



DMI Leadership Report – April 2021

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI, along with several local chamber partners, reported on the results from last month's survey on COVID and economic impacts. This was the third in a series of surveys amongst the partners. An average of nearly 450 diverse businesses completed the surveys each time. Here are some of the key findings:
 - 60 percent rated consumer and employee confidence as a top need, closely followed by a related need for more customers at 55 percent;
 - 70 percent experienced a decline in revenue in 2020 compared to 2019, with 24 percent losing more than half their revenue;
 - While businesses have worked to insulate their employees from experiencing negative impact, 52 percent have still had a reduction in employee benefits or workforce;
 - While there are positive trends and fewer businesses predicting closure, 31 percent have already closed or expect to close in the next 12 months if local public health orders are unchanged;
 - The most common local spending reductions were on entertainment (71 percent), meetings and events (69 percent), restaurants (67 percent), catering (48 percent) and hotels (43 percent);
 - 54 percent are utilizing at least some remote work, up from 27 percent pre-pandemic;
 - 18 percent rate Dane County's business climate as above average or excellent;
 - 28 percent rate local elected officials' performance during the pandemic as above average or excellent.
- DMI hosted several events this month including two New Faces, New Places with Piano Fondue and ESPN Madison; a Behind the Scenes with UW Campus and Visitor Relations; and a What's Up Downtown Breakfast with WEDC CEO and Secretary Missy Hughes.
- DMI, in partnership with the Downtown Milwaukee BID, is launching a new quarterly series, the Madison and Milwaukee Downtown Exchange. Every quarter, different speakers from the two downtowns, will share ideas on how the regions can work together for greater collaboration, growth, and investment.
- The Downtown Group met in March to hear several presentations including from Vandewalle's Rob Gottschalk on the economic importance of Downtown Madison and on the Group's future scenario planning project. The Group is shifting their work to a strategies-based approach, focusing on several key initiatives to create a vibrant and equitable downtown.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee did not meet in March however they have several meetings and events scheduled for April including presentations/discussions with Heather

Stouder from the City's Planning Division, Craig Stanley from Broadwing Advisors, and the team from Core Spaces on the 300 State Street project.

- DMI is working with Grace Church and the Workforce Board of South-Central Wisconsin on a potential new employment program for the homeless community downtown.

Challenge Committee:

- The DMI Challenge Committee met and discussed several topics including communication between the Committee and the Board, how to ensure the success of the future Step Up workshops and how to assist with the work of the Inclusiveness Committee's new task forces.

Membership Development:

- The Membership Committee met this month to discuss the Committee's wins and actional items. They reviewed the DMI ambassador training and the 2021 Committee goals as well. They also heard an update on the new account receivable tracking system and upcoming member meetups.
- DMI is excited to welcome several new members including: the Madison Reading Project, Operation Fresh Start, and Sarah Milestone.

Transportation:

- The Transportation Committee met twice in the last month. At their March meeting, Hannah Stewart, DMI Policy Researcher, and I presented on the DMI Pedestrian Mall Report. The presentation led to a discussion about State Street. At the April meeting, the Committee finished their work on the 2021 DMI Civic Agenda.

Quality of Life:

- The Quality of Life committee met to discuss their edits to the 2021 DMI Civic Agenda. The committee also heard updates from partners and the various new sub-committees.
- The DMI Policy Research team is working on a report discussing what, and giving examples, is a purpose-built shelter.

Inclusiveness:

- The Inclusiveness Committee met to reflect on UW-Madison's Aaron Bird Bear and Omar Poler's March meeting presentation on the Ho-Chunk Nation, heard updates on the new Inclusiveness Committee task forces work on internships, mentorships and an employer DEI toolkit, and discussed the changes for the 2021 DMI Civic Agenda.
- The Inclusiveness Committee started a book club. The group is reading works discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Government Relations:

- The Government Relations Committee did not meet in April. However, many on the Committee helped with ensuring the DMI endorsement information reached farther audiences.

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