Downtown Boone Development Association
Marketing and Communications Strategy RFP
Questions and Responses
Issued October 12, 2026

This document provides DBDA's responses to questions received from prospective proposers regarding the Marketing and Communications Strategy RFP. Similar questions have been consolidated for clarity. Please review these responses alongside the RFP when preparing your proposal.

Question deadline clarification: The deadline for written questions is October 12, 2026. This supersedes the October 9 date in Section 7. Proposals remain due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 23, 2026.

Stakeholder engagement: What number or range of stakeholder interviews, participants, or group sessions should proposers plan and budget for across the categories listed in Section 4.1; will DBDA provide a stakeholder list and assist with recruitment and scheduling, or should the consultant identify and recruit participants, including those beyond DBDA's existing network; and may interviews and meetings be conducted virtually?

Response: DBDA is funded through a Municipal Service District (MSD), which defines the area we represent and includes approximately 300 property and business owners. Stakeholder interviews should include DBDA staff and Board members, a representative mix of businesses within the district, and invested community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Development Authorities (TDAs), and other business and tourism support organizations.

Rather than prescribing a minimum number of interviews or group sessions, we encourage proposers to recommend an approach that captures a variety of perspectives within the project's scope and budget. DBDA can provide stakeholder lists and assist with recruitment and scheduling. Stakeholder interviews and meetings will need to be held in person in Boone, while routine staff check-ins may be conducted virtually.

Firm eligibility and meeting format: Does DBDA accept proposals from firms located outside North Carolina, and which project activities, including stakeholder interviews, meetings, and the April 27 draft strategy presentation, require in-person attendance in Boone? Which activities may be completed virtually, and how many on-site visits should proposers plan and budget for?

Response: DBDA welcomes proposals from firms located outside North Carolina. However, due to limited access to technology, in-person attendance in Boone will be necessary for stakeholder interviews and meetings, as well as the April 27 draft strategy presentation to the Board. Routine staff check-ins may be conducted virtually.

Proposers should plan and budget for the on-site visits needed to carry out their proposed engagement approach and attend the Board presentation.

Existing plans and communications materials: What existing materials, including DBDA's Main Street strategic plan or work plan, brand standards, audience research, recent communications materials, website analytics, and channel performance data, are available for prospective respondents to review, and what will be provided to the selected consultant at kickoff?

Response: Copies of DBDA's NC Main Street work plan and brand standards are attached to this email for prospective respondents to review. No current audience research is available.

Recent communications materials consist primarily of emails and a monthly PDF newsletter. Examples can be provided to the selected consultant at kickoff, along with available website analytics and social media performance data.

Implementation tools and templates: Beyond the calendar framework, communications matrix, and measurement tools specified in the RFP, what additional tools, templates, or designed marketing materials does DBDA expect? Should these include editable templates for recurring communications, such as social media posts and newsletters, or primarily frameworks and examples staff can adapt over time, and should they be compatible with any existing software platforms?

Response: DBDA is open to a range of implementation tools, including editable templates, adaptable frameworks, and examples staff can use over time. Beyond the deliverables outlined in the RFP, we do not have specific expectations and welcome recommendations that will make ongoing communications easier to manage.

We currently use Google Workspace, Proxi, Buffer and Meta Business Suite. Tools that work within or complement these platforms would be helpful, but we are also open to other options that fit our staff capacity and budget.

Grant documentation and compliance: What federal or grant-related forms, certifications, or compliance documents are required, and should they be submitted with the proposal or provided only by the selected contractor?

Response: No separate federal or grant-related forms or certifications are required with the proposal submission. Proposers must still provide the information requested in the RFP, including disclosure of actual or potential conflicts of interest under Section 11. The selected contractor will be required to provide applicable supporting documentation before contract execution.

On-site work and travel costs: Does DBDA anticipate any required on-site work beyond the stakeholder interviews, meetings, and Board presentation, and must all travel expenses associated with in-person work be included within the $20,000 budget ceiling?

Response: DBDA does not currently anticipate additional on-site work beyond the stakeholder interviews, meetings, and Board presentation, although additional visits cannot be completely

ruled out as the project develops. All travel expenses associated with in-person work must be included within the $20,000 budget ceiling.

Brand identity and scope: Is this engagement focused primarily on positioning, messaging, and communications systems, or is DBDA also open to changes to its visual brand?

Response: DBDA is not seeking changes to its visual brand. This engagement should focus on clarifying DBDA's role and identity through positioning, messaging, and communications systems, while working within our existing brand standards.

Website recommendations and scope: Should website recommendations focus on content, structure, and the website's role in the broader communications strategy, or is hands-on website work expected as part of this engagement?

Response: No hands-on website work is expected as part of this engagement. Website recommendations should focus on content, structure, and how the website supports the broader marketing and communications strategy.

# DOWNTOWN BOONE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION MAIN STREET PROGRAM
# Economic Development Implementation Plan – 2026-2027

**Main Street Methodology:** Boone is a designated NC Main Street community. The town of Boone has charged Downtown Boone Development Association with the administration of the Main Street program at the local level. The agency uses the Main Street America ™ model of establishing economic development strategies that will transform downtown and applies the Main Street Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization, to implement a plan that achieves measurable results.

**2026-2031: Downtown Boone is where community and commerce thrive together in a vibrant, walkable hub that strengthens local connections while driving regional prosperity. Rooted in the spirit of the Blue Ridge Mountains, it cultivates collaboration among residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors, creating a dynamic economy built on shared experiences and sustainable growth.**

**Mission/Purpose: The Downtown Boone Development Association promotes and champions the enhancement of downtown Boone.**

**Economic Development Strategy #1 that will transform downtown: A vibrant, walkable hub that strengthens local connections and drives regional prosperity.**

**Goal for accomplishing ED Strategy #1: To blend community engagement with economic growth that will enhance walkability and design, strengthen community connections, boost economic vitality and increase regional visibility.**

| ECONOMIC VITALITY | DESIGN | PROMOTION | ORGANIZATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** |
| Collaborate with Watauga County to explore opportunities to expand public parking availability during periods when court-related parking demand is lower (such as when jury is not in session), including evaluating signage needs and working toward a more unified parking wayfinding approach. DBDA will cover the costs associated with signage. *Measurable*: Details to be developed by July 2026. | Develop two point-of-interest walking pathways — one to measure and promote step-based distances between parking areas and downtown destinations, and another to demonstrate that while visitors may not be able to park directly in front of their destination, they are often walking less than they would in a large retail setting (such as a trip to Walmart). *Measurable:* Complete at least one pathway by June 2026. | Develop and publish 2-3 promotional pieces that encourage walking and highlight "where to park" when visiting downtown. *Measurable:* Ensure these pieces are integrated into website updates and social media by the end of July 2026. | Attend at least 2 TDA Board meetings by Spring 2026. Intentional collaboration with TDA quarterly meetings Director to Director. |

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| Conduct a parking – walking tour AND add a Video on social media "Before you Go – What you should know", interactive map on parking, by July 2026. | Finishing Howard Street and connecting mural alleyway development focus on elements that attract people to walk through. Develop a plan once construction is wrapping up by September 2026. | Create the means to promote the historical walking tour app – by fall of 2026. Tie to the ARC communication & marketing plan. | Facilitate Board Leadership and Governance Training through the ARC READY Nonprofits program to strengthen Board roles, governance practices, and organizational sustainability. Measurable: prepare to solicit leadership training RFPs by September 2026. |
| Coordinate with NCDOT Regional Director on pedestrian crosswalk and trail connectivity improvements; following implementation, survey downtown businesses to measure sales impacts. *(Target: 2027)* | Complete Hellbender mural expansion and coordinate with Town Staff to pilot temporary wayfinding marking connections between the Hellbender mural, Rivers Property, and downtown prior to permanent signage installation. Goal to have placement identified by Sept 2026. | Organize a quarterly downtown education seminar with hotel employes/wait staff/downtown staff. Gather input for seminar goals in 2026 with roll out planned in January 2027. | Procure development of a comprehensive Marketing and Communications Strategy to strengthen DBDA messaging, support downtown business promotion, and align outreach with NC Main Street priorities and the DBDA strategic plan. Measurable: be to prepared to solicit related RFPs by August 2026. |
| Research and develop a Downtown Bucks program, including review of implementation models used by peer communities such as Morganton and Mooresville, with program launch targeted for January 2027. | | Research and evaluate the feasibility, costs, and promotional benefits of converting the Downtown Boone website into a mobile app to support visitor engagement and downtown marketing efforts, with a report and recommendation prepared for Board review by Fall 2026. | Educate downtown businesses on events, resources, and best practices, and host quarterly community information sessions to provide updates on the Howard Street Project and DBDA initiatives, with a goal of recruiting 25 new volunteers by December 2026. |
| **Economic Development Strategy #2: Downtown cultivates collaboration among residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors creating a dynamic economy built on shared experiences and sustainable growth.** | | | |
| **Goal for accomplishing ED Strategy #2: To build a collaborative downtown ecosystem where residents, businesses and visitors actively engage to strengthen community ties and drive sustainable economic growth through shared experiences resulting in higher sales, sustained/expanded/new locally owned businesses, increased investment, safer, more attractive and walkable downtown blocks, stronger foot traffic and regional brand recognition.** | | | |
| **ECONOMIC VITALITY** | **DESIGN** | **PROMOTION** | **ORGANIZATION** |
| **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** | **Measurable Projects/Actions/Objectives:** |

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| Research businesses that are needed downtown that would complement existing and strive to recruit or expand up to 2 new businesses from the list by 2026. | Refresh the rotating Public Art Program and seek to tie in with App State's Annual Rosen Sculpture Walk. Identify at least one new sculpture area by the summer of 2026. | Write up to 8 storytelling pieces to submit to regional, local, statewide media outlets to tell a story about something unique downtown. It could be a business feature or about the cooperative spirit of the downtown businesses, etc. | Organize + training for staff in retail sales, realtors, wait staff, hoteliers, etc. on a bi-annual basis. Topics will rotate but will be<br>focused on upcoming events,<br>downtown safety,<br>fraud detection and others<br>as deemed necessary. |
| Create an incentive package with a goal of raising $50,000 that will encourage the best environmental practices. These can include assisting programs with tax credit projects, upgrading HVAC, electrical, proper fitting windows that meet the secretary of interiors standards, etc. – work with ASU to determine projects. | Partner with the Historic Preservation Commission for the development of additional historic programming and expanded public art spaces downtown. Fix the Doc Watson bricks, etc. Identify at least one new space that could house both by December 2027. | Create an overarching communication plan increasing social media engagement by 10% by the spring of 2027. | Action: Continue to Have a DBDA booth set up during Boonerang of 2026 that informs the community of all the yearly opportunities in downtown. Create 3 new visual boards for display that can be multi purpose for display options**.** |
| | Action: Tile work/wall update on public restrooms with Watauga Arts Council by March of 2024**.** | Action: Grow and expand restaurant week in 2026. | Action: Develop a volunteer recruitment manual that includes job descriptions, appreciation opportunities, etc. by June of 2027. |
| | ADDED: Partner with Sustainability Committee and Implement green design standards for 1 new project and certify businesses that meet that standard (or award them with a financial incentive for their work.) | Investigate adding 2 electronic signs to instantly inform public of downtown happenings. Have a report to the Board on feasibility by December 2026. | Action: Expand partnership with Boonerang planners to possibly expand funding opportunities for DBDA, as well as volunteer recruitment. Increase volunteer recruitment by 5%. |
| | | | Continue partnership with Appalachian State University to develop a downtown environmental sustainability ("green") initiative and long-term sustainability plan, while continuing participation in green business trainings, by December 2026. |

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| | | | **ADDED:** Review and consider: Form a Downtown Collaboration Task Force to bring together residents, entrepreneurs, property owners and downtown visitors (customers/ASU students) to ensure diverse perspectives, encourage inclusivity for downtown and to shape downtown initiatives, foster buy-in to the downtown program. These could be listening and input sessions three times a year beginning in March 26. |

# DBDA ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE TASKS

**Economic Development Strategy #1: That Will Transform Downtown: A vibrant, walkable hub that strengthens local connections and drives regional prosperity.**

**Goal for Accomplishing the ED Strategy #1: To blend community engagement with economic growth that will enhance walkability and design, strengthen community connections, boost economic vitality and increase regional visibility.**

**Economic Vitality Project/Action/Objective:** Collaborate with Watauga County to explore opportunities to expand public parking availability during periods when court-related parking demand is lower (such as when jury is not in session), including evaluating signage needs and working toward a more unified parking wayfinding approach. DBDA will cover the costs associated with signage. *Measurable*: Details to be developed by July 2026.

| Completed ✓ | Task | Name of Person Responsible | In-House or Outsourced | Cost/Time | Tools Needed | Partners/Assistance Needed | Date for Completion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ | Break down the task into actionable steps | EV Committee Members Name | Internal to the organization or external? | How much cost? How much time? | What do you need to do this task? | Who Needs to Help You do it? Agency? Person? | Deadline for completion |
| | Identify gaps in downtown business mix (retail, dining, services). | | | | | | |

DOWNTOWN

# Boone®

ELEVATION 3,333

LIVE IT UP

## BRAND STYLE GUIDE

# BRAND COLOR USAGE

## SUMMER GREEN

RGB: 101, 146, 122
CMYK: 62, 29, 47, 4
PANTONE: 556 C

## SPRING GREEN

RGB: 197, 222, 149
CMYK: 19, 00, 43, 2
PANTONE: 372 C

## Color Usage:

Whenever possible use the full color logo on the Summer Green background color. If you can only do 2 colors, choose the Summer Green Background with the Spring Green, Single Color logo (opt A).

OPT ION A

OPT ION B

## PRIMARY LOGOS

Textured

No Texture

## SECONDARY MARKS

Secondary Logo

Icon

## Usage:

The Primary, Non-Textured Logo has been trademarked and updated to include a Registration Mark. Please use the non-textured logo with the registration mark in most cases. You will find at times that the cleaner non-textured logo may work better for physical items such as embossing or etching.

# PRIMARY MARK USAGE HEIRARCHY

Best Option

2nd Best Option

3rd Best Option

4th Best Option

# FONT USAGE

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