



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Regular Board Meeting MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026 - 1:00 PM
736 PARK NORTH BOULEVARD, SUITE 120 ♦ CLARKSTON, GEORGIA 30021
(404) 296-6489 ♦ WWW.CLARKSTONGA.GOV

Note: The Board of Directors may go into Closed/Executive Session to deliberate any item on this agenda as authorized by the Georgia Open Meetings Act, Georgia Government Code Chapter O.C.G.A. S 50-14-1.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF THE 7/13/2026, AGENDA

IV. APPROVAL OF THE 6/8/2026, MEETING MINUTES

- a) 6/8/2026 Meeting Minutes

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any member of the public may address the Board during the time allotted for public comment. Each attendee will be allowed 3 minutes for comments at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. The public comment period will be limited to 40 minutes, and it is not a time for dialogue. If your public comment contains a series of questions, please submit those to the Planning & Economic Development Director in writing. This will facilitate follow-up by the council or staff. The DDA desires to allow an opportunity for public comment; however, the business of the DDA must proceed in an orderly, timely manner.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

- a) DDA Strategic Priority Results Summary

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- a) DDA Training Opportunities Discussion
 - 1. UGA - Development Authority Basic Training
 - 2. Georgia Tech CEDR - Board Boost Development Authority Training
- b) DDA Quick Wins Project(s) Discussion — Placemaking Ideas

- c) DDA Quick Wins Project(s) Discussion — Quarterly Business Meet & Greet
- d) Discussion: DDA Business Outreach Framework

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Discussion: Availability for Joint Work Session with City Council and Georgia Tech 7/21 or 7/23
- b) Discussion and Review of the DDA Regular Meeting Schedule

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLARKSTON, GEORGIA
HELD IN PERSON AND BY TELECONFERENCE, ZOOM AUDIO/VIDEO
IN SAID CITY ON MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026

NOTE: Items appearing in these minutes are in the order they were discussed, not necessarily in the order they appeared on the agenda.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairperson Rezwan Amad called the meeting to order at 1:15 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Michele Maserjian, Secretary/Treasurer
Rezwan Amad, Chairperson
Sydney Jakes, Director
Dean Moore, Director
Adria Marshall, Vice Chairperson

Members Absent:

Akber Lassi, Director
Ganaro Makor, Director

Staff Present:

Jacob Bouie, Economic Development Coordinator
Kyle Williams, DDA Attorney

III. APPROVAL OF THE 6/8/2026, AGENDA

Motion made by Director Dean Moore to approve the June 8, 2026 Regular Meeting Agenda, with the addition of a New Business item regarding DDA training opportunities. The motion was seconded by Director Sydney Jakes. The aye votes were: 5, with the nay votes: 0.
Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE 5/11/2026, MEETING MINUTES

a) 5/11/2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Director Dean Moore to approve the May 11, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Sydney Jakes. The aye votes were: 5, with the nay votes: 0. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any member of the public may address the Board during the time allotted for public comment. Each

attendee will be allowed 3 minutes for comments at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. The public comment period will be limited to 40 minutes, and it is not a time for dialogue. If your public comment contains a series of questions, please submit those to the Planning & Economic Development Director in writing. This will facilitate follow-up by the council or staff. The DDA desires to allow an opportunity for public comment; however, the business of the DDA must proceed in an orderly, timely manner.

There were no public comments.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a) Board Discussion: Brainstorming Potential DDA Quick-Win Projects

Jacob Bouie introduced the item as an opportunity for the Board to restart discussion regarding potential quick-win projects that may support the DDA's future priorities. Chairperson Rezwan Amad referenced prior project ideas, including the coupon booklet and a possible business get-together. Mr. Bouie noted that a business get-together may provide value as a networking opportunity and business-to-business engagement effort, similar to outreach efforts that have worked well in other cities.

The Board discussed the possibility of hosting a business outreach event at Brockett Pub as an after hours event focused on the Brockett Road business corridor. The Board discussed using the first event to see how the outreach model works and potentially rotating future events to other locations, including Refuge Coffee, City Hall, and Tahoe Village. Decide DeKalb was also discussed as a possible resource. Mr. Bouie stated that he would reach out to Decide DeKalb regarding an opportunity to meet with the DDA. The Board discussed what type of information the DDA should present to local businesses. Discussion included the current lack of connection between some businesses and City Council, the lack of dedicated funding for the DDA from the City, and the importance of communicating that the DDA is available to support local businesses. The Board generally agreed that the business outreach effort should focus on networking and relationship building.

The Board discussed two primary goals for the outreach effort: first, letting businesses know that the DDA exists through educational materials; and second, gathering feedback from businesses to help identify more focused workshops or future support opportunities. The Board discussed creating an educational packet that may include information from the DDA bylaws, Georgia Tech documents, and general information regarding the services and support the DDA may be able to provide. Vice Chairperson Adria Marshall recommended keeping the materials short and including a QR code and multiple languages, where appropriate.

Mr. Bouie noted that digital outreach has not always been successful in Clarkston and that physically showing up where people are located can be more impactful and effective. Mr. Bouie also noted that there are approximately 348 businesses in Clarkston and discussed the possibility of door-to-door outreach. The Board discussed whether the DDA, as a Board, would have the time and capacity to support door-to-door outreach efforts.

The Board discussed potential costs associated with supporting business get togethers and generally agreed that the DDA should support costs associated with business outreach events. Mr. Bouie stated that he would confer with the City Manager regarding future funding for the DDA.

The Board discussed timing for future outreach events. Mr. Bouie noted that the Comprehensive Plan is anticipated to be presented toward the end of the year. Mr. Bouie also stated that Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan report timeline has been possibly extended, and he was unsure when Phase Two would be completed. Mr. Bouie stated that he is working with the City Manager regarding a potential joint retreat with Georgia Tech, City Council, and the DDA for the Georgia Tech presentation, with timing potentially in late July or early August. The Board discussed holding the first business outreach event in the fall, possibly September or October, around football season and after DDA training and the Georgia Tech report are completed. The Board also discussed the possibility of holding quarterly business-to-business events at each of the four locations discussed.

Mr. Bouie stated that he would prepare a business outreach event plan for the DDA's review.

b) DDA Training Opportunities

Director Dean Moore introduced a discussion regarding DDA training opportunities. Mr. Bouie noted that all DDA members are required to complete two hours of additional training each year. New members are required to complete eight hours of training within their first year. Mr. Bouie also noted that some training opportunities may include a cost. Mr. Bouie stated that he would send information regarding current training classes being offered. Board members were asked to send completed training certificates to Mr. Bouie for tracking purposes. Mr. Bouie stated that information regarding the August 17 training opportunity in Rome, Georgia would be sent to DDA members.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Director Dean Moore to adjourn the meeting at 2:25 P.M. The motion was seconded by Director Sydney Jakes.

The aye votes were: 5, with the nay votes: 0. Motion passed.



Clarkston DDA: Strategic Priorities Summary

July 13th, 2026



Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic
Development Research



Four Focus Areas

Feedback from the DDA priorities setting homework completed by current board members is briefly summarized in the following slides. This feedback is being used to craft report recommendations.

Relationship Building

- Establish transparency and proactive communication to connect with the community.

Placemaking

- Create a must-visit destination for residents and visitors by correcting the undefined and disjointed feel of downtown.

Small Business Support

- Become a desirable destination for entrepreneurs by providing the financial support and regulatory clarity needed to support startups.

Housing

- Ensure diverse housing options and prevent displacement while building community capacity.



Relationship Building

- **Building trusted messenger relationships was a top priority.**

- Creating an open house series is a near-term, feasible mechanism for establishing consistent touchpoints between the board, city staff, and the business community.

Open Response Feedback:

An honest evaluation of current and past performance in local business strategies should be conducted in a confidential setting before broader rollout, to avoid undermining trust during early relationship-building.



Placemaking

- **Signage related projects were the top priority.**
- The City of Clarkston is already coordinating a signage initiative, and that the design and timeline of this program should inform plans for downtown signage and build momentum.

Open Response Feedback:

It will be important to factor annexation and cultural-center “gravity” into signage location and design



Small Business Support

- **“How to start a business guide” was seen as the most actionable and lowest-barrier objective.**
- Establishing a comprehensive DDA website to increase visibility was shared as a medium-term goal.

Open Response Feedback:

Take inventory of existing businesses and assess their longevity and success, to inform program design and provide a baseline for measuring impact.



Housing

- **The DDA's housing role should focus on policy and partnerships before direct development.**
- Support a First-Time Homebuyer Fair as a short-term goal.

Open Response Feedback:

As the city grows, the DDA's housing strategy should be developed with an eye toward how the downtown core may transition.





Thank You

cedr.gatech.edu



Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
**Center for Economic
Development Research**



Search Again

0126 | Development Authority Training – Basic

: In– Person / Classroom and Online: Defined Schedule
Carl Vinson Institute of Government – Appointed Official Training

Participants discuss their responsibilities as members of development authority boards and the role that development authorities serve within the local economic development process.

Topics include:

- legal issues
- ethics
- conflicts of interest
- open records and open meetings requirements
- the basics of financing development authority operations
- incentives
- bonds
- strategic planning in community development
- project development and management
- emerging issues that affect development authorities

Notes

Cancellation Policy:

- 90% refund (10% Service Charge) if cancelled greater than 14 days before the class
- 75% refund (25% Service Charge) if cancelled between 7 and 14 days before the class
- No refund if cancelled fewer than 7 days before the class

0126 042 Development Authority Training – Basic – Sept 2026 Open Enrollment Sep 29, 2026 In– Person / Classroom Available	
Section Title:	Development Authority Training – Basic – Sept 2026 Open Enrollment
Type:	In Person
Days:	T
Time:	8:30AM to 4:30PM
Dates:	Sep 29, 2026
Schedule and Location:	View Details
Contact Hours:	8.0

Location:	Carl Vinson Institute of Government Locations	
Delivery Options:	In- Person / Classroom	
Course Fee(s):	Registration Fee	\$279.00
Section Notes:		
<u>REGISTRATION FORM</u> – Please use this form if registering for someone other than yourself and email to sfenneran@uga.edu . We can send the invoice to the appropriate person or department as needed—just include the billing details when you submit the form.		
Registration Fee: \$279.00 per person		
This class will be held September 29, 2026 – 8:30am – 4:30pm		
LOCATION OF CLASS: Middle GA Regional Commission 3661 Eisenhower Pkwy, Suite MB102 Macon, GA 31206		
Participants discuss their responsibilities as members of development authority boards and the role that development authorities serve within the local economic development process.		
Topics include:		
• legal issues • ethics • conflicts of interest • open records and open meetings requirements • the basics of financing development authority operations • incentives • bonds • strategic planning in community development • project development and management • emerging issues that affect development authorities		
<i>This class will be held in person.</i>		
<u>CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY:</u>		
• 90% refund (10% Service Charge) if canceled greater than 14 days before the class • 75% refund (25% Service Charge) if canceled between 7 and 14 days before the class • No refund if canceled fewer than 7 days before the class		
Registrants who fail to attend, cancel, or send a substitute will be liable for the full registration fee. Substitution of participant is encouraged over cancellation. To cancel registration or send a substitute, please e-mail notification to Sharon Fenneran – sfenneran@uga.edu		
0126 043 Development Authority Training – Virtual – Dec 2026 Dec 10, 2026 Online: Defined Schedule Available		
Section Title:	Development Authority Training – Virtual – Dec 2026	
Type:	Virtual	
Days:	Th	

Time: 8:30AM to 4:30PM

Dates: Dec 10, 2026

Schedule and Location: [View Details](#)

Contact Hours: 8.0

Location: Carl Vinson Institute of Government Locations

Delivery Options: [Online: Defined Schedule](#)

Course Fee(s): Registration Fee \$279.00

Section Notes:

REGISTRATION FORM - Please use this form if registering for someone other than yourself and email to sfenneran@uga.edu. We can send the invoice to the appropriate person or department as needed—just include the billing details when you submit the form.

Registration Fee: \$279.00 per person

This class will be held VIRTUALLY/ONLINE - December 10, 2026 - 8:30am - 4:30pm

You must have working/dependable internet connection, webcam & microphone to take this course

Participants discuss their responsibilities as members of development authority boards and the role that development authorities serve within the local economic development process.

Topics include:

- legal issues
- ethics
- conflicts of interest
- open records and open meetings requirements
- the basics of financing development authority operations
- incentives
- bonds
- strategic planning in community development
- project development and management
- emerging issues that affect development authorities

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY:

- 90% refund (10% Service Charge) if canceled greater than 14 days before the class
- 75% refund (25% Service Charge) if canceled between 7 and 14 days before the class
- No refund if canceled fewer than 7 days before the class

Registrants who fail to attend, cancel, or send a substitute will be liable for the full registration fee. Substitution of participant is encouraged over cancellation. To cancel registration or send a substitute, please e-mail notification to Sharon Fenneran - sfenneran@uga.edu

Center for Economic Development Research

Enterprise Innovation Institute

Board Boost: Development Authority 2-Hour Supplemental

These free, live webinars provide Georgia Development Authority Board Member Training aligned to SB 171's 2-hour annual continuing education requirement. Choose one of four dates at 9:00–11:00 a.m. ET, complete the two hours in one morning, and receive a certificate after we verify your attendance.

FREE • LIVE • CERTIFICATE PROVIDED

Fulfill your 2-hour annual continuing education requirement with free, live training designed for Georgia Development Authority board members.

[Choose Your Date](#)

Designed to meet **GA Code § 36-62A-21(b)** (effective July 1, 2025). Retain your certificate for your authority's records and AARF report. [Statute](#) • [DCA Guidance](#).

Key Facts

When

9:00–11:00 a.m. ET (live on Zoom)

- September 15, 2026
- November 10, 2026



We use cookies to improve your experience. By continuing, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

[Manage Settings](#)

[Reject](#)

[Accept All](#)

Choose your date

Every webinar includes one hour on **Recent Developments in Economic Development Law** plus an hour on **Workforce Housing as an Economic Development Strategy** or **Measuring & Understanding the Local Impact of Data Centers**—so you can complete your Georgia development authority continuing education in one sitting.

June 16, 2026

9:00–11:00 a.m. ET

- Measuring & Understanding the Local Impact of Data Centers
- Recent Developments in Economic Development Law

This event has ended, please select one of the other available dates.

September 15, 2026

9:00–11:00 a.m. ET

- Workforce Housing as an Economic Development Strategy
- Recent Developments in Economic Development Law

[Register on Zoom](#)

November 10, 2026

9:00–11:00 a.m. ET

- Measuring & Understanding the Local Impact of Data Centers
- Recent Developments in Economic Development Law

[Register on Zoom](#)



We use cookies to improve your experience. By continuing, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

What you'll learn

Recent Developments in Economic Development Law (1 hr)

New legislation, case law, and incentive program updates that affect Development Authorities.

Workforce Housing as an Economic Development Strategy (1 hr on select dates)

Explore strategies, partnerships, and policy tools for addressing workforce housing challenges to support economic growth.

Measuring & Understanding the Local Impact of Data Centers (1 hr on select dates)

Fiscal impacts, jobs, infrastructure considerations, and community communications.

Presented by

Hosted by the **Center for Economic Development Research (CEDR)**.

Sponsored by **Seyfarth Shaw LLP** and the **Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2)**.



Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
**Center for Economic
Development Research**



We use cookies to improve your experience. By continuing, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

▲ DOES THIS SATISFY MY ANNUAL CONTINUING TRAINING REQUIREMENT?

Yes. Effective **July 1, 2025**, Georgia requires Development Authority board members to complete **at least 2 hours of continuing training** (in person or online). This 2-hour live webinar is designed to meet that standard under **GA Code § 36-62A-21(b)**. Keep your certificate for your records and AARF reporting.

▼ HOW WILL I RECEIVE MY CERTIFICATE?

▼ IS THERE A RECORDING?

▼ WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

© 2026 Georgia Institute of Technology

Georgia Institute of Technology
North Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30332



We use cookies to improve your experience. By continuing, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

PLACEMAKING IDEAS FOR CLARKSTON DDA TO FUND FOR 2026

UNDER \$500

- Turn vacant lots into temporary gathering spots with picnic tables, string lights, and planters; treat it as a “pop-up pocket park.”
- Put out movable chairs, benches, and a couple of café tables downtown to create casual hangout spaces near coffee shops or bakeries.
- Add outdoor games like cornhole, giant Jenga, or checkers in a central space to encourage people to linger and socialize.
- Use chalk art, paint markers, or student artwork to decorate blank walls, sidewalks, or windows facing the street.
- Install temporary “parklets” by converting a parking space into a small seating area with planters and café furniture.

Activate empty storefronts and buildings

- Fill empty storefront windows with rotating displays from local artists, school projects, or mini-museums using items from your historical society.
- Host pop-up shops or short-term holiday markets in vacant retail spaces to test new business ideas and fill downtown gaps.
- Create a shared “micro-retail” marketplace inside a large underused building, with small stalls or mini-suites for local makers and startups.
- Use an empty building as a community “third place” with couches, Wi-Fi, games, and flexible space for clubs, workshops, and meetups.

Streets, alleys, and small spaces

- Revitalize an alley with string lights, murals, planters, and café seating so it becomes a cozy pedestrian lane instead of a dead back-of-house space.
- Add wayfinding signs that point to key spots (park, library, trailhead, local café) with walking times to make the city feel more connected.
- Paint simple patterns or “playable” designs (hopscotch, stepping-stone paths) on wide sidewalks or in low-traffic plazas.
- Create a simple “town square” by designating one spot (a corner of a park, parking lot, or wide sidewalk) as your go-to gathering area and investing in seating and shade there first.

Events and programming

- Start a regular night market or seasonal street fair that highlights local food trucks, artisans, and musicians in your downtown.
- Run a “pop-up gallery walk” where multiple small venues (church halls, city hall lobby, cafés) all display local art on the same evening.

- Host outdoor movie nights in a park or parking lot using a portable screen and invite local groups to provide snacks or activities.
- Organize themed walks or rides (history walk, mural tour, bike-the-riverfront) to help residents re-discover local assets.

Economic and social ideas

- Convert a corner of downtown into a food truck or vendor court with shared seating and simple amenities like lights and trash bins.
- Pilot a “retail incubator” space with short, low-cost leases for new entrepreneurs to try out businesses in small stalls.
- Offer co-working or shared studio space in an underused building for remote workers, artists, and small businesses.
- Make one project specifically about inclusion and welcome—multilingual signage, a community welcome board, or events led by underrepresented groups.

DDA Quarterly Business Meet & Greet

BUSINESS EDUCATION

What is the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)?

The Clarkston DDA is dedicated to building a vibrant, connected downtown by celebrating the city's cultural fabric through dynamic experiences, enhanced public spaces, and promoting partnerships, civic engagement, and regional collaboration.

The purpose of the DDA is to stimulate and sustain economic development in Clarkston 's core economic districts.

The DDA is most effective when used for its financing and project administration abilities which focus on *unusual endeavors*.

DDA revitalization and redevelopment projects would include:

- Planning for long-range improvements
- Finance projects by loan, grant, lease, or borrowing,
- Execute development agreements,
- Acquire/lease/sell property
- Issue revenue bonds and notes
- Local tax abatements via Community improvement districts CIDs and
- Business Improvement Districts (BID) where applicable.

How does the DDA encourage and support businesses?

We promote the City of Clarkston as an exciting place to live, work, and shop by holding downtown events to drive foot traffic. Some examples are the annual Holiday Tree Lighting festival, Trunk and Treat festival, Juneteenth festival, summer farmers market, and the Fall back-to-school give away . These events also support and encourage community pride.

How does the DDA sustain and improve the appearance of downtown?

Streetscaping, public art, signage, and general design enhancements to ensure our downtown feels vibrant and welcoming.

How can my Business support the DDA?

Sponsorships with the DDA to promote your business at DDA events such as:

Wellness Walk: Host monthly "wellness walks" featuring health-related businesses (chiropractors, pharmacies, smoothie shops, fitness facilities, etc) to encourage public space engagement while highlighting local businesses.

Bike Month (May): Partner with other cities along the Path during National Bike Month.

Programming could include bike repair clinics, beginner bike rides for children, or a weekend event with vendors.

ENGAGEMENT BOARD(S)

Would you support small-scale, high-impact grants?

Beautiful Building Grant of \$1,000 in reimbursable funds to help downtown property owners and tenants make exterior improvements that boost curb appeal.

Bright Lights Grant of \$1,000 in reimbursable funds to help downtown property owners and tenants make exterior improvements which increase public safety such as lighting and security camera by your storefront, parking lot, alleyway.

Which economic activity would you support? [place dot next to item you like]

- Rent assistance or "pop-up" subsidies for first-time retailers
- Impact fee or permit fee reductions for downtown adaptive reuse
- Convert a corner of downtown into a food truck or vendor court with shared seating and simple amenities like lights and trash bins
- Offer co-working or shared studio space in an under-used building for remote workers, artists, and small businesses
- Make one project specifically about inclusion and welcome - multilanguage signage, a community welcome board, or events hosted by under-represented groups
- Pilot a "retail incubator" space with short, low-cost leases for new entrepreneurs to try out businesses in small stalls.

How would you like the DDA to stimulate and increase foot traffic? [place dot next to item you like]

- Fill empty storefront windows with rotating displays from local artists, school projects
- Host pop-up shops or short-term holiday markets in vacant retail spaces
- Turn vacant lots into temporary gathering spots with picnic tables, string lights and planter
- Pull out movable chairs, benches, and a couple of cafe tables to create a casual hangout space near a coffee shop or bakery, or restaurant
- Run a "pop-up gallery walk" where multiple small retailers (such as a strip center) all display local art on the same evening.

DDA Business Outreach Framework

Building Direct Relationships with Clarkston Businesses

Prepared for Board Discussion | Discussion Only

Agenda Item	Review and Discussion of DDA Business Outreach Framework and Potential Fall Pilot Event
Purpose	To help the Board discuss how the DDA can more personally and effectively reach Clarkston business owners, build relationships, and gather feedback before developing specific programs or workshops.
Action Requested	Discussion and Board direction. No formal action is required unless the Board wishes to provide direction on next steps.
Primary Question	How should the DDA show up, invite, listen, and follow up with Clarkston businesses in a way that is realistic for Board members and staff?

Background and Purpose

At the June 8, 2026 DDA meeting, the Board discussed business outreach as a potential quick-win project(s). The discussion included helping businesses understand the role of the DDA, creating opportunities for business feedback, and exploring a possible business gathering. This attachment is intended to support a continued Board discussion, with a specific focus on Clarkston's business environment and how DDA members can help reach business owners directly.

This is not a final business outreach plan. It is a discussion framework to help the Board determine what kind of outreach is realistic, personal, and useful for Clarkston businesses.

Clarkston Business Outreach Considerations

Clarkston's business community includes a wide range of small businesses, restaurants, retailers, service providers, property owners, entrepreneurs, and corridor-based businesses. Many of these businesses may not regularly engage with City communications through email, website updates, online forms, or digital announcements.

Based on prior outreach experience, digital communication alone has not always been the most effective method for reaching local businesses in Clarkston. Emails, online forms, and social media may still be useful support tools; however, relying too heavily on digital outreach may limit participation and can place additional follow up and tracking responsibilities on staff.

For that reason, the DDA may wish to consider a more direct, relationship-based approach that includes in person engagement, personal invitations, corridor based outreach, and Board member participation. The goal is not simply to host an event, but to make the DDA more visible, accessible, and connected to the local business community.

Proposed Clarkston Business Outreach Model

The DDA may consider a simple outreach model built around four actions:

- 1. Show Up:** DDA members and staff attend or host small gatherings where businesses already are, rather than relying only on digital communication. This may include corridor-based meetings, after-hours gatherings, or informal business visits.
- 2. Invite Personally:** Board members may assist by personally inviting business owners, property owners, and business contacts to attend outreach events or provide feedback. Personal invitations may be more effective than general email announcements.
- 3. Listen First:** The first phase of outreach should focus on hearing from businesses, not presenting a finalized program. The DDA can ask businesses what they need, what challenges they are experiencing, and how communication can improve. This can be in a form of an engaging activity.
- 4. Follow Up Clearly:** After outreach activities, the DDA should summarize what was heard, identify common themes, and determine what next steps are realistic. Businesses should understand that their feedback was received and considered.

Potential Fall Pilot Event

The Board may consider a fall pilot event as one tool within a broader relationship building approach. The event should be informal, business facing, and focused on conversation. It does not need to operate as a formal presentation or workshop.

Possible format	After hours business gathering or small corridor based listening session.
Possible first location	A local business location previously discussed by the Board, such as Brockett Pub, with the option to rotate future gatherings to other corridors or locations.
Possible audience	Business owners, property owners, and corridor stakeholders. The Board may decide whether the first event should focus on one corridor or be open to all Clarkston businesses.
Possible purpose	Introduce the DDA, listen to business needs, identify common themes, and determine future outreach or workshop topics.
Possible partners	Partner organizations may be invited after the Board determines the event purpose. The first event could also remain informal and DDA led.

Role of DDA Board Members

If the goal is relationship building, Board member participation will be important. A personal outreach model should not depend solely on staff sending emails, tracking responses, and following up digitally. The Board may discuss how members can support outreach in manageable ways.

- Identify businesses or property owners with whom Board members already have relationships.
- Personally invite business owners to attend the pilot event or provide feedback.
- Attend the pilot event and participate in informal conversations with businesses.
- Help determine which corridors or business clusters should be prioritized first.
- Support follow-up by reviewing common themes and helping identify realistic next steps.

Simple Feedback Approach

Feedback collection should be simple and not overly administrative. The DDA may use a short paper form, QR code, conversation card, or verbal discussion prompts. The goal is to identify common themes, not create a burdensome data collection process.

1. What is one challenge your business is currently facing?
2. What type of support or information would be most helpful to your business?
3. What is the best way for the DDA or City to communicate with you?
4. Would you attend future business gatherings or workshops?
5. What topics would you like the DDA to explore in the future?
6. Are there specific concerns in your corridor or business area that the DDA should understand?

Potential Future Topics Based on Business Feedback

Depending on what businesses share, future DDA discussions or partner workshops could focus on:

- Business networking and merchant connections
- Access to capital or small business resources
- Marketing and promotion opportunities
- Permitting, zoning, and code navigation (Staff led)
- Safety, lighting, cleanliness, and corridor appearance
- Facade, signage, or property improvement concepts
- Workforce needs and talent connections
- Business retention and expansion support

Board Discussion Questions

1. Which Clarkston business corridors or business clusters should the DDA focus on first?
2. Should the first outreach event focus on one corridor or be open to all Downtown Designated Clarkston businesses?
3. Would a small after hours gathering be more effective than a formal meeting?
4. How can DDA Board members help invite businesses without placing the full outreach burden on staff?
5. What businesses or property owners does each Board member already have a relationship with?
6. What information should businesses receive about the DDA?
7. What is the simplest way to collect feedback from businesses?
8. What follow-up should businesses expect after the first outreach activity?

Desired Direction from the Board

Staff is seeking Board feedback on whether to continue developing a Clarkston-specific business outreach approach focused on direct engagement and personal relationship building. If the Board wishes to proceed, staff can return with a more detailed pilot event outline, including proposed audience, location, invitation strategy, materials, feedback tool, partner involvement, and estimated costs.

Reference Resources

This framework is informed by downtown revitalization and business outreach concepts from [Georgia Main Street Community Transformation Strategies Workbook](#), [Smart Growth America – Making Neighborhoods Great Together](#), and the DDA's June 8, 2026 Board discussion. These resources are background references only.