KENT DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

IMPACT REPORT 2026



NOVEMBER 2026

KENT DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
KDP
SINCE 1992

MESSAGE FROM KENT DOWNTOWN PARNERSHIP

Another year of progress, partnership, and community spirit has shaped Downtown Kent. Throughout the year, KDP worked alongside local businesses, volunteers, community partners and residents to create meaningful experiences and strengthen the heart of our downtown.

A strong downtown is built around people, and this year KDP continued to create opportunities for the community to connect, celebrate, and experience Downtown Kent together. Through free public events, volunteer and stakeholder engagement, and expanded seasonal programming, we welcomed thousands of residents and visitors downtown. These gatherings not only created memorable experiences but also supported local businesses and helped strengthen the relationships that make our downtown community unique.

Our local businesses are at the heart of Downtown Kent, and supporting their continued success remains a central part of KDP's work. Throughout the year, we provided practical resources and opportunities designed to help businesses grow and remain competitive—from microgrants and façade improvements to welcoming new businesses and supporting existing businesses as they evolve, expand, and respond to changing needs.

Creating a vibrant downtown that is welcoming, and enjoyable to experience remains an important part of KDP's work. Events, the expansion of Illuminate Downtown project, art installations, flower baskets, clean-up projects, and other beautification initiatives are made possible through the support of our partners, community and volunteers.

In the coming year, KDP will continue building on this momentum through strong collaboration with the City of Kent, engaging community programs, support for local businesses, and continued investments in the downtown environment. Together, these efforts will create more opportunities for people to connect, celebrate, and experience all that Downtown Kent has to offer.

Together, we are helping shape a downtown that reflects the spirit of our community, welcomes everyone, and continues to grow with purpose. We are grateful for the continued support of our businesses, partners, volunteers, and community, and look forward to what the year ahead will bring.

Sincerely,



GAILA HAAS
Executive Director

Daniel Abrego



DANIEL ABREGO
President Elect 2027



147
Supported small businesses & entrepreneurs

1279
volunteer hours

5
New businesses/expansions

5
Facade Improvement grants awarded by KDP to Small businesses

OVERVIEW

VISION

To be the heart of our community offering opportunities, creativity and innovation. To foster strong partnerships and be a vibrant and thriving community while preserving our historic character and charm.

MISSION

To strengthen commerce and promote growth in historic downtown Kent through programs and events that celebrate our unique and diverse community and culture.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:
- Daniel Abrego, President Elect
- Suzanne Cameron, Past President
- Doug Scharnhorst, Treasurer
- Toni Troutner, Secretary

Ex Officio Members
- Katrinka Marrie , Greater Kent Historical Museum
- Zenovia Harris, Kent Chamber of Commerce
- Kelly Spreitzer, Assesso ShoWare Center

Members:
- Joy Cortado, Harborstone Credit Union
- Kevin Grossman, Green River College
- Greg Haffner, Retired
- Kaki Kesterson, Maggie's on Meeker
- Randall Smith, All Pro Building Maintenance
- Diane Whitely, Kent Lions
- Bill Ellis City of Kent
- Elizabeth Scharnhorst, Retired

Legal Counsel:
- Erik Olsen, Hanis, Irvine, Prothero

ENGAGEMENT



KDP works to strengthen Downtown Kent as a lively, welcoming destination where businesses, residents, and visitors can connect and thrive. Through promotion, engaging events, support for local businesses, and opportunities for collaboration, we bring people together and encourage a strong sense of community throughout the downtown core. Throughout the year, we offered a variety of programs and experiences designed to engage the community, encourage participation, and create meaningful connections:

- **Shop Local & Small:** KDP helps keep Downtown Kent's small businesses visible and connected. We spotlight local businesses through events, social media, newsletters and grand openings – creating ways for businesses to share their stories and connect with customers.

- **Community Connection:** Community involvement is an important part of our work. Through board/committee service, event participation, and volunteer opportunities, community members contribute their time, ideas, and enthusiasm to help move our work forward. Their involvement brings new perspectives, strengthens our programs and impact.

- **Events**: KDP organized successful, free celebrations throughout the year featuring live music, vendors, artists/makers, food and drink. Here's what 2026 looked like:

    - Cajun & Creole Fest: 11,917+
    - Kent Nerd Party: 3,500
    - Tasting events: 800
    - Clean up events: 120
    - Volunteer mixers: 95

1707
Followers

4.7K
Followers

NEWSLETTER
Statistics

3,538
Subscribers

28%
Open Rate

21
Main Street Tax Credit Contributors

12
Community Events Produced

15
Performing artists

22
Sponsorships/grants received

9
Volunteer/Community Connection meet ups

25
Hanging flower baskets

SUCCESS STORIES



GROWING DOWNTOWN ATTENDANCE

KDP's events continued to draw people into Downtown Kent, with approximately 17k+ attendees across programming so far in 2026. From large cultural celebrations to specialty events and community gatherings, these experiences bring residents and visitors downtown while creating additional exposure and foot traffic for local businesses.

RECORD BREAKING CAJUN & CREOLE FEST!

The 2026 Cajun & Creole Fest welcomed close to 12K attendees, making it one of KDP's largest community events. The free celebration brought together music, food, culture, local vendors, volunteers, sponsors, and families while showcasing Downtown Kent as a place where diverse cultures and traditions can be celebrated.

THE FACE OF DOWNTOWN

KDP's Façade Improvement Grant program helped local businesses make meaningful improvements to the storefronts that shape the look and feel of Downtown Kent.

This year, $20K in grant funding supported four downtown businesses, helping them enhance their street-facing spaces through improvements such as exterior upgrades, painting, updated signage and lighting.

These investments do more than improve individual storefronts. They contribute to a more attractive, cohesive, and welcoming downtown environment while giving small businesses the opportunity to make improvements that may otherwise be difficult to fund on their own.

Every refreshed storefront adds to the overall character of Downtown Kent—and demonstrates what can happen when we invest directly in the businesses that make our downtown unique.





KDP FUNDING PROGRAMS

Free Public Access: Support from **4Culture** through its Open Doors, Free Public Access grant program, along with funding from the **City of Kent** Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) program helps KDP keep community events free and accessible to everyone.



This support played an important role in the success of our community events and other public programs throughout the year. By removing financial barriers, these investments create opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy music, art, culture, and community in Historic Downtown Kent.

Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program: This program enables businesses to directly invest in their local community. By redirecting a portion of their state B&O or public utility tax liability to KDPs Main Street organization—the program fuels projects that strengthen our historic district, while keeping their tax dollars local.







Thank you to our 2026 Contributors

City of Kent, 4 Culture, Infrasource/Potelco, Seattle Thunderbirds, Bowen/Scarff Ford, All Pro Building Maintenance, Allegro Performing Arts Academy, Around the Clock Property Management, Dicks Drive In, Ditco Inc, Gellner Law Group, Hanis Irvine Prothero, Heritage Bank, McMonigle Veterinary/BRP, MedoSweet, Meridian Dental, Lake Meridian Water District, Puget Sound Energy, Davis Door Company, Masthi Bar & Grill, Lake Merdian Water District, Industry Graphics/Auburn Sign Company

KDP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Economic Development: We utilize established partnerships to strengthen a diverse downtown economy, supporting both existing and new businesses.

Clean & Safe: In partnership with the City's Conservation Office and Kent Police, we collaborate to promote and advocate for a safe environment by hosting monthly safety meetings and clean-up events throughout the year.

Historic Preservation: Focus on preserving the unique character of our community. We aim to balance development with the protection of our heritage, ensuring that future generations can appreciate the architectural and cultural significance that defines our local history.







VALUES

Community & Collaboration: Cultivate strong connections among residents, businesses, and visitors, working together to strengthen the heart of downtown Kent.

Innovation & Improvement: Embrace new ideas and adapt to changing needs, improving our programs and partnerships to better serve the community.

Equity & Inclusion: Engage and champion opportunities for all voices to be heard and represented in our programs and initiatives to support community involvement.

Integrity & Accountability: Act transparently, responsibly, and with integrity, building trust with our community through every initiative.

KDP STAFF

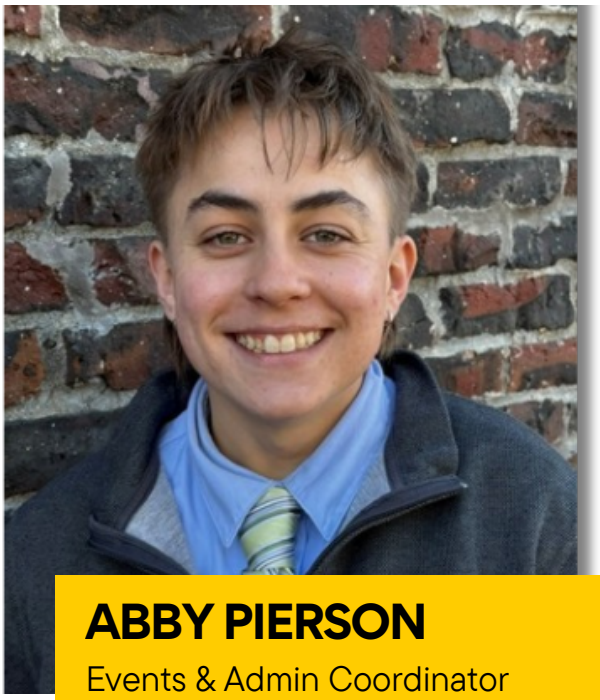


GAILA HAAS
Executive Director

Joined KDP **2019**

Gaila works to build strong connections and partnerships within Kent's Main Street program while also fostering strong relationships with statewide Main Street communities.

Through leadership, development training and participation in state conferences, she has strengthened ties with state and federal programs that support Main Streets and community development. Her ongoing work with local organizations has amplified the impact on the historic district, reinforcing a shared vision for a vibrant, inclusive downtown community.



ABBY PIERSON
Events & Admin Coordinator

Joined KDP: **2025**

Abby is an energetic force turning event ideas into unforgettable experiences. They manage every aspect of event logistics—from choosing the perfect venues to coordinating vendors—ensuring everything runs seamlessly on the big day.

With a keen eye for detail, Abby is committed to upholding our high standards, and making sure each event flows effortlessly.

Their dedication, planning expertise, and thoughtful approach consistently creates meaningful, high-quality experiences for all to enjoy.

CONTACT US



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THANK YOU SUPPORTERS!



































