



**DOWNTOWN BENCH**



**BEAMSVILLE**

**WE SAVED YOU A SEAT**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**



**FOCUS 2027**



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# WHO WE ARE

The Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA (DBBBIA) was formed in 1978 by a group of business owners with a vision to improve downtown Beamsville and take on their vision of beautification and commitment to the downtown and community.

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an innovation that allows local businesses people and commercial property owners and tenants to join, and, with the support of the municipality to organize, finance, and carry out physical improvements and promote economic development in their designated area.

Representing 100+ businesses in the downtown area, the DBBBIA carries out six key functions to fulfill our mandate.

1. Beautification
2. Revitalization & Maintenance
3. Marketing & Promotions
4. Special Events
5. Economic Development
6. Communications

In addition, DBBBIA advocates on behalf of the interests of the business improvement area and undertakes strategic planning as necessary. A BIA's role is not to make individual businesses "great" but to make downtown a "great" place to do business.

# WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

The 2017 -2023 Strategic Plan focused on building a solid foundation including strong governance and financials. A structure was put in place to fulfill the Mission and achieve the Vision. Highlights of the accomplishments follow:

## Key Initiatives

1. Invested in staff position to support achievement of initiatives and to advocate for members.
2. Expanded the boundaries for larger catchment.
3. By-laws, Constitution and Policies and Procedures were amended and implemented to support growth.
4. Rebranded, launched a new website, and joined relevant social platforms.
5. Invested in art assets that reflect the uniqueness of the downtown Bench and surrounding areas.
6. Delivered a roster of well attended events.
7. Developed and strengthened key relationships and partnerships.
8. Improved member communication to build engagement.
9. Effectively adapted our programs based on “needs of the moment” during the pandemic.







# THE NEED TO REGROUP

In March 2020, our world changed with the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Mandated COVID closures and restrictions resulted in businesses closing to the public on and off over the next year and a half. Businesses adapted with retailers providing in store pick ups, and restaurants shifting to take out. Events were reimagined to keep people connected while managing physical distancing and adhere to new protocols.

Downtown Bench Beamsville not only survived but continued to thrive coming together to support each other. Proudly, there were minimal vacancies and closures a significant accomplishment.

The DBBBIA board, team and partners are focused on continuing to build a strong downtown community today and tomorrow.



# A NEW PLAN

Guided by our Vision and grounded in our Values, the DBBBIA's commitment is to serve, lead and together build a prosperous downtown. We have worked as a team of committed DBBBIA leaders to craft this plan, based upon our strong foundation and success to date. We look forward with optimism to building on our already strong assets and continuing to serve our community and increase visitors to our downtown.

Focus 2027, our new plan, continues to focus on collaboration and working together. United we stand. When we have strong businesses thriving in a deeply connected, and an aligned community, we can and will achieve our vision.

Developing a future-ready, connected downtown requires the DBBBIA to focus on five major directions:

1. **CUSTOMER ATTRACTION:** Increase local and visitor traffic to stop and experience downtown.
2. **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:** Work together to grow smarter.
3. **MEANINGFUL SPACES:** Build on our artful experience.
4. **STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT:** Collaborate with shared purpose.
5. **ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:** Build systems for sustainable growth.

Focus 2027 will guide our work over the next three years. As a living document, it is flexible and will reflect changes in our environment.







# THE DBBBIA STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

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Strategic planning is the process of defining your strategy, or direction and making decisions on allocating your resources (i.e., time/effort, money, people) to pursue this strategy.

The board and team are committed to working together to develop a **3-Year Strategic Plan** that reflects on the past, assesses the present and actively plans for the future.

The DBBBIA Strategic Planning Process included 5 key phases:

- **DIAGNOSE FOR CLARITY** – *Where we are now*
- **STRATEGIC FOUNDATION FOR ALIGNMENT** – *Where we want to be*
- **ANALYSIS TOOLS TO PRIORITIZE** – *What we need or need to change*
- **PLANNING TOOLS FOR FOCUS** – *How we will get there*
- **TRACKING TO MONITOR PROGRESS** – *How we will stay on track*

This process shaped the plan and priorities.



# WHAT MATTERS NOW

Trends and cultural shifts that are influencing downtowns and specifically Downtown Bench Beamsville were identified:

## On the Move

Increased housing costs, remote employment, retiring baby boomers and increased immigration means many GTHA are moving further south into Niagara. This brings new faces into the traditional agricultural community of Beamsville. Balancing honouring Beamsville's historical roots with welcoming newcomers is important to build a connected community.

## Disruptive Change

Multi-generational living, 4-day work weeks, and a fundamental shift from a vehicle-dependent culture to one dependent on alternate means of transportation, walkability, and rideability mean planning infrastructure now is required to support future needs. Technology including artificial intelligence means a changing job market and new business opportunities. This will not only change what businesses are in demand, but it will change how businesses operate.

## Economic Reality

Economic shifts are a common reality. The worldwide health pandemic is validation that the world has indeed become smaller, with a more profound ripple effect. Inflation pressures, recession threats, interest rates, property and rent prices, supply chain issues, and workforce shortages require fiscal responsibility and strict prioritizing of resources.





# THE DOWNTOWN WE WANT

When people reflect on the DBBBIA we want:

*“to be known as the hub connecting,  
building community, and artfully sharing  
our agricultural roots”.*

We are known for public (street) art, agriculture roots, and a community vibe.

You always feel welcomed, connected, delighted whether you are a long-term resident, newcomer or visitor.

At every turn you experience something memorable - slivers of art and nature, “home” town comfort, nostalgic places and things.





# THE BIA WE WANT



To build the Downtown we want a strong BIA is vital. With scarce resources we need to make wise decisions that will benefit the Downtown today and tomorrow.

To achieve this, we commit to:

**BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS** – To welcome locals, newcomers and visitors to experience our connected downtown community.

**IMPROVING OUR CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES** – Invest in our people and partners expertise to build the structure and systems required to take our BIA to the next level.

**EMPOWERING OUR MEMBERS** – To connect and support our members to foster their growth and prosperity.

**WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER** – To build and maintain strong relationships with partners and stakeholders to build synergy and momentum that achieves greater results.

**BEING FUTURE READY** – To understand changes and trends to actively shape our downtown to continue to attract residents, businesses and visitors.







## OUR MISSION

*Our raison d'être – reason to be*

***To build an exceptional Downtown Bench Beamsville by collaboratively working together.***

## OUR VISION

*The future we will create*

***To be the hub connecting, building community, and artfully sharing our agricultural roots.***

## OUR VALUES

**Our guide to decision-making and behaviour**

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***Collaboration*** “Knowing we are better together we agree on the outcome and work towards it leveraging our strengths.”

***Connection*** “Meaning and experiences are enriched through our networked community.”

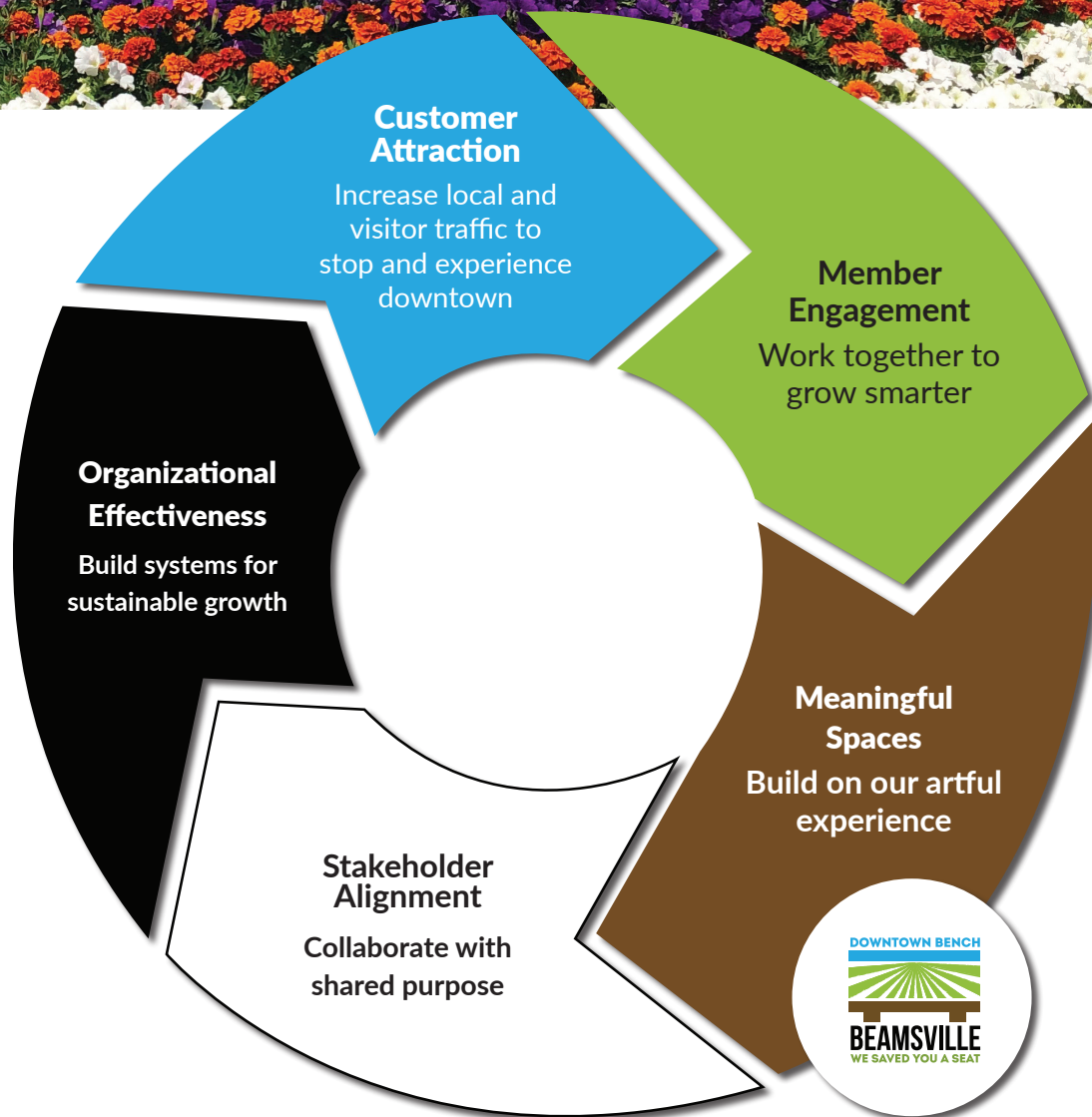
***Inspire*** “Co-creating a vibrant, engaging environment to prosper.”





## Strategic Themes:

To achieve our Vision, the plan focuses on five strategic pillars. These directions are interdependent—recognizing the achievement of objectives or goals in one area strengthens our capacity to achieve objectives or goals in another area.







## CUSTOMER ATTRACTION

### ***Increase local and visitor traffic to stop and experience downtown***

At Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA we want by 2027:

*To be a daycation stop where visitors mingle with locals for a nostalgic hometown experience.*

Customer Attraction Key Strategies	Customer Attraction Priorities
1. Continue to grow and build on successful “authentic” seasonal Events that bring people to the downtown.	1 a) Develop Critical Path for major events to support optimizing resources. 1 b) Continue working with partners to maximize resources. 1 c) Plan and budget for “post COVID” realities – increased costs, sponsorship challenges, supply chain delays/issues. 1 d) Conduct annual analysis of events for continuous improvement and refresh/renew as required.
2. Build our brand through development of strategic communications and marketing.	2 a) Develop a communications strategy and plan for greater impact. 2 b) Develop brand guidelines to ensure brand alignment and improve brand recognition. 2 c) Update our website to improve the user experience (mobile-friendly). 2 d) Leverage tools and templates to optimize social media. Invest in outsourced resource(s) to support development. 2 e) Collaborate with Town’s wayfinding strategy to attract visitors downtown. 2 f) Post programs/advertisements assess ROI, note conclusions and implement improvements.
3. Identify the ideal merchant mix (including destination merchants) for increased local/visitor traffic.	3 a) Identify secondary research resources (including OBIAA) that have data for similar size markets. 3 b) Identify BIAs with similar demographics/psychographics for data/intelligence.





# MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

## *Work together to grow smarter*

At Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA we want by 2027:

*To have a supportive member network that collaborates for more effective business growth.*

Member Engagement Key Strategies	Member Engagement Priorities
1. Continue building strong member relationships and member engagement through effective communication.	1 a) Share relevant information via e-news bulletin and monitor open rates. 1 b) Meet one-to-one with members as requested/required. 1 c) Develop window display competition to coincide with event to deepen engagement and customer experience. 1 d) Monitor the need for Ad hoc Task Forces and/or Ambassadors to share information and/or support specific objectives. 1 e) Ensure business-type representation on board.
2. Connect members to resources to support growth.	2 a) Share government-funded resources (i.e. workshops, business planning) with members. 2 b) Encourage cross-promotion by connecting businesses with a shared target market. 2 c) Educate members on the value of destination merchants to work together to identify new opportunities.
3. Develop quarterly member survey to gather intelligence to assess needs, identify trends and inform decisions.	3 a) Identify a clear objective or need for gathering intelligence. 3 b) Select survey tool that provides custom reporting/graphing to easily analyse and communicate trends. 3 c) Communicate WIIFM (what's in it for me) to members to encourage participation. 3 d) Share results with the board and members benchmarking against previous quarter to demonstrate changes and trends. 3 e) Utilize information to support grant applications for funding. 3 f) Annually assess value and determine what is working and what to improve to ensure relevance and increase the response rate.





# MEANINGFUL SPACES

## *Build on our artful experience*

At Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA we want by 2027:

*To have a pedestrian friendly, accessible and rideable **connected** downtown.*

Meaningful Spaces Key Strategies	Meaningful Spaces Priorities
1. Advocate and work with the Town and/or Region to improve physical elements of the downtown that impact the customer experience.	1 a) Improve accessibility and walkability by upgrading and adding sidewalks. 1 b) Investing in lighting to enhance visibility and structures. 1 c) Monitor vandalism and agree on the approach to repair assets to minimize negative perceptions.
2. Continue building seasonal beautification assets that showcase agricultural roots and artistic expression.	2 a) Plan and budget for additional beautification assets to connect the corridor leading to the redeveloped school. 2 b) Identify buildings and areas for adding additional art/agriculture murals. 2 c) Plan and budget for the replacement of aging beautification assets. 2 d) Work with community partners to support creating and/or funding beautification assets for deeper community engagement.
3. Educate and Continue to assess parking to ensure needs are met.	3 a) Monitor employee parking in key spaces that lead to perception of a lack of parking. 3 b) Quarterly assess the impact and review current plans for effectiveness and as required redevelop plan to address concerns.
4. Implement new initiatives to connect the downtown and improve the Customer experience.	4 a) Install Big Benches for visual brand impact and additional pedestrian assets. 4 b) Implement the “Little Free Art Gallery” to build on the artistic assets. 4 c) Plan for the addition of free public WIFI to encourage longer stays and increased merchant visits in the downtown.





# STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT

## Collaborate with shared purpose

*At Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA we want by 2027:*

*To connect and enhance the Downtown experience for locals and visitors.*

Stakeholder Alignment Key Strategies	Stakeholder Alignment Priorities
1. Work with Town to develop assets to support the downtown.	1 a) Collaborate on the redevelopment of school to create a connected space with multi-faceted components that bring people downtown for work, shopping, dining, and recreation/leisure.
2. Work with community partners to expand our reach and provide an improved visitor experience.	2 a) Work with Tourism to include downtown locations in itineraries to attract out-of-town visitors. 2 b) Work with Economic Development on diversifying the merchant mix and attracting destination merchants. 2 c) Promote and monitor the introduction of business licensing to welcome new members/businesses and communicate grand openings. 2 d) Explore working with Scouts (youth engagement/retention) on Bomber Park as a community green space (tie in with and further connect school redevelopment).
3. Collaborate with the Town to advocate to the Region for improvement initiatives that impact the downtown.	3 a) Continue to build the case to eliminate truck traffic on King St. 3 b) Promote the need for bike lanes for increased cycling traffic (both residents and visitors). 3 c) Work to bring back the façade improvement grant for downtown business buildings.



# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Build systems for sustainable growth

*At Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA we want by 2027:*

*To have systems, processes, tools and templates that make the most of our resources (time, people, money) to streamline operations.*

Organizational Effectiveness Key Strategies	Organizational Effectiveness Priorities
1. Formalize Annual Work Plan and Calendar.	1 a) Research tool/template organized by month and use to input key priorities (i.e., events, marketing, AGM). Update annually. 1 b) Use the Value Analysis tool post initiative and with new initiatives to assess return on investment and return on time invested. 1 c) Quarterly review trending of key metrics and use to inform changes/improvements.
2. Develop systems to streamline resource intensive Events and Marketing.	2 a) Develop Critical Path for key events and promotions to support current/future delegation. 2 b) Update annually. 2 c) Develop brand guidelines to follow for increased brand recognition. 2 d) Use an automated tool for standard social media posting. 2 e) Develop key Standard Operating Procedures for consistency/delegation. 2 f) Leverage the BIA network for best practices and shared resources to utilize to build systems.
3. Develop Succession Plan for ED Role.	3 a) Document ED Role and Responsibilities. 3 b) Develop and document filing protocol for easy access to systems (i.e. Standard Operating Procedures, Critical Paths, etc.) 3 c) Conduct annual Performance Reviews to provide formal feedback.
4. Monitor and maintain Governance.	4 a) Continue financial stewardship. 4 b) Manage and monitor board succession and recruitment.
5. Research/identify opportunities for additional resources (money, people, plans).	5 a) Monitor and apply for grants (i.e. summer student). 5 b) Maintain and grow Sponsorship. 5 c) Leverage the BIA network for information on opportunities.



# DOWNTOWN BENCH BEAMSVILLE BIA FOCUS 2027 STRATEGY ROAD MAP

**VISION:** To be the hub that is connecting, building community and artfully sharing our agricultural roots.

**MISSION:** To build an exceptional Downtown Bench Beamsville by collaboratively working together.

**VALUES:** Collaboration - "Knowing we are better together we agree on the outcome and work towards it leveraging our strengths."  
Connection - "Meaning and experiences are enriched through our networked community."  
Inspire - "Co-creating a vibrant, engaging environment to prosper."

## STRATEGIC THEMES: TO UNITE AND CONNECT THROUGH



Increase people  
experiencing  
our downtown



**Build our  
Brand through  
focused**



Work together to  
grow smarter



**To compile and  
share business  
intelligence**



Build on our artful  
experience



**Improve our  
Accessibility;  
Walkability;  
Rideability**



Collaborate with  
shared purpose



**Connect and  
enhance the  
Downtown  
experience**



Build systems for  
sustainable growth



**Lever tools and  
technology for  
effectiveness and  
efficiencies**

**GOALS**

**PROGRAMS**



# DOWNTOWN MATTERS...

Focus 2027 will guide our direction and lead the way to develop a future-ready Downtown to support our community.

*“Universally downtown is the economic engine and the core (or heart) of every community. It tells us who we are, who we were, and how the past has shaped us. It defines our culture and identity.”*

*There are also tangible benefits; it protects and strengthens our existing tax base, increase sales and returns revenue to the community, creates a positive community image, attracts new businesses, creates new jobs, and preserves historic architectural resources.”*

— Alliance Main Street



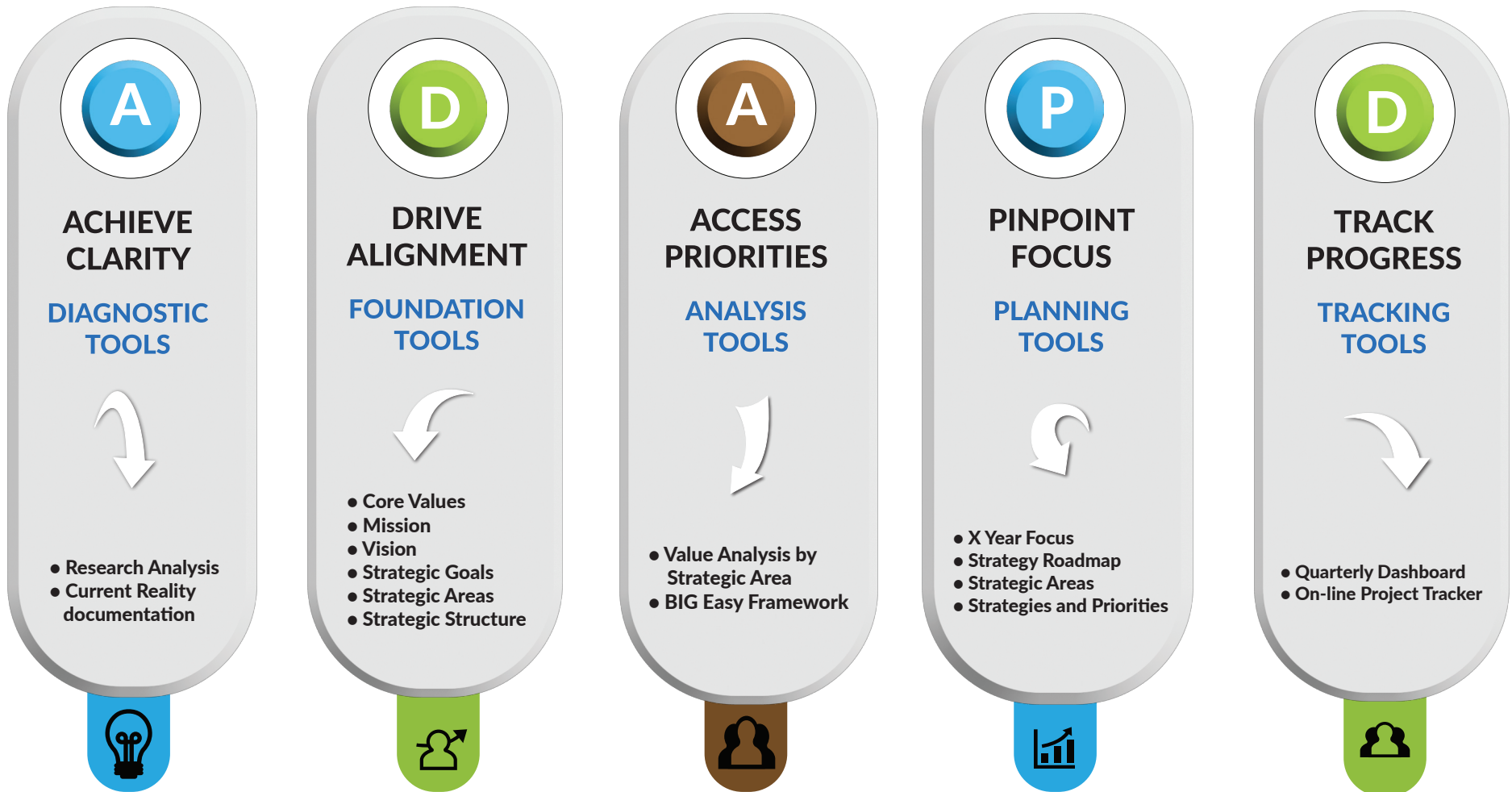
# APPENDIX

## *DBBBIA Strategic Planning Process Detail* *Acknowledgements*





# ADAPT Strategic Planning Process





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## DBBBIA Board of Directors, 2023

Clayton Gillie

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Director

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