



DMI Leadership Report – December 2020

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI, along with the Greater Chamber of Commerce, Destination Madison, the Black Chamber, the Latino Chamber, and the regional chambers from Fitchburg, Middleton and DeForest/Windsor conducted a COVID survey of local businesses. The responses yielded 503 responses from businesses of all shapes and sizes. Some of the key findings included: 66% rated consumer and employee confidence as the most pressing issue; 78% experienced a decline in revenue and 30% say they will close by June if they remain on the same track. The partnership will continue to survey members throughout 2021 and use the data to advocate to local government and public health to help find innovative ways to keep the people safe and the economy moving forward.
- The Downtown Group, facilitated by DMI and the City, continues their work creating a vibrant and equitable downtown. The three task forces (equity, economic development, and activation) are all working on separate initiatives including a neighborhood association connection plan, tours of downtown for city leaders, researching pop-up/kiosk shops in vacant spaces, assisting with business re-opening, working on the Shop Madison campaign (with Destination Madison) and various other short and long term projects.
- The Stephen and Laurel Brown Foundation Policy Research Team are now releasing their research reports to the DMI membership. So far reports on pop up retail/space activation and reclaiming lost spaces: activating alleyways are now available on the DMI website and featured in the weekly emails. More reports will be released in the next few weeks.
- The DMI Board of Directors approved four new Committee Chairs, all starting on January 1 2021:
 - Brenda Gonzalez – Inclusiveness
 - Peggy Gunderson – Quality of Life
 - Brian Lee – Membership Development
 - Morgan Ramaker – Transportation

Economic Development:

- As a member of the Dane County Airport Commission there are several updates important to downtown. Airport traffic is down 78% for the year, but up 4% at Wisconsin Aviation. However, numbers are currently rising slightly. The airport traffic is somewhat behind other similar sized airports because of Dane County's heavy reliance on business passengers. The renovation of the terminal is nearly complete, and the expansion RFP should be released in early 2021 (south end expansion).
- The Economic Development Committee hosted a presentation and discussion with Summer Rector from QTI discussing anticipated HR trends for 2021.

Challenge Committee:

- The Challenge Committee met to discuss their project to ensure equity is throughout the DMI Civic Agenda.

Membership Development:

- The Membership Development Committee continued their work on the new DMI Scholarship program. Several partners are interested in assisting. The Committee also assigned ambassadors, discussed member meetups and heard a DMI update.

Transportation:

- The Transportation Committee met to discuss the combination of the Transportation and Bike Committees. The Committee agreed with the change and thought the timing was right. The group does want to make sure pedestrian and bikes issues are still important parts of the Committees work. They are also interested in changing the name of the Committee to better reflect all modes they are working on.
- The Committee met with Metro Transit on their recent updates to the BRT locally preferred alternative route. The possible changes to the downtown route include center running busses and stations on much of East Washington Avenue and relocating two stops from Webster and Livingston to Blair and Paterson, respectively.
- The City's work on Vision Zero (goal of creating zero pedestrian deaths in Madison) has started in earnest and DMI is serving on their stakeholder task force. There are several projects already working to prevent deaths including reduction of speed on several downtown streets like East Washington Avenue. A huge thanks to Kathy Marks and TMP Peritus for the amazing logo.
- The Transportation Committee's Signature Bike Route Task Force continues working in earnest on their plan to create an exciting, inclusive and art-filled signature route throughout Madison.

Quality of Life:

- The City is beginning their work on the Community Based Crime Reduction grant. DMI, along with CNI, UW Population Health, the City's Community Development Department and MPD are all parties to this important work.
- DMI continues to serve on the City/County Homeless Issues Committee. The Committee is meeting multiple times a month to work on current issues, including sleeping in parks, campers, tiny houses, the shelters, and several other issues.
- MadLab continues their work on assisting with an art and public space project at Crowley Station and planning for a large art project in Hawthorne Court.
- The Quality of Life Committee heard a presentation from the Overture Center on their work during the pandemic, the health of the organization and their future.

Inclusiveness:

- The Beyond Compliance Task Force completed their ADA guide on festivals. The document was approved by the Inclusiveness Committee, the Executive Committee and the DMI Board.
- The Inclusiveness Committee participated in a presentation from the Beyond Compliance Task Force on their festivals report, heard an update from DMI's diversity, equity and inclusion work

and discussed their potential projects, including creating a book club and potentially helping a partner organization with some downtown winter activities.

Government Relations:

- The Government Relations Committee heard a presentation from Mike May on the City's Task Force of the Structure of Government work. He discussed the main recommendations including creating a full-time, smaller, City Council, and revisions to the citizen boards and committees.
- The Committee also discussed the endorsement process and why they believe it is important for DMI. The DMI Executive Committee and Board of Directors approved endorsing candidates during the spring 2021 election cycle.

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