



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
8:00 a.m. September 16, 2025
111 S Tejon St., Ste. 703, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Board members present: Sam Clark (remote), Troy Coats, Carrie Bartow (remote) Jordan Empey, Jeff Finn, Chris Lieber, Jeremy Shirley, Jim Smith, Patrick Stephens, Ryan Tefertiller

Board members absent: Laura Neumann, Brandy Williams

Staff members present: Chelsea Gondeck, Sarah Nurmi, Pat Rigdon, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Ana Valdez

Guests: None

Call to Order & Welcome

At 8:03 a.m., Chris Lieber called the meeting to order.

Chris Lieber began the meeting by calling attention to the construction Downtown and encouraged people to continue supporting local restaurants.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes

The board reviewed minutes from the August 19, 2025, board meeting. Jeremy Shirley put forth a motion, Jeff Finn seconded, and the board unanimously approved the meeting minutes.

Financials

Dated July 31, 2025

Chelsea Gondeck reported no updates beyond the items discussed at previous meetings. TIF reimbursements have not yet been recorded, as they were processed in August. Current projections indicate that we are on track regarding both our mill and TIF funding.

The board reviewed the financial statements for the period ending July 31, 2025. Jeff Finn motioned to accept the financial statements, Sam Clark seconded, and the board unanimously accepted the financials.

Jordan Empey arrived at 8:12 a.m.

2026 Budget

On a motion by Jordan Empey, seconded by Jim Smith, the board unanimously approved opening the public hearing for the purpose of reviewing the 2026 Downtown Development Authority budget.

There was no public comment.

Chelsea Gondeck presented the 2026 preliminary budget, operating plan, and contract for service with key updates focused on increased clarity and alignment of spending with organizational goals. Chelsea outlined inclusion of marketing costs within service contracts, rather than listing them as a separate line item, as a meaningful change. This improves efficiency and reflects longstanding practice with the Business Improvement District. While overall marketing spending remains flat, adjustments are being made in how funds are allocated.

The board emphasized the importance of fully understanding how DDA funds are used by Downtown Partnership to ensure alignment with the DDA's mission and fiduciary responsibilities. There was

support for the more defined scope in service contracts and improved ROI tracking. She added that anticipated funds may support new initiatives in 2026, and the plan maintains budget flexibility maintained to address evolving priorities as the Elevate Downtown Plan is finalized. Labor cost distribution across entities was discussed as a continued area of review.

The board raised concerns regarding Clean & Safe program tracking, the CEO search process (budgeted under DP), and the proportion of the DP budget dedicated to service contracts—estimated at around 50%. Board members expressed interest in refining the next budget cycle based on the forthcoming Plan of Development.

On a motion by Jeff Finn, seconded by Jeremy Shirley, the board closed the public hearing.

On a motion by Carrie Bartow, seconded by Patrick Stephens, the board accepted the Downtown Development Authority's 2026 budget, operating plan, and contract for service with Downtown Partnership as presented.

Final budget approval will take place on December 9, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. It will be a brief public hearing, but quorum is essential.

Presentation

Draft Master Plan

Chelsea Gondeck shared an overview of the current draft of the Elevate Downtown Plan. She noted that survey responses informed the plan, and it reflects input from both Downtown and surrounding areas, highlighting the need to balance community perspectives with market data. Discussion covered the need for clearer articulation of major themes, with the "amenitization" of Downtown—through events, services, and activation—emerging as the primary strategic focus.

The board discussed the incorporation of restorative justice in the current iteration of the Plan and noted its community origins and potential for misinterpretation. Board members suggested renaming the concept to better reflect its collaborative intent, while maintaining alignment with the DDA's role as a taxing authority and ensuring community-driven efforts.

Regarding Downtown grocery access, the board reviewed outreach strategies, emphasizing direct engagement with retailers and considering density and proximity to other services. The potential for a convention center was briefly considered, with attention to public funding and land use. Support for small businesses was reaffirmed, including the suggestion of a more flexible grant application, and a recommendation was made to reprioritize economic vitality within the plan.

Other

Tejon Reconfiguration

Chelsea reported that the board previously approved an MOU with the City for enhancement at Historic Busy Corner, with project oversight by the City. A contractor's cost miscalculation has resulted in a \$77,000 increase to retain the existing 16-foot design. While the board reviewed an option to reduce the width to mitigate expenses, Chelsea recommended maintaining the 16-foot specification. The board deliberated on the budgetary impact and the project's scope, considering comparable grants previously awarded.

Jeremy Shirley made a motion to approve an update to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to retain the 16-foot width and to authorize the installation of tree lights for the upcoming season. Jim Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Clean & Safe Update

Pat Rigdon shared that outreach efforts have officially launched. Early success includes housing placement for a wheelchair-bound individual in Acacia Park through Homeward Pikes Peak. The library has offered 10 radios to improve real-time communication; Jim Smith offered support with implementation. The team is evaluating a digital reporting platform to increase field efficiency and data quality, though cost remains a consideration.

Significant City funding is still anticipated but unconfirmed. Discussions continue around refining success metrics, understanding broader program impact beyond homelessness, and identifying data-sharing strategies. The team remains mindful of reduced capacity among service providers. Pat noted that resource cards are updated regularly, and a comprehensive services guidebook is in development for distribution across partner boards.

A new Downtown police lieutenant is showing interest in collaboration, though staffing and budget constraints limit weekend police presence. Collaboration with community partners, including Homeward Pikes Peak and faith-based community volunteers, is contributing to a greater sense of safety Downtown. A Merchant Townhall is planned for late October to gather feedback after three months of program activity.

Jordan Empey left at 9:25 a.m.

The board inquired about efforts to address the need for additional warming beds. Chelsea Gondeck noted that, while outside the program's scope, the issue directly affects the community, and the City is actively working to address the gap.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Chris Lieber adjourned the board meeting at 9:27 a.m.