



## DMI Leadership Report – August 2021

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

### **Creating Connections and Community:**

- DMI Director of Development Carol Ann Hewitt announced her retirement effective in late fall. Carol Ann is an amazing member of the DMI team. Thanks to her hard work, creativity, hospitable manor, and thoughtful approach, DMI is the organization it is today. During her decade plus with DMI, Carol Ann ensured both DMI and Downtown Madison are for the better. Thank you, Carol Ann, from everyone in the organization.
- DMI released a position statement opposing bus rapid transit stations on State Street.
- DMI is interviewing consultant candidates to assist with our new strategic plan. The consultant will start in the third quarter and end their work in quarter one of 2022.
- DMI hosted our first hybrid What's Up Downtown Breakfast live from the Edgewater Hotel. Morgan Ramaker from BCycle, LLC presented.
- I presented a downtown update at the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce August Lunch(UP)date discussion with Zach Brandon. The discussion ranged from busses on State Street, the return of office workers, future development, and the future of downtown.
- DMI hosted a member of the International Downtown Association (IDA) for a tour last month. DMI is working closely with IDA on several projects.
- WEDC hosted a press conference downtown announcing a new grant program for businesses moving into vacant storefronts. At the conference, several partners also introduced the new State Street pop-up shop program. The program is a public-private partnership between the City of Madison, the Madison Black Chamber, Hmong Chamber, Latino Chamber, the BID and JD McCormick Properties working to create more diverse businesses on State Street.

### **Economic Development:**

- The Economic Development Committee hosted a panel discussion on the closing of Tax Increment District (TID) 25 (central downtown). The panel, including Alder Mike Verveer, Matt Mikolajewski and Jason Stein, discussed the importance of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the power of TID 25.
- DMI is working with Destination Madison, MadREP and Madison College on hospitality workforce issues. There are several significant projects in the works.
- DMI, along with several other local economic development agencies, met with Small Business Administration Administrator Isabel Guzman. Rep. Mark Pocan set the meeting up and we all updated the Administrator on local economic conditions and the specific needs of small business in our area.

### **Challenge Committee:**

- The Challenge Committee met to discuss the details and timing of the 2022 Civic Engagement Agenda process, the next steps for DMI's diversity, equity, and inclusiveness work and to find a new Committee Chair.

#### **Membership Development:**

- The Membership Development Committee met to discuss monthly membership updates, share wins, and discuss ambassador assignments.
- Several new members joined DMI: Widen, Madison Property Management, The Soap Opera, The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness, Madison Top Company, Summit Commercial Fitness, and Integrated Art Group.

#### **Transportation:**

- The Transportation Committee is meeting on Friday, August 13 to hear updates from partners and a presentation by Freebee, a free ride share program interested in starting in Madison. The Committee will also participate in a workshop/listening session on the Metro Transit Network Redesign.

#### **Quality of Life:**

- The Quality of Life Committee met and heard updates from several partners including the BID and MPD. The Committee also heard a presentation from Solace, a member organization whose purpose is to bridge the existing gap in end-of-life care services by creating a community supported Social Model Hospice Home.
- The Committee's Sub-Committees in University Relations, Homelessness, and Story Telling all met last month.
- The Friends of Nolen Waterfront held a meeting with several City agencies and many stakeholders to discuss the Lake Monona Waterfront project. There were several updates including the timing of the design challenge (2022) and the reconstruction of the Monona Causeway bridges (2026).
- I met with the new Madison Police Department Captain, Harrison Zanders. The new Captain takes over from Captain Kelly Donahue in early August.

#### **Inclusiveness:**

- The Beyond Compliance Task Force held a training for local festival and event operators as part of their roll out of the new DMI Festivals and Events Accessibility Guide.
- The Inclusiveness Committee met and heard several partner and sub-committee updates. The Committee also heard a presentation from Sabrina Madison on the Progress Center for Black Women. The Progress Center just moved downtown.
- The Inclusiveness Committee Book Club started a new book, *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo.

#### **Government Relations:**

- The Government Relations Committee hosted 4<sup>th</sup> District Alder Mike Verveer at their August meeting.

For questions and more information, contact Jason Ilstrup, DMI President at 608-512-1330 or [jilstrup@downtownmadison.org](mailto:jilstrup@downtownmadison.org).