aligned with the Alliance's priorities. Staff is responsible for implementation, operations, and day-to-day execution, including developing recommended actions, tactics, and work programs for Board consideration and approval where appropriate.

Within that broader framework, programmatic committees can serve as a mechanism for channeling Board expertise into the Alliance's priority areas in a focused and productive way. To remain effective, each committee should have a clearly defined purpose and a direct connection to one or more of the three priority areas outlined in this update. Periodically reviewing committee structure, scope, and meeting cadence will help ensure that these groups continue to serve the organization well as priorities evolve.

When a standing committee no longer directly supports the Alliance's strategic priorities, the Board should restructure, consolidate, or sunset that committee. In some cases, a project-based task force or time-limited working group may be a more effective way to address a specific initiative. This approach allows the Alliance to draw on Board expertise when it is most needed while keeping staff time focused on the work that matters most.

Clear communication between the Board and staff is also essential. Program updates should be organized around the three strategic priorities so that the Board can easily see how day-to-day work connects to the broader direction of the organization. Reporting that highlights outcomes and progress toward these priorities helps strengthen Board oversight while avoiding unnecessary meeting burden or duplication.

PRIORITY & IMPACT FILTER

To maintain focus as new ideas and opportunities emerge, the Alliance will apply a Priority & Impact Filter when evaluating potential initiatives, partnerships, or program expansions. This Filter provides a

consistent way for determining whether an initiative strengthens the organization's strategic direction or distracts attention from its core work.

When considering new efforts, the DTLB Alliance staff, Board, and committee leadership should ask:

- Does this directly support one of the three strategic priorities?
- Is the Alliance the right organization to lead or facilitate this work?
- Will this effort create meaningful benefit for Downtown Long Beach?
- Do we have the staff time and resources needed to carry it out successfully?
- What trade-offs would this require, and what would the Alliance need to stop or defer to take it on successfully?

Staff, and committees where appropriate, should use this Filter to evaluate potential initiatives and develop a recommendation based on that analysis. The Board can then use that recommendation to determine whether and how the initiative should move forward within the Alliance's broader strategic and policy direction. If a proposed initiative does not clearly meet these standards, it may be appropriate to say no, refine the idea, defer it, or pursue it through another partner organization. The purpose of the Priority & Impact Filter is not to limit new ideas, but to ensure that the Alliance's time and resources remain focused on the work that delivers the greatest value for Downtown and its ratepayers.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Strategic Plan update provides clear direction for the Alliance's work over the next five years. It reinforces the importance of core services, focuses attention on the areas where the organization can have the greatest impact, and outlines governance practices that support consistent execution. This includes a clearer delineation of roles, with the Board responsible for setting priorities, providing policy direction, and exercising oversight, while staff is responsible for translating that direction into implementation, annual work programs, and day-to-day execution.

Downtown Long Beach will continue to evolve in the years ahead. Economic conditions are shifting, expectations for downtown districts remain high, and preparation for the next renewal of the Downtown PBID will require sustained credibility and demonstrated value. In this environment, maintaining focus is a leadership choice. By concentrating effort on the priorities outlined in this update and applying the Priority & Impact Filter to new opportunities, the Alliance can continue delivering reliable services while supporting the long-term vitality of Downtown Long Beach.

A consistent commitment to these priorities will help ensure that the Alliance remains a trusted steward of assessment funds and a reliable partner in Downtown's continued progress. This approach positions the organization to navigate change, strengthen Downtown's economic resilience, and prepare successfully for the next renewal of the PBID.

APPENDIX: 2026–2031 PRIORITY AREAS AND ALIGNED OBJECTIVES

The following table shows how the three priority areas outlined in this update align with the objectives contained in the 2021 Strategic Plan. The priority areas do not introduce new objectives. Instead, they organize the existing objectives to reflect where the Alliance will focus its effort over the next five years.

<i>Priority Area</i>	<i>Tier</i>	<i>2021 Goal</i>	<i>2021 Objective</i>
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Core	Goal 1 – Clean & Safe Downtown	Enrich services to enhance the feeling of safety in Downtown
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 1 – Clean & Safe Downtown	Build on the Homeless Outreach Program that is tailored to the unique qualities and needs of the unhoused population in Downtown Long Beach
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 5 – Advocacy & Organizational Sustainability	Advocate for policies and resources that support enduring solutions to homelessness
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 4 – Placemaking & Public Realm	Partner with the City to ensure a clean, safe, and enjoyable experience at the newly developed Lincoln Park
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 1 – Clean & Safe Downtown	Establish higher standards for clean services
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 1 – Clean & Safe Downtown	Enhance lighting levels throughout Downtown
<i>Safe & Clean</i>	Supporting	Goal 1 – Clean & Safe Downtown	Improve maintenance of trees, tree wells, and walkways
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Core	Goal 3 – Marketing & Communications	Continue a comprehensive marketing & communications strategy

Priority Area	Tier	2021 Goal	2021 Objective
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Core	Goal 5 – Advocacy & Organizational Sustainability	Pursue all necessary requirements to renew the Downtown property-based improvement district (PBID) for another ten-year term
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Supporting	Goal 5 – Advocacy & Organizational Sustainability	Continually seek ways to build awareness of the DTLB Alliance and educate stakeholders about the Alliance’s role and value proposition
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Supporting	Goal 3 – Marketing & Communications	Increase use of online platforms to promote the people, businesses, and activities in Downtown
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Supporting	Goal 5 – Advocacy & Organizational Sustainability	Re-define, and advocate for, projects, policies, and initiatives that are considered transformative based on community benefit
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Supporting	Goal 4 – Placemaking & Public Realm	Work with partners to improve connectivity throughout Downtown
<i>Awareness & Visibility</i>	Supporting	Goal 5 – Advocacy & Organizational Sustainability	Actively track and participate in plans and special projects that impact Downtown
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Core	Goal 2 – Economic Vitality	Assist new and existing businesses in accessing resources and working through City processes
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Core	Goal 2 – Economic Vitality	Work with property owners, developers, and the leasing community in support of Downtown retail and office tenants

Priority Area	Tier	2021 Goal	2021 Objective
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Core	Goal 4 – Placemaking & Public Realm	Activate key locations with art, music, and culturally responsive placemaking, including programming and physical place enhancements
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Supporting	Goal 2 – Economic Vitality	Activate vacant or underutilized storefronts and help prevent future vacancies
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Supporting	Goal 2 – Economic Vitality	Assist the Downtown office market in evolving to meet the new reality
<i>Foot Traffic & Vitality</i>	Supporting	Goal 3 – Marketing & Communications	Continue to rethink the Alliance’s role in the production of events