

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

1. Good at engaging the community and maintaining a positive image
2. Proven Fundraising (501c3 makes it more appealing)
3. Good momentum with building relationships with businesses and the city.

Weaknesses:

1. We have a lack of funding
2. We're experiencing volunteer limitations
3. Lack of clarity on our groups purpose (from the public's perspective) causing relationship issues with other groups (chamber, economic development)
4. Lack of relationship with property owners and businesses beyond our involvement with In Any Event and Woody's.

Opportunities:

1. Foster relationships with The City, The Chamber, Economic Development and The School.
2. Further structuring of Volunteers, Board Members and Committees.
3. Hire Contractors/Leverage local professionals to bridge the gaps in our Volunteers.

Threats:

1. History of the Group
2. Volunteer & paid position limitations
3. Having time to ensure project completion and polishing so we don't have inferior projects that hurt our image
4. Missing Opportunities
5. General cost of doing business.

Ashland Betterment Coalition Strategic Plan:

I. Introduction

The purpose of this strategic plan is to outline the key initiatives and strategies for Ashland Betterment Coalition – a non-profit organization focused on revitalizing the downtown area of Ashland, Missouri. By working towards the common goal of transforming downtown Ashland into a thriving, vibrant, and economically sustainable community hub, this plan aims to attract businesses, improve infrastructure, enhance community engagement, and create a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. This strategic plan will be revisited every 3-5 years to ensure we are keeping up with the needs of our community. The budget included at the end of this plan will be revisited every year.

II. Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission is to use existing educational and economic resources as well as new opportunities to foster sustainable economic growth and help develop a diverse and vibrant mix of businesses and entertainment options while encouraging community interaction.

We are here to encourage a diverse, family-oriented commercial environment that promotes the Ashland downtown as the place to live, shop & play.

We envision a revitalized downtown Ashland that serves as a thriving center for commerce, attracting businesses, residents, and visitors while preserving its small-town charm and historical character, and creating a vibrant and inclusive community space that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors.

III. Objectives and Action Plans

Community Engagement

- 1) Establish healthy relationships:
 - a) Form a collaborative partnership with local businesses to help encourage the utilization of the downtown area through organized events, community programs and infrastructure enhancements.

- 2) Maintain relationships:
 - a) Continue our social media efforts – including business spotlights.
 - b) Maintain our relationship with the city and other city groups by attending meetings and staying in the know about what's being discussed.
 - c) Continue being present and vocal on what we're doing through social media.
 - d) Provide events for the public that highlight our efforts in some way.

- 3) Stakeholder involvement:
 - a) Conduct yearly town hall meetings, surveys, or workshops to gather input from residents, business owners, building owners and other stakeholders, ensuring their voices are heard and included in the revitalization efforts.
 - i) We will have “Feedback February” yearly where we will focus on gathering input.
- 4) Clarify our purpose in relation to other groups:
 - a) Establish strong partnerships with The City, The Chamber and Economic Development to align goals and to share resources and knowledge to maximize impact and avoid duplication of efforts.
 - i) Get involved with them; find how we can help them so they can help us; meet with President and VP of each group in near future to define and differentiate roles in the community.
 - b) Communicate the differences between the groups via social media.
- 5) Attract and maintain a healthy list of active volunteers.
 - a) Create a list of what volunteers we need and communicate those needs through social media and a mailing to all in the 65010 zip code.
 - b) Create an onboard guide for new volunteers so they can feel included in the group quickly.
 - i) Give them opportunities to be involved right away and have tasks so they are held accountable but not spread too thin. This will help us keep volunteers once we’ve obtained them.
 - c) Hire Contractors/Leverage local professionals to bridge the gaps in our Volunteers.
 - i) Consider sites like fiverr for newsletter, connect with local contractors asking them to be part of our events and find ways our projects can benefit their business, look at high school group volunteer opportunity needs, find college talent looking to grow portfolio/experience.
 - ii) Make the asks to groups like regional development to write grants, find volunteers who have different experiences and get them involved where they feel some accountability.

Infrastructure Enhancement

- 1) Increase funding:
 - a) Ensure that we are making it known that we are tax deductible and send the formal tax receipt.
 - b) Share our successes with fundraising and use those funds for things the community sees and appreciates.

- c) Host successful fundraisers consistently.
 - i) Consider adopting fundraisers / money opportunities that have been successful in the community before but are hurting for volunteers or not done any more.
 - ii) Partner with the sports teams/school groups and other Ashland groups for fundraising opportunities so it is a success for everyone.
 - d) Encourage the city to continue providing \$5,000 annual at a minimum by keeping good records and giving them a reason our group is beneficial to the city itself.
- 2) Streetscape improvement:
- a) Collaborate with The City and local businesses to improve the aesthetics and functionality of downtown streets, sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping. i) Priorities would be Planters, Trees, Trashcans, Benches, Cute Lighting, and Darker Parking Lines.
- 3) Utilize the community to enhance the aesthetics:
- a) Enhance the aesthetics of downtown Ashland by integrating public art installations - fostering a sense of community pride and engagement. i) Initiate a local art contest for a mural design on the side of the building at 103 E. Broadway, Ashland, MO 65010.
 - ii) Initiate a plan to have local artists design and paint utility boxes. iii) Reach out to Mid-Mo Art Alliance for a local artist to create a couple of watercolors of what we'd like Downtown Ashland to look like in the future.
 - b) Implement a Memorial Program for community members to donate towards a bench or tree that would be planted in their family member's memory. This would include an engraved plaque.
- 4) Parking management:
- a) Conduct a parking assessment by the end of the year.
 - i) Doesn't have to be anything formal – just us evaluating the current number of spots vs. how many we think we should have and identifying solutions.
 - b) Implement solutions to alleviate parking challenges throughout the downtown area.

Economic Development

- 1) Attract and retain businesses:
- a) Encourage existing businesses to get involved in our events in the area.
 - b) Attract new businesses that align with the vision for downtown Ashland.
 - i) Evaluate open properties and gather opportunity details for posting on our social media and website.
 - ii) Look at partnering with Economic Development.
- 2) Provide resources and support:
- a) Offer business development resources.
 - i) How to start a business in downtown Ashland, List of local resources, List of our upcoming events they can be a part of, Financial incentives if we have

- any.
 - b) Set up a Financial Incentive Program for businesses looking to improve their buildings.
- 3) Market downtown Ashland:
- a) Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote downtown Ashland as a destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment.