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Development Corporation of Austin

Development Corporation of Austin Mission: Work closely with public and private sector partners to aggressively market the area to attract new businesses and industries, as well as support existing enterprises for economic benefit of Austin and Greater Mower County

Notes from the CEO's Desk

Dear DCA Members and Partners,

Happy New Year! As we kick-off 2025, we remain consistent in the objectives that have driven the DCA since its founding in 1986:

- Promote a strong, healthy business climate.
- Support the growth and development of businesses, including small businesses.
- Encourage new businesses and industries to locate in the area and assist existing businesses with improvements.
- Highlight the benefits of Austin, Minnesota, to businesses considering relocation or expansion.



However, in 1986 and for much of its history, DCA focused on physical buildings. The organization aimed to achieve its goals by “helping locate or provide buildings through leasing, purchasing, or other methods.”

Today, DCA's focus has expanded. While new buildings remain a priority, businesses now also look for communities that can help them attract and retain a skilled workforce. This includes offering housing, childcare, and other community amenities. With numerous partners, DCA is leading the Impact Austin initiative, which focuses on community improvements to help retain and attract a quality workforce. This

Find out how you can get involved in this effort below!

- John

December DCA Board Meeting

The December 10th DCA Board meeting included breakout discussions around DCA's priorities. Ideas to enhance Downtown Austin and Austin's Brand & Story were also discussed and will be incorporated into the on-going Comprehensive Plan work.



Key themes from the discussion included:

- **Quality of Life & Place Investments need to remain a key priority for the DCA-** if we get this right, the other strategic pillars for the DCA will fall into place
- **Align and tell our story-** build a community of cheerleaders for Austin
- **Strengths of Austin:**
 - The people
 - The Hormel Foundation and the Hormel Institute
 - Location- easy access to interstate and highways as well as close to MSP and Rochester
 - Affordable
 - 4 seasons
- **Opportunities:**
 - Education and Schools
 - Mission and Branding
 - Improve Investor Perception of community
 - Expand downtown retail- more attractive shops and food options
- **Comprehensive Plan- to be successful, we have to do the following:**
 - Plan must reflect and include cultural make-up of Austin
 - Needs to communicate, "Who we were, who we are now, and who we want to be in the future"
 - Show early successes and celebrate wins to gain momentum
 - Success means an increased tax base

We are planning future discussions and actions related to these topics- all of which have direct involvement of DCA board members, staff and partners.

IMPACT AUSTIN

Impact Austin Corner:

DCA Members and Partners,

First of all, I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season! It was a productive end to 2024, and I am looking forward to what is in store for Impact Austin and DCA as a whole in 2025!

Since my last update, we have continued to work hard supporting the ongoing Mower County and City of Austin Comprehensive Plan, and all of the various aspects that fall under this groundbreaking project for the community. With that said, here are a couple of project updates for you all!



Open House:

On **January 15th from 4-6 pm at the Hormel Nature Center**, we are hosting our first community open house for the Comp Plan 2045 Project. This is an all ages event with activities for any younger members of the community that attend. There is no formal presentation associated with this event, so please come and go as you please!

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2045
MOWER COUNTY | CITY OF AUSTIN

Our future is exciting.

Project Open House

Attend the Open House to learn more about the project, what we've heard from the community so far, and provide your ideas and comments.

- Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025
- Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Location: Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (1304 21st St NE - Austin, MN)

This is a kid-friendly event. All ages are welcome and encouraged to attend. Feel free to join anytime. There will be no formal presentation at the event.



Communities of Practice Workshops:

As another facet of the Comp Plan 2045 project, we are working with Daniel Hintz of The Velocity group to assemble a series of **Communities of Practice**. A community of practice is a small group of folks, who are content experts in different areas, that come together to share ideas, collaborate, and be a resource for the community as a

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During the week of February 17th-21st we will be hosting a series of public workshops for our assembled COPs inviting the community in to learn about each group, and see what plans have developed thus far in the early stages of their formation. There will be more details coming, and I hope you attend these workshops as you are able, and get involved in the work we are doing!



Listen to the latest episode of the [“Wright Here Right Now”](#) Podcast featuring Nick Novotny, Holly Wallace and Val Sheedy to talk details of the Comprehensive Plan 2045 Project.

As always, if you would like more information on anything regarding the Comprehensive Plan, or are wanting to get involved at all, I encourage you to reach out!



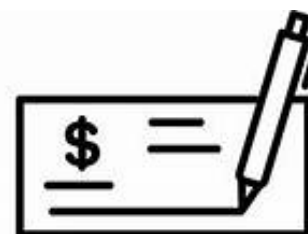
For more information, provide your comments, and sign up for updates:

www.compplan2045.com

Cheers,
Nick Novotny
Director of Community Engagement & Enhancement
Impact Austin- Development Corporation of Austin

LeRoy Forgivable Loan Program

The DCA recently partnered with Mower County to distribute \$80,000 in unspent economic development funds to help businesses in LeRoy that have affected by Highway 56 road construction. **Fourteen local businesses were able to utilize these funds.** Read more [here](#).



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Please share with anyone you feel could benefit from this event!

Member Spotlight

Each newsletter, we will be featuring a member of the DCA.

New member of the DCA in 2024

Lindsey Compton- Owner & Operator

Business Name: *The Style Lounge Salon & The MOD Medspa*

Reason for Joining the DCA: *I am passionate about the present and future of Austin. I am lifetime resident and small business owner in Austin.*

Favorite Thing About Austin: *The people and the opportunities available in our community.*



In 2024, we also welcomed the following new members:

- Kris Heichel, Fairway Mortgage
- Betsy Morem, Morem & Waller, CPA

Economic Development

Breaking It Down

What does it all mean? Each quarter, we will highlight some commonly used phrases in economic development and how they relate to the work happening at the DCA.



Cluster/Industry Cluster/Innovation Cluster

Networks of thematically related companies and institutions in close, geographic proximity that — through competition and collaboration — have the potential to produce more efficient economic output as a group than they could individually. Examples of established clusters include Silicon Valley (technology), Detroit (automotive engineering), and the Boston Life Sciences Corridor (biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry). Clusters can include suppliers, manufacturers, and institutions that provide education and technical services to support those businesses.

DCA Strategic Priorities:

DCA's 2022-2025 strategic plan prioritizes opportunities in food, bioscience and agriculture in Austin and Mower County. It places a high priority on supporting entrepreneurs and infrastructure planning to benefit local businesses. Lastly, DCA will support initiatives to attract and retain a talented, skilled workforce.

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Priority 1:	Position Austin to be a destination for businesses, innovators, and entrepreneurs at the intersection of food, health, agriculture, and biosciences.
Priority 2:	Ensure entrepreneurs and startup businesses have access to the right technical assistance and funding to launch their ideas.
Priority 3:	Existing firms have access to workforce, infrastructure, capital and physical space that allow them to remain and continue to grow in the community.
Priority 4:	Coordination and collaboration with community partners to make Austin a world-class destination for residents.

[Click here for the full Development Corporation of Austin & Austin Community Growth Ventures Strategic Plan](#)

Our 2025 Membership Drive is now underway! We thank you for your support.



[Click here to see our 2024 DCA Members and Contributors](#)

Your annual membership letter will be sent in the mail later this month.

You can send your annual membership dues to:

The Development Corporation of Austin
329 N Main St Suite 106L
Austin, MN 55912

****Individual contributors may make their contributions to "Austin Community Charitable Fund", the DCA's 501c3 organization. Individual contributions may be tax deductible.**

Let's Connect!

Click below to share any ideas, topics or feedback you would like to see in future newsletters. We'd love to hear from you!

Share Your Thoughts



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