



DMI Director's Report – October 2026

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI hosted our Annual Celebration on September 10 at the new Madison Public Market. The event was a success thanks to the second highest number of attendees to ever attend the celebration, at just under 800. We really appreciate all the amazing support!
- DMI hosted several events this month including a New Faces, New Places at the newly renovated Johnson Financial Group location in Downtown Madison, and:
 - Two Madison/Milwaukee Downtown Exchanges, including one on the importance of office space to thriving downtowns with Emily Mehl from Broadwing Advisors, and Tom Irgens of Irgens in Milwaukee.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtu0cX4QQu0&t=3s>
 - A joint Madison/Milwaukee Downtown Exchange and What's Up Downtown Breakfast on the importance of sports to downtowns with Josh Glessing of the Milwaukee Bucks and Conor Caloia of Big Top Events/Forward Madison/Rally Madison.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMVdtu4HugA>
- September's DMI Advocacy Update featured a discussion on tourism in Downtown Madison with Rob Gard from Destination Madison:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NNf48e3Glc>
- Envision Madison hosted several meetings including two Center City Collaborative meetings and a public meeting on October 1 to review work completed thus far, preview upcoming work and seek input from the community.
- Several DMI Board members and staff we're named to this year's InBusiness Magazine 2026 Power 100 list including, Ruben Anthony, Dan Brown, Ellie Westman Chin, Jason Ilstrup, Rebecca Prochaska, Jeannie Cullen, Amy Supple, and Jim Tubbs. Congratulations everyone!

DMI Media Mentions:

- September 15 – Wisconsin State Journal - [Meeting Coming Up on Downtown Madison Development Plan](#)
- September 21 – Wisconsin State Journal - [Housing, Lake Access, Vibrancy, Top Downtown Madison Wish List](#)
- September 22 – Madison City Cast – What Should Downtown Madison's Future Look Like?
- September 24 – Cap Times - [Chipotle Comes to Madison's Capitol Square](#)
- Jason co-hosted this month's Live it Up with Lee and Friends on WKOW.

Presentations:

- Jason served on the Monona East Side Business Alliance's (MESBA) State of Dane County panel with Dane County Executive Melissa Agard, Claire Olesiak from Sustain Dane, and Jason Scott from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.
- Jason moderated and served on a panel discussion in Milwaukee about the state of Downtown's in Wisconsin as part of the Hoan City Exchange. The panel also included Ray Hill from Milwaukee's Historic King Drive, Matt Dorner from MKE Downtown, and Brian Johnson from On Broadway in Green Bay.
- Jason emceed the end of the Anesis Therapy 10th anniversary event.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee hosted a discussion led by Craig Stanley from Broadwing Advisors on the current state of commercial real estate in Downtown Madison.
- The Regent Street Group met to discuss the placemaking elements of the Regent Street reconstruction project. The Group formed a task force to work with the City on the project. The task force met for the first time in October.
- Jason participated in UW Athletics welcoming of a delegation from Dublin, Ireland in preparation for next year's Aer Lingus College Football Classic featuring the Badgers v. Pitt. The delegation included government leaders, business leaders, and the team operating the game.
- Jason visited Downtown Janesville, Inc., meet with leaders, and toured Downtown Janesville as part of an exchange.

Membership Development:

- DMI welcomed several new members, including:

American Feral Artist Services	https://americanferalgallery.com
Karen Kendrick-Hands	N/A
Holden Real Estate Advisory	https://holdenadvisory.com
MicroAdz a SPEAK Company	https://microadz.com
Pines Bach LLP	www.pinesbach.com
RM Berg	https://www.rmberghomes.com/
Supporting Strategies	www.supportingstrategies.com
Thysse	www.thysse.com

Transportation:

- The DMI Transportation Committee met twice since the last Director's Report. In September, the Committee heard a presentation from Ben Lyman with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on their e-device research. In October, the Committee discussed the placemaking elements of the Regent Street reconstruction project.

Quality of Life:

- The DMI Quality of Life Committee welcomed Don Cramer from the Wisconsin Policy Forum to their September meeting to discuss their report on Wisconsin's homeless population.

Inclusiveness:

- DMI assisted in hosting the bi-monthly meeting of the Madison Area Diversity Roundtable (MADR).

Beyond Compliance:

- The Beyond Compliance Sub-Committee released a survey looking to inform them about their current and future work.

Government Relations:

- The DMI Government Relations Committee heard a presentation from Deputy Chief of Staff of the County Executive's Office, Aaron Collins, on the 2027 Dane County Budget.
- Jason and several DMI Board Members continue to participate in both the Wisconsin Policy Forum's Greater Madison Advisory Committee and the Wisconsin Union's Director's Advisory Board.

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