



DMI Leadership Report – October 2020

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI and the City of Madison continue to co-lead the Downtown Group, a team of diverse leaders working on short and long-term goals for creating a vibrant and equitable downtown. The Group recently created three task forces in equity, economic development, and activation/programming. The task forces members include those in the Downtown Group and other interested members of the community all working on implementing ideas within their area.
- DMI, along with the Chamber, Black Chamber, Latino Chamber, Destination Madison and the Tech Council met with leaders of Public Health Madison Dane County to discuss how we can create a working group to regularly meet to discuss public health and business. The working group model, helping to create collaboration and stronger communication, is used in cities throughout the country to great success. The Chamber, Destination and DMI have continually advocated for its creation.
- DMI hosted our first ever virtual Annual Dinner. The event included enhanced virtual networking through a new software platform, REMO. We also featured several videos including a story of downtown in 2020. The event concluded with a conversation about race, equity and downtown Madison with Angela Russell from CUNA Mutual and Heather McGhee from Demos and NBC News.
- DMI hosted several meetings with downtown business leaders and Madison City officials including a meeting with MPD Captain Kelly Donahue and an MPD lead de-escalation training.
- DMI hosted new MMSD Superintendent Dr. Carlton Jenkins at our September What's Up Downtown Virtual Breakfast. Dr. Jack Daniels, Dr. Tim Casper and Maggie Porter Kratz from Madison College are scheduled to present in October.
- The DMI State of the Downtown event (virtual) is scheduled for Thursday, October 29 at 7:30am. The event will feature the distribution of this year's report, networking using the Remo platform and a panel discussion with Dr. Ruben Anthony, Brenda Gonzalez, Tiffany Kenney, Diane Morgenthaler, and Matt Wachter.
- As part of DMI's support for the MMSD referenda, I continue to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Yes 2 Invest Campaign.
- The DMI staff started their DEI development work with Step Up: Equity Matters. The team is reading Biased by Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt together. Step Up will begin the diversity, equity and inclusiveness work with the Board and staff this month.
- The staff attended yearly International Downtown Association Annual Conference. The virtual event was a fantastic opportunity to learn and connect with our peers nationwide.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee held a panel discussion on how companies are adapting to the needs of parents during COVID. Anne Morrison facilitated a panel of business leaders from American Family Insurance, Exact Sciences and ULI.
- DMI and Smart Growth are hosting a series of meetings with Madison Planning Division staff and Alders (Heck and Verveer) on a potential new resolution to increase building setbacks from zero to five feet on developments with terraces shorter than fifteen feet (mostly located downtown and on commercial corridors).
- The DMI Housing Task Force met to discuss the City of Madison's potential initiative to create more affordable housing in Madison. The Committee supported many of the ideas and is finding ways to best assist the City.
- DMI met with the Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin and UW to create a better working relationship and communications strategy during COVID.

Transportation:

- The Transportation Committee heard a presentation from Zia Brucaya of the Greater Madison MPO on their recent Remote Workforce Study of nearly 2000 employees. Some of the results will appear in the 2020 DMI State of the Downtown report.
- DMI is working with the City, the BID and several other organizations on Walk-tober Fest, a month-long celebration of walking. The BID created walk routes downtown.
- The City is submitting their application for Walk Friendly Status at the end of the year. The City is working with DMI and Destination Madison on this project.
- DMI hosted a presentation, with our partners at the City of Madison, on cargo bikes and business. The presentation, part of Madison Bike Week, explained how useful cargo bikes can be for business and how several groups are already successfully using them as part of their fleet.

Inclusiveness:

- The Inclusiveness Committee met to discuss the Committee's and DMI's diversity, equity, and inclusion work. We updated the committee on the staff/board training and all the other projects we are currently working on.
- The Beyond Compliance Task Force is starting their work on a training guide for the new ADA regulations for festivals.

Challenge Committee:

- The Challenge Committee met in September and decided to work very closely on the 2021 Civic Agenda. The Committee will work with Step Up and the Committee Chairs to create a training on how to ensure DEI is throughout the whole document. The Committee will then review the work of the Committees after each section is complete.

Quality of Life:

- I participated in a Law Park Phase 2 focus group with EQT and several community members. The conversation focused on the larger Law Park footprint from Willy Street to Olin Park. The design competition scheduled for 2021 is the next phase of the project. I continue to serve on the Friends of Nolen Waterfront Board.

- The Quality of Life Committee heard a presentation from the Friends of the State Street Family. The Committee heard about their work and how we can all partner together to help our homeless community.
- DMI continues to partner with MadLAB on two public art projects downtown – Crowley Station and Hawthorne Court.
- I moderated a panel discussion at this years Cap Times Idea Fest on the future of retail in Madison post COVID. Orange Schroeder from Orange Tree, Jessica Cavazos from the Latino Chamber and Stacey Scannell from the Soap Opera served on the panel.

Membership:

- The Membership Committee met to discuss their new DMI membership sponsorship work. This program will provide membership dues for perspective DMI members or those who are not renewing their memberships due to hardship through contributions provided by other DMI members and partners. The Committee also discussed ambassador assignments and program/meet-up updates.

Government Relations:

- The Government Relations Committee discussed DMI's role in the upcoming local elections. At the request of the Board, the Committee met to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the current non-endorsement policy. The Committee stated their desire to again endorse candidates. The Committee felt that the political environment has change dramatically since the last election. They asked the Executive Committee to discuss the option and for DMI to work with our partners on a plan.

For questions and more information, contact Jason Ilstrup, DMI President at 608-512-1330 or jilstrup@downtownmadison.org.