



DMI Leadership Report – December 2021

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI is completing the 2022 budget with the help of our Finance Committee and accountant, Kollath CPA. Thanks to all our members and partners, DMI is in a solid financial situation and will be able to continue working with the community to build a vibrant, equitable and welcoming downtown for everyone.
- DMI hosted several virtual, live and hybrid events including our What's Up Downtown Breakfast with MadREP President/CEO Jason Fields at the Edgewater Hotel and on Zoom. We also hosted the last MSN+MKE Downtown Exchange of the year virtually, where a panel discussed big ideas for the two downtowns. Lastly, the Madison Youth Arts Center (MYArts) hosted a live Behind the Scenes event of their wonderful new facility.
- DMI partnered with the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, Destination Madison, Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, and the Latino Chamber of Commerce on a fall business survey, the fourth in a series seeking to collect information regarding current business operations, challenges, and potential opportunities. 305 diverse businesses completed the survey which shows signs of optimism in confidence as vaccination rates grow. Yet challenges remain, primarily in the areas of talent shortages and higher operating costs.
- With the final approval at the DMI Board's November meeting, in January, DMI will welcome:
 - **New Board Members (7):**
 - Amy Supple, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Edgewater Hotel Company
 - Nora Roughen-Schmidt, Executive Director, StartingBlock Madison
 - Dan Kennelly, Vice President, Quad Capital Partners
 - Karla Thennes, Executive Director, Porchlight
 - Alia Stevenson, Chief Programs Officer, The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness
 - Baltazar De Anda Santana, Executive Director, Latino Academy of Workforce Development
 - David Braun, Senior Vice President, Group Manager WI Commercial Real Estate, Huntington National Bank
 - **New Ex-officio Board Members (2):**
 - Ellie Westman Chin, President and CEO, Destination Madison
 - Dr. Linda Vakunta, Deputy Mayor, City of Madison
 - **New Board Vice Chair:**
 - Margaret Watson, President and CEO, Steve Brown Apartments
- Jason is working with a UW Human Ecology class, DS 341 (Design Thinking for Transformation), on a semester long set of student projects to help transform three areas downtown, including the top of State Street, Hawthorne Court and Francis Mall.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee participated in a panel discussion on the tech sector downtown. The panelists included Nora Roughen-Schmidt of Starting Block, Max Fergus with LUM and Forrest Woolworth with Per Blue.

Challenge Committee:

- The Challenge Committee is planning for their 2022 work, how to work directly on the DMI strategic plan and how to welcome potential new members.

Membership Development:

- The Membership Committee met to discuss their recent activities, ambassador assignments and to hear organizational updates.
- DMI welcomed several new members this month including WDS Construction (Jeff Garretson), Center for Black Excellence and Culture, Inc. (Dr. Alex Gee), Isthmus Community Media (Jason Joyce) and Wisconsin Bank and Trust (John Hintze).

Transportation:

- The Transportation Committee met twice over the last month. At the first meeting, the Committee discussed the status of BRT/State Street and People for Bikes recent presentation. The Committee discussed ways to continue to advocate for better biking conditions downtown. At the second meeting, the Committee had a presentation and discussion on high-speed rail with Rick Harnish and Chris Ott with High Speed Rail Alliance.

Quality of Life:

- DMI continues working with the City's Community Development Division, Madison Police Department, Public Health Madison & Dane County, Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc., UW Population Health, and several other partners on the Downtown Safety Initiative. DMI serves on both the groups steering committee and the advisory council.
- The Quality of Life Committee met in November to hear sub-committee updates and a presentation on the redevelopment of Library Mall with Aaron Williams, UW-Madison Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture.

Inclusiveness:

- DMI co-hosted an event with the Out Professional Engagement Network (OPEN) on how to make Madison the most livable community for everyone. The event, hosted at the UW South Madison Partnership, included a panel discussion with Dana Pellebon, Tempestt Ballenger and Dina Nina Martinez, and question and answer from the audience.
- The Inclusiveness Committee met to hear various committee task force updates, reflect on the past year and plan for 2022.

Government Relations:

- The Government Relations Committee heard a presentation from Doug Poland, Partner at Stafford Rosenbaum and Litigation Director of Law Forward on redistricting throughout the state. The Committee also discussed the recent redistricting of the Madison Common Council.

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