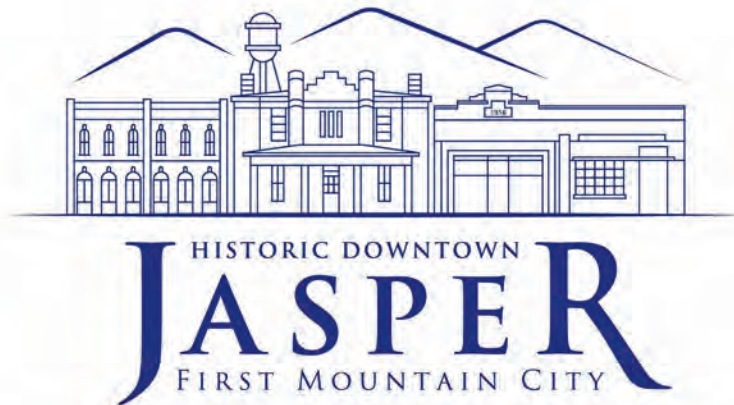
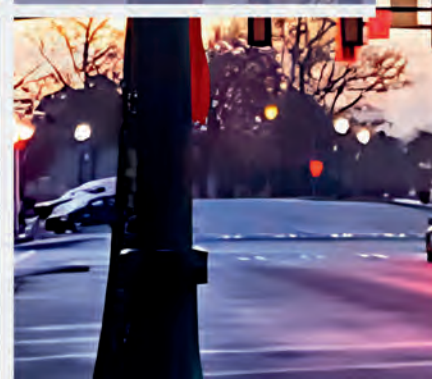




Action Plan

A One Year Plan from
July 1, 2026
to June 30th, 2027

Learn More



Letter from the Facilitator

Dear Jasper Downtown Development Authority
Board Members,

I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the time, thought, and energy you brought to our recent planning session and training. It was a true pleasure to spend time with your board and see the care you each have for Downtown Jasper.

What stood out to me most was the spirit of collaboration in the room. The conversations were honest, thoughtful, and productive, and it was clear that everyone came prepared to think seriously about the future of downtown. Your willingness to discuss challenges, share ideas, and work toward common goals says a great deal about the strength of your board.

Downtown development work is not always easy, but it is deeply important. The work you are doing helps shape the identity, energy, and future of your community. I left the session encouraged by your commitment and excited about the opportunities ahead for Downtown Jasper.

Thank you again for allowing me to be part of the conversation. I appreciate your hospitality, your engagement, and your dedication to building a stronger, more vibrant downtown.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey D. Fowler



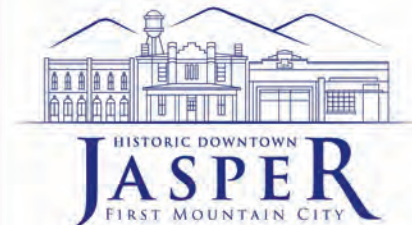
Board Roster and Meeting Attendance

The Jasper Downtown Development Authority Board includes:

Board Member	Role
Parish Lowrie	Chair
Pam Watkins	Vice Chair
Marty Callahan	Secretary & Treasurer
Jack Dunn	Board Member
Brandon Hannah	Board Member
Brian Rittenberry	Board Member
Morgan Watson	Board Member

Meeting Attendance Note:

Marty Callahan and Jack Dunn were not present for this planning meeting. Because both members were assigned workplan responsibilities, the Chair should follow up with each of them directly to explain their assigned areas and responsibilities before formal adoption of the workplan. As all Main Street/DDAs are working boards, all board members are required assigned tasks.



Executive Summary

The Jasper Downtown Development Authority is entering an important implementation year. Previous planning efforts established a foundation around downtown revitalization, Main Street growth, board structure, community partnerships, tourism, business activation, and visible downtown improvement. This report turns the board's recent training and planning discussion into a practical one-year workplan.

Jasper has already made meaningful progress. In 2026, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs announced Jasper as one of the communities elevated to Affiliate Main Street status, which recognizes strengthened program structure, increased local engagement, and readiness to continue advancing within the Main Street framework.

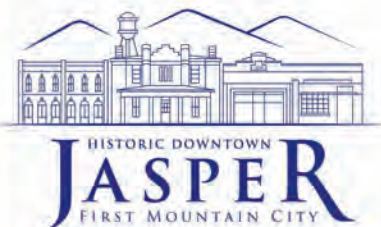
The purpose of this one-year plan is to move Jasper from discussion into action. The workplan focuses on seven board-led priorities:

1. Create a separate Main Street board / nonprofit structure
2. Advance the juried art project
3. Build smaller events and downtown promotions
4. Create sustainable funding and sponsorships
5. Plan Christmas downtown / shopping night
6. Build storytelling and volunteer systems
7. Strengthen downtown economic development

The Main Street Approach is centered around four major areas of work: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. These areas give Jasper a useful structure for sorting board responsibilities, downtown projects, events, fundraising, and long-term redevelopment activity.

03

S U M M A R Y



Board Training Themes

The board training emphasized that the DDA is not simply an event committee or volunteer club. A Georgia Downtown Development Authority exists to support downtown redevelopment, long-range planning, financing, public-private partnerships, and the economic health of the downtown district. The University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute notes that DDAs may help develop and promote downtowns, make long-range plans, finance public-good projects, execute agreements, buy or sell property, and issue revenue bonds or notes.

Because the Jasper DDA also carries Main Street responsibilities, the board's work must include more than beautification or events. It must include planning, reporting, staff support, board involvement, measurable progress, and ongoing downtown economic development. The prior training materials emphasized that the board helps support staff, create and follow an annual workplan, participate in training, hold regular meetings, track downtown activity, and maintain compliance with Georgia Main Street expectations.

Georgia Main Street also makes clear that designated programs are expected to keep a workplan on file, and that workplans guide the projects and scope of work for the local Main Street program.

The key message from training was simple:

The DDA should not try to do everything at once. It should choose clear priorities, assign ownership, track progress, and build visible wins that create trust.



Planning Foundation

The 2025 Jasper DDA Strategic Planning Work Session identified three Community Transformation Strategies for Downtown Jasper: Beautification Initiatives & Design, Business Activation & Development, and Tourism. Those strategies were intended to focus downtown investment, align partners, and guide Jasper's continued work toward a stronger Main Street program.

That earlier planning report also recommended that Jasper treat the workplan as a living document, prioritize visible and achievable projects, hold quarterly check-ins, document outcomes, track volunteer hours, and engage partners through committee structures aligned with the Main Street Four-Point Approach.

This new one-year plan should therefore be treated as a working tool, not a static report. The board should review it monthly, update it quarterly, and use it to hold each project lead accountable.





Goal 1: Create a Separate Main Street Board / Nonprofit Structure

Board Lead: Parish Lowrie

Main Street Category: Organization

Purpose

The DDA should explore creating a separate Main Street board and nonprofit support structure to strengthen fundraising, volunteer recruitment, community ownership, and long-term program sustainability. A separate nonprofit or supporting organization can help create a clearer division between the public authority role of the DDA and the community-based fundraising and volunteer role often needed for Main Street success. This does not mean the DDA steps away from leadership. Instead, it means the DDA builds a stronger support system around downtown work.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have a clear recommendation on Main Street board structure, nonprofit status, board composition, legal setup, and initial funding. Immediate Goals Identified

Parish identified the following next steps:

- Explore creation of a 501(c)(3)
- Identify a lawyer willing to assist pro bono
- Raise at least \$1,000 in startup capital for the nonprofit

Recommended Action Steps

Ask DCA / Georgia Main Street for sample structures from comparable Georgia communities.

Identify 3–5 communities Jasper can study and “borrow” from.

Draft basic mission language for the nonprofit.

Create a startup budget.

Begin identifying founding contributors.

Draft articles of incorporation and bylaws.

Begin recruitment of founding board or committee members.

By End of Year

Establish legal structure or formal recommendation.

Create written relationship guidelines between DDA, City, Main Street staff, and nonprofit support board.

Tips and Tricks

Keep this simple at first. The first goal is not to create another complicated board. The first goal is to create a support system that gives downtown work more people, more money, and more community ownership.



Goal 2: Juried Art Project

Board Lead: Morgan Watson

Main Street Category: Design / Promotion

Purpose

The juried art project is a strong fit for Jasper because it connects downtown beautification, local identity, tourism, artists, public space, and community pride.

This project should not be treated as “just art.” It should be treated as a downtown activation project that brings people into the district, creates visual interest, supports local creatives, and gives Jasper something marketable.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have completed or launched a juried art project with clear artist communication, confirmed funding, a public timeline, and a promotional plan.

Morgan identified the following next steps:

- Getting back with the artists
- Setting dates
- Checking with Carly about available funds

Recommended Action Steps

Contact all artists who previously expressed interest.

Meet with Carly to confirm budget and funding source.

Identify possible locations.

Recruit a jury panel.

Secure sponsorships if needed.

Prepare promotional graphics and press release.

By End of Year

Install or exhibit the selected art.

Host a public unveiling, art walk, or awards night.

Track attendance, artist participation, volunteer hours, sponsorship dollars, and media reach.

Decide whether to make it annual.

Tips and Tricks

The strongest public art projects are easy to explain. Choose one clear theme.

Give artists good instructions. Make the public vote or attend. Get sponsors.

Take photos of everything.



Goal 3: Smaller Events and Downtown Promotions

Board Lead: Pam Watkins

Main Street Category: Promotion

Purpose

Smaller events can bring people downtown without exhausting staff, board members, merchants, or volunteers. Jasper does not need every event to be large. In fact, smaller promotions may be more sustainable and more helpful to downtown businesses. The goal should be to build a consistent downtown rhythm.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have a manageable calendar of small events and promotions that support downtown businesses, generate some revenue, and create regular reasons for people to visit downtown.

Pam identified the following next steps:

- Consulting the event list
- Charging people for events where appropriate
- Borrowing, researching, and duplicating ideas from other cities
- Looking at what other communities are doing

Recommended Action Steps

Ask each downtown business what type of promotion would actually help them. Identify events that can make money instead of only costing money.

Build a 12-month downtown promotion calendar.

Choose no more than one major focus per month.

Launch the first small promotion.

Create a repeatable event checklist.

By End of Year

Complete at least four small downtown promotions.

Track attendance, business participation, revenue, volunteer hours, and lessons learned.

Decide which events should return.

Tips and Tricks

Every event should have a purpose. The purpose may be business sales, fundraising, tourism, community pride, volunteer recruitment, or downtown visibility. If no one can explain the purpose, the event should not happen.

Events should also have revenue rules. Free events are fine, but someone still pays for them. Jasper should use vendor fees, sponsorships, ticketed add-ons, donation boxes, merchant buy-ins, and in-kind partnerships where appropriate.



Goal 4: Funding and Sponsorship Program

Board Lead: Marty Callahan

Main Street Category: Organization / Economic Vitality

Purpose

Funding is one of Jasper's most urgent needs. Without money, the board cannot support projects, events, marketing, art, beautification, incentives, or long-term planning. As Secretary & Treasurer, this is a logical area for Marty's leadership.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have a formal sponsorship program, written sponsorship levels, a prospect list, a tracking system, and a goal for annual unrestricted operating support.

The board identified the following next steps:

- Raise money
- Create a sponsorship program
- Establish sponsorship levels
- Stick to the program consistently

Recommended Action Steps

Determine annual fundraising goal.

Create a list of sponsorship prospects.

Decide what sponsors receive in return.

Create a draft sponsorship packet.

Create a one-page "Why Support Downtown Jasper?" sheet.

Assign board members to contact prospects.

Begin public sponsor recognition.

By End of Year

Build a recurring sponsor base.

Evaluate which levels worked.

Renew sponsors before the next budget year.

Set a reserve goal for the next year.

Tips and Tricks

The board should not reinvent sponsorship levels for every event. That creates confusion and makes sponsors wait for a better deal. Create one annual sponsorship packet and stick to it.

Also, do not undervalue sponsorships. Downtown work has value. Sponsors are not just giving money to an event; they are investing in Jasper's identity, business climate, and community pride.



Goal 5: Christmas Downtown / Shopping Night

Board Lead: Brian Rittenberry

Main Street Category: Promotion / Organization

Purpose

Christmas downtown can become one of Jasper's strongest seasonal promotions. It supports local shopping, creates community pride, brings families downtown, and gives businesses a reason to stay open later. This should be treated as both a holiday event and an economic development tool.

One-Year Objective

By the end of the holiday season, Jasper should host a well-organized downtown Christmas shopping night with sponsors, volunteers, storytelling, marketing, and a "claim a tree" component.

Brian identified the following next steps:

- Sponsors
- Volunteers
- Storytelling
- Marketing
- Claim-a-tree concept

Event Ideas

- Claim-a-tree downtown display
- Late-night shopping
- Hot cocoa stations
- Christmas music downtown
- Santa photos
- Downtown passport card
- Ornament hunt
- Window decorating contest

Recommended Action Steps

Pick event date.

Confirm event name.

Identify sponsorship needs.

Launch sponsor outreach.

Launch "claim a tree" program.

Recruit volunteer team.

Create marketing schedule.

Confirm merchant participation.

Track attendance and business participation.

Add storytelling elements, such as local Christmas memories, downtown history, or merchant stories.

Talk with downtown merchants before finalizing the plan.

Collect merchant feedback.

Tips and Tricks

Make the event feel full even if the budget is small. Lighting, music, greenery, signage, photo spots, and volunteers in visible places can make a major difference.

The event should not depend on one person. Create small volunteer teams!



Goal 6: Storytelling and Volunteers

Board Lead: Jack Dunn

Main Street Category: Organization / Promotion

Purpose

Jasper has history, people, stories, buildings, churches, civic groups, traditions, and mountain-town identity. Storytelling can help connect residents and visitors to downtown in a deeper way. Volunteers are also essential. A strong Main Street program cannot function with only staff and board members doing the work. It needs a clear volunteer system.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have a volunteer database, a storytelling project structure, and a November signature event concept built around partnerships, local history, churches, DAR, oral histories, and community stories.

The board identified the following next steps:

- Storytelling
- Volunteers
- Partnerships

Recommended Action Steps

Create a volunteer interest form.

Create a list of story themes.

Recruit volunteer captains.

Create a simple volunteer sign-in and hour-tracking system.

Record or document first set of stories from Downtown Jasper.

Assign volunteers to event roles.

Announce storytelling project.

Collect oral histories or written stories.

Share stories through social media, website, event signage, or downtown displays.

Create a volunteer recognition plan.

Tips and Tricks

Storytelling should not become complicated. Start with simple questions:

- What do you remember about downtown Jasper?
- What business did your family visit?
- What building matters to you?
- What was downtown like when you were younger?
- What tradition should not be forgotten?
- What do you hope downtown becomes?

The board should collect stories in small pieces. A quote, a photo, a memory, or a short video can all become useful content.



Goal 7: Economic Development

Board Lead: Brandon Hannah

Main Street Category: Economic Vitality

Purpose

Economic development is one of the hardest but most important parts of DDA work. Jasper has challenges, but the board can begin with practical steps: know the buildings, know the owners, know the vacancies, know the business needs, and know what tools are available. The goal is not to solve every economic challenge in one year. The goal is to build the system that lets Jasper respond to opportunities.

One-Year Objective

By June 2027, Jasper should have a downtown property and business inventory, a list of available buildings, a list of possible business recruitment targets, and a draft façade or small business incentive concept.

Brandon identified the following next steps:

- Figuring out what the DDA can realistically do
- Researching and duplicating ideas from other cities
- Looking at façade grants
- Making a list of available buildings
- Understanding downtown economic development challenges

Recommended Action Steps

Create a downtown property inventory spreadsheet.

Create a list of available buildings.

Identify 5–10 target business types that fit Jasper.

Research façade grant examples from other Georgia downtowns.

Draft a façade grant concept.

Identify one or two small economic development wins.

By End of Year

Launch or prepare façade grant pilot.

Create a business recruitment packet.

Make contact with property owners of key vacant buildings.

Recommend next-year economic development priorities.

Tips and Tricks

Do not start with a huge incentive program. Start with data.

- What buildings are vacant?
- Who owns them?
- Are they for sale or lease?
- What condition are they in?

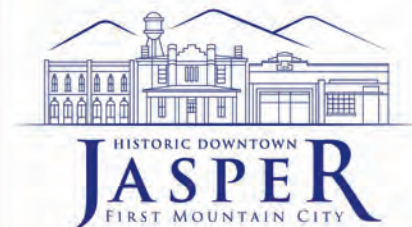
A property inventory is one of the most powerful tools the DDA can build.

Board Accountability System

Each board member should provide a short monthly update using the same format:

Question	Response
What was completed this month?	
What is currently in progress?	
What help is needed?	
What is delayed?	
What decision does the board need to make?	
What is the next action before the next meeting?	

accountability



Final Thoughts

The Jasper DDA should formally adopt this final one-year workplan as a living implementation guide. The board has already identified the right priorities: structure, funding, events, art, storytelling, volunteers, Christmas activation, and economic development. The next step is consistent follow-through.

The most important thing this year is not perfection. It is momentum.

If the board can confirm ownership, raise initial funds, build a sponsorship system, complete visible downtown projects, track volunteer hours, support businesses, and document progress, Jasper will be in a much stronger position by June 2027.

The work ahead should be clear, shared, measurable, and realistic. Downtown Jasper does not need every idea at once. It needs steady action, visible progress, and a board willing to own the work.

The board should track:

- Dollars raised
- Sponsorship commitments
- Volunteer hours
- Number of active volunteers
- Number of downtown events/promotions
- Event attendance estimates
- Business participation
- Artist participation
- Public art installations
- Vacant buildings
- Occupied buildings
- Business inquiries
- Property owner contacts
- Façade improvements
- Social media reach
- Email list growth
- Press mentions
- Partnerships created
- Board member task completion

These metrics do not need to be perfect. They simply need to be consistent.

