



DMI Leadership Report – February 2021

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- The Wisconsin State Journal editorial board advocated for turning State Street into a pedestrian mall. The editorial, along with a podcast, several letters to the editor and a column by former Mayor Dave Cieslewicz in the Isthmus, started a strong community wide conversation about a potential project.
- The Downtown Group is working on several important projects to reimagine downtown Madison in both the short and long term. The Group is conducting a future scenario planning exercise helping to set four different, possible, outcomes: the expected, the devastating and two visionary models. The Group is also working to combine communications strategies through a team led by Destination Madison. The Group is also working through three separate task forces:
 - Activation and Programming:
 - Conducting tours of downtown for community leaders; hosting COVID safe events like the Hound Hike and Winters Alive (along with the Madison Arts Commission and Sustain Dane). Along with the BID, they've launched a Stay Warm Campaign.
 - Economic Development:
 - Facilitated an economic analysis of downtown (conducted by Vandewalle with the assistance of MGE), assisted with the Public Health opening strategy, continued work on pop-ups shops with the Black and Latino Chambers, and are conducting a survey of downtown office tenants through the property owners on the timing of employees returning to downtown.
 - Equity:
 - Assisted the BID, Overture and Little John's with the creating and execution of the Martin Luther King Community Dinner. Over 2600 meals were served. Creating a neighborhood association coalition; the coalition will help neighborhood associations connect and think of downtown as part of their community.
- The University of Wisconsin is conducting an advanced planning redevelopment study for Library Mall. I was invited to become a member of the Core Team. The Core Team's goals are to create a welcoming and inclusive space, integrate the space into east campus/State Street, prioritize sustainability, engage a cross section of stakeholders with an equity approach and create an inclusive and representative vision.
- I was nominated to join the board of the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council (WDAC). The Wisconsin Downtown Action Council is a statewide organization established to facilitate the revitalization of Wisconsin downtowns as vibrant social and economic centers. Joining the

Board is part of DMI's 2021 goals to connect more with our peers throughout the state and country. The board will assist in helping launch the new Madison/Milwaukee discussion series.

- DMI hosted several virtual events including a New Faces, New Places with Forest Coaching and Consulting, our What's Up Downtown Breakfast with International Downtown Association President David Downey and a Behind the Scenes featuring Children's Theater of Madison and the Madison Youth Arts Center.
- DMI is partnering with the Madison Arts Commission and Sustain Dane on two snow sculptures at this year's inaugural outside art festival. DMI is working with the Bayview Foundation and several young members of the community to design the art. A Wisconsin based artist will sculpt the children's images in an 8-foot by 8-foot block. Thanks to our friends at Findorff for constructing the snow mold.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee heard a presentation and held a discussion with Lorrie Heinemann from the Madison Development Corporation and Rich Lynch from Findorff on their work with the Dane County Workforce Housing Fund, an initiative of the Economic Stability Council.
- DMI submitted a position statement on the rezoning of the Amazon facility on Madison's east side. DMI strongly advocated for the City to maintain their current policy on rezoning properties that attempts to minimize the creation of non-conforming uses and structures. The statement was not about the specific site but about the precedent this decision would set. The rezoning failed at the February 2 Council meeting.

Challenge Committee:

- The Challenge Committee met to discuss forming a plan to ensure 100% completion of the Step Up: Equity Matters online bias challenge. The Committee also discussed setting up a timeline for the 2022 Civic Agenda work.

Membership Development:

- The Membership Development Committee met to discuss ambassador requirements, the committee's goals (sharing wins, ambassador training and working on actionable items). The committee also heard an update on the DMI Scholarship Program.
- The Committee hosted a New Member Coffee. The participants introduced themselves, heard more about DMI and connected in breakout rooms.
- DMI welcomed several new members this month: Literacy Network, Lions Reality and Investments, Sandy Torkildson, and WEDC.

Transportation:

- The Transportation Committee discussed their 2021 Civic Agenda work at their last meeting.
- The City is moving around 40% of the Metro bus traffic off State Street and onto West Washington Avenue. This work is not part of an effort to change State Street into a pedestrian mall; it is scheduled work to reduce bus traffic for the pending arrival of bus rapid transit downtown. The move of several bus routes is coordinated with the reconstruction of West Washington between Henry and Bedford this summer. The new road will include bus only lanes (one side only, alternating), dedicated bike lanes, one lane of car traffic and parking. The City is

also reconstructing one block of Bassett to create a floating bus lane and the extension of the protected bike lane.

- At the next virtual Nosh at Noon, we will be hosting a panel discussion on the future of transportation with Morgan Ramaker (BCycle), Kim Jones (Dane County Airport), Chris McCahill (SSTI), Yang Tao (City Transportation Engineer), Justin Stuehrenberg (Metro) and Harald Kliems (Madison Bikes).

Quality of Life:

- The Community Based Crime Reduction stakeholder group continues to meet. Most of the work is focused on community outreach.
- DMI co-hosted (with CNI) a downtown community conversation with John Adams and Michael Moody from Catalyst for Change. They discussed their downtown homeless outreach efforts.
- The Quality of Life Committee met to discuss their goals for 2021 including which committee members want to participate in the four new task forces: communications, homelessness, safety and university relations. We also heard partner updates from the BID, MPD, Porchlight and Sustain Dane.
- DMI is hosting a discussion on downtown policing with new MPD Chief Shon Barnes.

Inclusiveness:

- The Inclusiveness Committee met to hear updates on the Step Up work, the 2020 DMI Civic Agenda Task List for the Inclusiveness Committee and hold a discussion on what to focus on this year.
- The Committee is helping facilitate a book club through a DMI meet up.
- The Beyond Compliance is continuing their work on the ADA festivals training guide. They are working with the City on how to best ensure everyone is trained properly.

Government Relations:

- DMI is currently conducting interviews with City Council candidates (with no primary).
- Interviews with the candidates from the 9, 16 and 18th districts will be conducted after the February 16th primary.

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