



The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) is established to help support the residents, business owners, organizations, and owners of property within Downtown Stevens Point. The BID boundaries and operating documents may be found at: <https://stevenspoint.com/1296/Business-Improvement-Districts>.

Downtown BID meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month but moved for special circumstances. Additional ad hoc meetings are held as needed. All board meetings of the board are hosted in-person and virtually and are open to the public.

Members

- Tara Manzke
- Hana Cutler
- Mike Beacom
- Bob Butt
- Brian Cummins
- Rosalind Kealiher
- Alderperson Christianson

AGENDA

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Date and Time:	April 2, 2024 2:30 PM	Location:	Large Conference Room Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau 1105 Main Street Suite A, Stevens Point, WI 54481
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Opening Section:

1. Roll Call.
2. Comments from the public on non-agenda and agenda items
3. Guest Speaker - City Attorney, Logan Beveridge
4. BID Fiscal Policy Discussion
5. Downtown Vacancy List (For Marketing)
6. General Reports and Updates
 - A. City Staff Updates
 - B. Treasurer Report
 - C. Downtown Manager Report
 - D. Board Chair Report
7. Work Group Reports
 - A. Promotion Work Group Lead - Tara
 - B. Design Work Group Lead - Brian
 - C. Economic Vitality Work Group Lead - Rosalind

D. Organization Work Group Lead - Hana/Bob

Discussion and Possible Action on:

1. Approve Meeting Minutes from March 5, 2024
2. Consideration of Work Group to Provide Support for Vacancy Effort
3. WDAC Downtown Summit Conference Fee
4. Secret Shopper Program
5. Adjournment.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any person who has special needs while attending these meetings or needs agenda materials for these meetings should contact the City Clerk as soon as possible to ensure that a reasonable accommodation can be made. The City Clerk can be reached by telephone at (715) 346-1569 or by mail at 1515 Strong's Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Maps further defining the above area(s) may be obtained from the City of Stevens Point Department of Community Development, 1515 Strong's Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481, or by calling (715) 346-1567, during normal business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a quorum of the Common Council may be in attendance at this meeting.

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID

Stevens Point, Wisconsin 2024 Resource Team Report

The Resource Team is a service provided by Wisconsin Main Street to help guide local revitalization efforts in new Main Street communities. This report identifies strategic initiatives to achieve their vision of a vibrant district.

The Resource Team's proposed strategies and recommendations for action are based on extensive market research, community surveys, business outreach, a review of past performance and progress, and additional input provided by a wide variety of stakeholders during the three-day visit.

Stevens Point has been actively focused on downtown development for many years; as part of the Main Street Program from 2004-2012, under the Connect Communities Program from 2016-2022, and rejoining Main Street with the formation of the BID in 2023. During this time, major initiatives downtown included the development of the square, redevelopment of the mall, the establishment of effective design review and impactful property rehabilitation programs, and numerous successful events.

Strategic initiatives and transformative strategies presented in this report are rooted in the community's vision for Downtown Stevens Point and incorporate projects and processes that align with the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization, advancing efforts in:

- **Organization** of broad-based local support and leadership, membership and fundraising.
- **Promotion** to market downtown and its public and private assets as a center of commercial and social engagement.
- **Design** of the built environment, signage, streetscape, public spaces, and other visual aspects of the downtown
- **Economic Vitality** tools to strengthen and expand the downtown's economic base.



KEY ASSETS

- ❖ **Engaged and participatory community**
- ❖ **Numerous destination businesses and entities**
- ❖ **Impressive historic buildings, many restored**
- ❖ **New investment by existing owners and developers**
- ❖ **Extensive public art**
- ❖ **Ample public spaces and natural resources**

OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ **Host popup businesses and events to activate underused spaces. Locate public amenities to maximize use.**
- ❖ **Use wayfinding signage, visual cues, and public art to help visitors navigate the district.**
- ❖ **Create opportunities for private sector and volunteer engagement to achieve common goals.**

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CORE ACTIONS

As a new(er) organization, there are several foundational tasks that, if tackled now, can help the organization be more effective in the future. These include:

Organization

- » Establish communications plan for key audiences.
- » Formalize committee structure and recruit volunteers.

Economic Development

- » Use Main Street America property inventory tool to survey downtown properties and track vacancy and condition trends.
- » Conduct business/property owner survey to understand and track rental rate trends.

Marketing & Promotion

- » Establish a unified marketing message and branding for downtown used by all partners.
- » Work with SPA to set goals for events, measure impact and refine as needed.

Design

- » Create building improvement resource packet.
- » Promote Wisconsin Main Street design assistance.



DISTRICT STRATEGIES

With strong central neighborhoods and a growing population, downtown Stevens Point will thrive when it is seen as a **welcoming neighborhood**. We repeatedly heard that living close to downtown was a selling point for this audience, providing a built-in and receptive audience. Customers living within walking distance of businesses visit twice as often and add evening and weekend vitality.

Quick Win: Survey walking-distance residents to understand perceptions and needs.

Short Term Goal: Create new resident welcome kit, host new resident socials.

Long Term Opportunity: Connect property owners with funds for upper floor rehab projects.



Downtown has many destination businesses and entities, but many City visitors never find their way downtown. Marketing **downtown as an experience** will help retain existing customers longer while also providing curated recommendations for targeted visitor groups, helping them visualize a trip downtown.

Quick Win: Visually connect downtown to the river using lighting, art and wayfinding.

Short Term Goal: Create series of targeted downtown itineraries (arts, outdoors, etc.).

Long Term Opportunity: Add public amenities or encourage businesses to fill activity gaps.

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID

MARKET PROFILE

MARKET PROFILE

While relatively small in size, representing only 1.5% of the land area of the City, downtown Stevens Point plays an important role in the local economy. Downtown generates over \$750,000 annually in municipal and county taxes and is home to a significant share of businesses, employees, and property value. Additionally, downtown attracts an average of 6,000 average visitors per day. There is room for growth in the residential and hospitality traffic, both of which will boost evening and weekend activity, as well as adding market opportunities for retail and restaurants, as we know that the average downtown residential unit spends nearly \$10,000 per year on goods and services that can be purchased downtown, and customers are 200% more likely to patronize businesses that are walkable rather than getting in their car to travel elsewhere.

	City	Downtown	Market Share
Geographic Size	18.4 sq. mi.	0.28 sq. mi.	1.5%
Assessed Value	\$1.946 b	\$66 m	3.4%
Businesses	2,340	315	13.5%
Daytime Employment	16,583	2,034	12.3%
Residential Population	25,954	885	3.4%
Retail Businesses	455	54	11.9%
Restaurant Sales	\$33.9m	\$818,000	2.4%
Hotel Rooms (Incl AirBnB)	801 rooms	62 rooms	7.7%
Total Annual Visitor Traffic	17.4m	2.1 m	11.9%

Sources: Department of Revenue, ESRI, Datafy, Data Axle

Since joining the Connect Communities program in 2017, downtown Stevens Point has had numerous successes, including the following:

- » -8 Net new businesses
- » 0 Net new jobs
- » \$232 million in private investment
- » \$8.9 million in public investment
- » Over 14,000 volunteer hours valued at \$400,000+
- » Won Connect Communities award for Tunes at Twilight

The Wisconsin Main Street team looks forward to working with the community as it continues this successful path.



RESOURCE TEAM OVERVIEW

RESOURCE TEAM PROCESS

The resource team consisted of a team of four professionals focused on understanding the strengths, opportunities and challenges facing downtown Stevens Point and the Downtown BID associated with each of the Main Street Four Points. Specifically, team participants included:

- » **Organization:** Amy Krupp, Executive Director Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership
- » **Economic Vitality:** Errin Welty, Senior Director of Downtown Development, WEDC
- » **Promotions:** Adriana Humbert, Downtown Promotions Manager, WEDC
- » **Design:** Joe Lawniczak, Downtown Design Specialist, WEDC

OBSERVATIONS

During our three-day visit, we were impressed by many of the things we saw and heard. Specifically, downtown Stevens Point has the following;

- » Contiguous core of (largely) well-maintained historic architecture.
- » Strong complement of anchor businesses and civic destinations.
- » Active private investment from local owners and large developers.
- » A good mix of retail, services, and restaurants (however, hours and product mix could be tweaked to cater to targeted/emerging audiences).
- » Active riverfront and programmable areas (although not always visible or well connected to downtown).
- » Genuine interest and engagement from many constituents in a thriving downtown.
- » Great community reputation for identifying and planning for municipal issues, although implementation can be delayed.
- » Limited awareness among potential stakeholders of opportunities for direct engagement and 'how to help'.
- » Wayfinding is challenging given mix of wide, one-way streets, limited consistent signage and lack of landmarks.
- » Limited green space within downtown, but ample underutilized spaces with possibility.

REPORT LAYOUT

This report is organized according to the Four Points of Main Street, with the recommendations provided in each section designed to be led by the respective committee. However, research shows that communities working toward an overall transformation strategy are more effective at implementing impactful initiatives. A transformation strategy is a tool to help the district refine and communicate its strategic vision and focus its efforts to achieve the greatest success (while also preventing it from getting sidetracked by initiatives or events that don't complement the goal). Currently, Stevens Point's greatest opportunities lie in its potential to be a Welcoming Neighborhood and a Destination Experience.

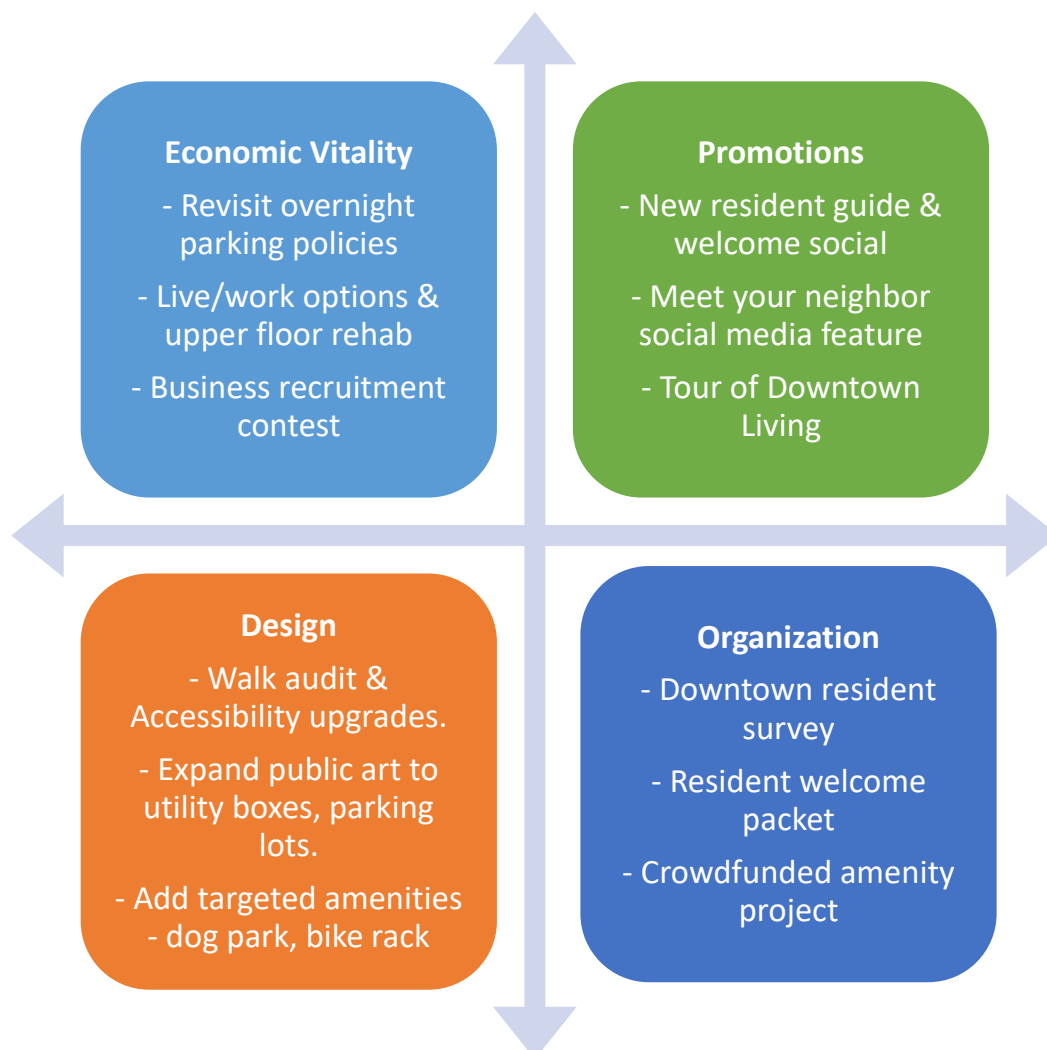


TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Welcoming Neighborhood

This transformation strategy focuses on the fact that downtown is central to a strong and growing residential population. Not only are there an estimated 885 residents living within the BID borders and 5,209 within a 15-minute walk. By and large, these residents have chosen to live in a walkable neighborhood near downtown and are a prime audience for district businesses. By focusing on better connecting these residents to downtown, keeping them informed of district businesses and events and formally welcoming and acknowledging their support, these individuals can become a marketing force for the district.

This strategy focuses on increasing visitation and loyalty from existing customer groups and encouraging them to share their experiences to attract other similar visitors, growing overall traffic. Accomplishing this strategy includes both changing perceptions to allow downtown to be seen as a neighborhood, adding amenities to make downtown living more convenient and appealing, and adding marketing and promotions elements to create a downtown living identity. The graphic below highlights how this strategy can be employed within each of the Four Points.

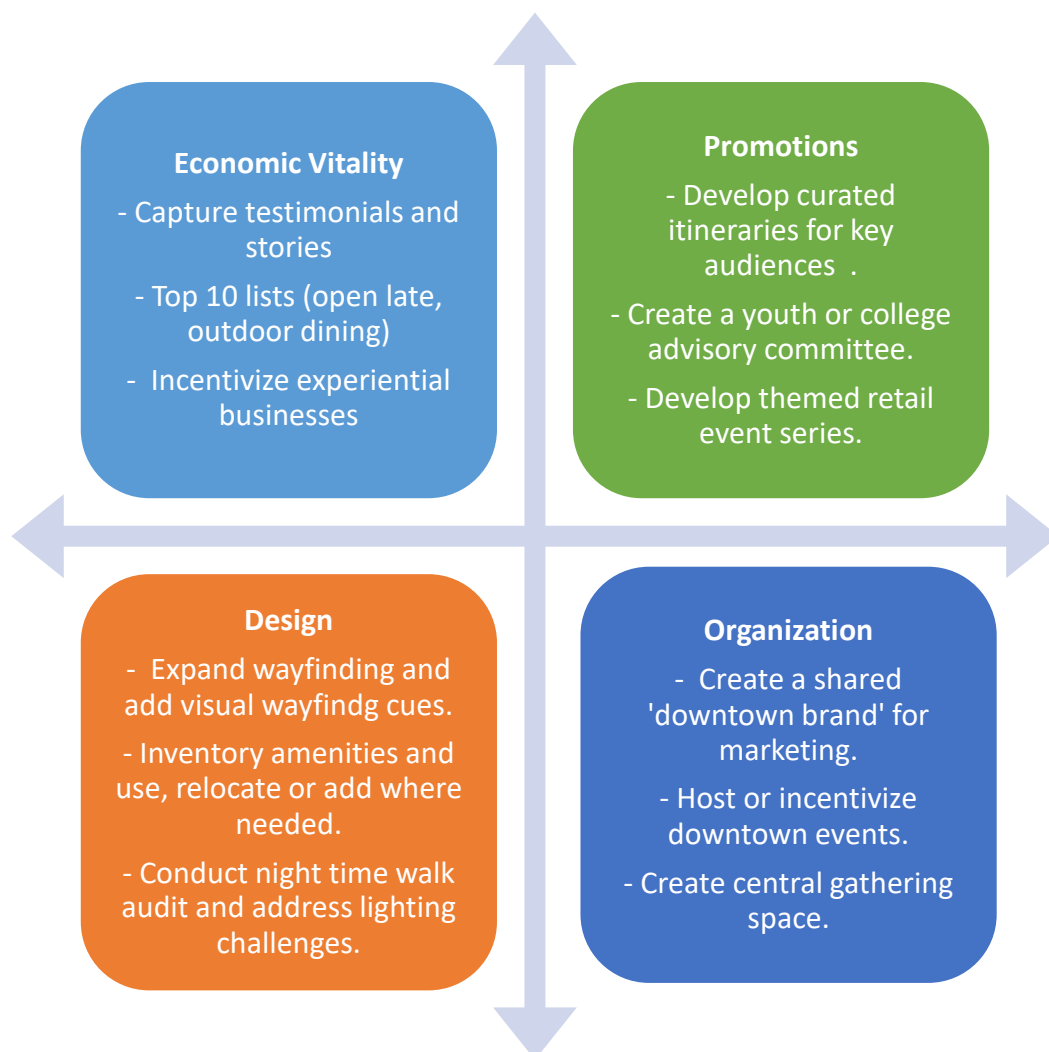


TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Downtown Experience

Downtown Stevens Point is home to numerous destination businesses, events, and activities, but it was clear that visitors do not regularly experience downtown as a whole during their visit. By actively promoting businesses and experiences that cater to a shared audience, not only will existing customers stay longer and spend more, but new visitors from key populations will view downtown Stevens Point as a hub for their visit, rather than a stop on the route.

This strategy highlights curated itineraries that appeal to visitors from targeted groups or with specific interests, encouraging them to visit and share their experiences. This strategy can be employed not only by the Downtown BID, but also by partners, thereby expanding its impact. Potential strategies for enhancing downtown as an experience are outlined in the below graphic.



DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID ADVOCACY

DOWNTOWN ADVOCACY

Stevens Point has many large-scale initiatives currently in the planning phases. Many of these projects are actively underway, involve community-wide discussions and decisions, and will not be led by the Downtown BID. For that reason, they are not addressed as part of this plan. However, the outcome of these decisions and projects will have a profound impact on the look and feel of downtown. To the extent that the BID can advocate for specific objectives or outcomes as part of these projects, some suggested guiding principles and factors for consideration are outlined below.

KEY TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

- » **Parking:** Stakeholders for every downtown district in the state feel that they have a parking problem. Parking awareness and management are largely to blame for this perception, although accessibility can also be a challenge for older populations especially. In Stevens Point, the following suggestions should be explored:
 - Implement wayfinding system, give lots names and clear signage that includes hourly parking and/or costs. Geotag lots on online map systems for visitor convenience.
 - Evaluate parking permitting systems to create overnight options and promote shared space use between daytime and nighttime users.



Inadequate signage and wayfinding.

Shopko/Great Lakes Buildings: There are many ideas in the community for the reuse of large vacant properties. Many of these uses would be beneficial for the community, but few are financially feasible without a charitable investor. The City has a positive track record of proactively addressing obsolete properties downtown, as evidenced by the mall redevelopment. Future uses of these spaces should:

- Maximize foot traffic and activity in the district.
 - Improve the pedestrian experience by activating the sidewalk.
 - Maximize developable square footage and property values in the district.
- » **Vacant Retail Space:** Numerous stakeholders expressed concern over the vacant commercial space in new developments. While in the short-term rental rates and construction costs may result in vacant commercial space for some time, it is still preferable to require these spaces, since the alternative is to create first-floor residential or other inactive uses which limit pedestrian activity. Additionally, the addition of modern retail spaces can allow expanding businesses or professional service firms to move out of retail spaces, freeing up more affordable space for small businesses. Working with property owners to install temporary popup or incubator uses in the interim will help to reduce the visibility of vacant spaces.



- » **Portage County Courthouse:** Discussions on the future of the courthouse and jail have been ongoing for several decades and are unlikely to be resolved soon. The presence of a major employer in the district is important for daytime foot traffic, and the courthouse in particular drives demand for law offices and ancillary businesses nearby. Any future changes on this site should include consideration of:
 - The cost (and burden) of redevelopment and impact on assessed value in the downtown.
 - Inventory and retention of downtown employment base and office tenants.
- » **Centerpoint Drive:** Potential changes to Centerpoint Drive have also been ongoing. Its current form as one-way arterials pose a significant challenge to creating a walkable district and also limits connections with growth areas on the edges of the district. It is recommended that the city work with the DOT to make interim improvements until reconstruction is possible while identifying priority objectives for this future opportunity.



A reimagined Centerpoint Drive crossing.

- » **Unhoused Populations:** The increase in visibly unhoused populations in the district has caused concern for many businesses and customers. This concern stems from the real added costs of security and maintenance of property where overnight activity is happening, concern for the safety and retention of workers, especially those with evening shifts, and the potential for impacts on customer traffic. Stevens Point is not alone in facing this challenge – unhoused populations have increased statewide. Some steps to help address immediate concerns might include:
 - Creation of a business resource guide that provides instructions and contacts for businesses to call in certain situations (police and non-police).
 - Host a police/business roundtable strategy session.
 - Exploring a shared outreach staff to serve as an ambassador and social service outreach worker to move individuals into services.
 - Working towards a day center to provide an indoor hub for services.



April 2020

SAFETY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency	911
Non-Emergency Police Intervention Portland Police Dispatch	207-874-8575
Community Policing Midtown Coordinator, 26 Portland Street	207-772-1371
Outreach to Persons in Need Amistad Peer Outreach Worker	207-550-7726 Call or text
Substance Use Milestone HOME Team	207-838-8904
Crisis Response Opportunity Alliance	888-568-1112
Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)	207-828-1035
Health & Human Services Info & Referral System (Includes Maine Opiate Helpline)	Call 211 or go to 211maine.org
Portland Community Free Clinic 103 India Street	207-874-8982

ADDITIONAL CLEAN & SAFE RESOURCES

Trash & Sanitation Issues Code Enforcement	207-874-8703
Noise Issues Portland Police Dispatch	207-874-8575

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID

GETTING ORGANIZED

DEFINING AND STRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATION

As a new organization, the Downtown BID has an opportunity to set itself up for success. A well-run organization is more effective and attracts talented individuals. By establishing formal work plans and processes, the organization will have the longevity and credibility it needs to secure volunteers and funding to achieve its goals. This chapter, as with the others, is structured to include the following:

- » **Further define the makeup, terms, and job descriptions** of the Board and committees. Now that the organization is up and running, it may be necessary to adjust the bylaws slightly to ensure the right mix of talent is at the table. Over time, re-evaluate board size composition. Currently, the BID board is relatively small and limited in makeup. This may help the organization be focused and efficient in its early efforts, but over time may limit capacity. Ultimately, board members should represent all facets of downtown, including property or business owners on the edges of the district and the West Bank. It is also ideal to have specific skills or perspectives such as attorney, accountant, resident, and a variety of age groups reflected in the group to ensure diverse opinions.
 - It is recommended to have Board Members with connections to other relevant committees or organizations (ex. city, SPA, CVB). Over the long term, increasing the amount of **overlap among boards**, either through the coordination of Board Member nominations or the addition of ex-officio or non-voting members, can help to minimize conflicts among organizations in the planning phase, and can help clarify organization positions or decision-making processes, reducing real and perceived conflicts between organizations.
 - Develop a **Board Commitment Letter and Application** – We recommend an introductory letter to potential new Board Members that clearly defines the expectations and requirements of being a Board Member.
 - Create an **annual calendar by month of Board activities**. This is a quick exercise to map out the monthly standing topics to be addressed at Executive and Board meetings. This will ensure that annual activities do not fall off the radar of the group, such as annual accreditation, budget planning, and staff reviews.
 - In future years, **re-evaluate the size of the Board**. It may be in the best interest of the organization to add more members to represent a wider variety of constituents.
- » **Define committees versus task forces, including job descriptions**. Generally, standing committees will align with the four pillars of the National Main Street Model – Design, Economic Vitality, Promotion, and Organization. Establish committees and work groups for major initiatives. Identify goals and activities for each and recruit committee members and/or volunteers with the necessary interests, skills, and connections. **Form an Organization Committee** to create the necessary policy and procedure documents. Utilize your fellow Main Street Communities and state staff to obtain templates of documents that are needed.
 - **Define standard meeting times and standard agenda items** – All standing committees should have a standard monthly meeting time and place. Agendas and prior month's minutes should be sent out 48 hours in advance. Meetings should be limited to one hour unless otherwise noted. This will reduce meeting fatigue and overall time spent in meetings.
- » **Schedule an annual downtown stakeholder summit** of key partners to discuss progress, and roles and agree on priorities for the coming year. This will reduce duplication of efforts, streamline communication, and ensure consistent marketing.
- » **Formalize organizational procedures and documents**. Continue to build out your structure with a full complement of policies and procedures to ensure continuity during transitions. Design and annually review; Financial Statements, Bylaws, Personnel Manual (including job descriptions and annual review procedures), Board, Volunteer, and Committee Member Job Descriptions, confidentiality, and commitment statements.



DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID GETTING ORGANIZED

INCREASE VISIBILITY

As a new organization, downtown Stevens Point faces the challenge of getting the word out about who they are and what they do. Because Stevens Point is fortunate to have numerous civic entities hosting events and carrying out initiatives, branding the organization will help differentiate itself and create awareness in the community.

» **Brand all organizational materials.** Develop a downtown Stevens Point BID logo (this can be a Main Street Technical Assistance Visit) and associated fonts and colors to be a fully functional brand. Once established, all documents, advertisements, etc. should have the downtown Stevens Point BID logo on them and use the selected fonts and colors.

- To increase organizational awareness, purchase logo apparel for Board Members to wear at all events and functions.
- Consider creating select merchandise with the organizational logo to use as thank-you gifts or prizes. Remember that the quality of the item you put your logo on reflects the quality of your organization.

» **Plan an Annual Meeting** – Take the opportunity to bring all constituents together celebrate your successes so far and highlight plans for the upcoming year. Determine award categories and recognize partners that contribute to downtown. Also, use this meeting to have people sign up for volunteer opportunities or to sign up to participate in upcoming functions.

» **Communicate strategically with stakeholders:**

- Continue to keep City Council informed of your progress (in person) bi-annually, if not more frequently. We were impressed with the support seen from City Staff and the City Council.
- Communicate the opportunities to stay informed with the organization. Example – Open Board Meetings schedule, private Facebook groups, etc. (attached)

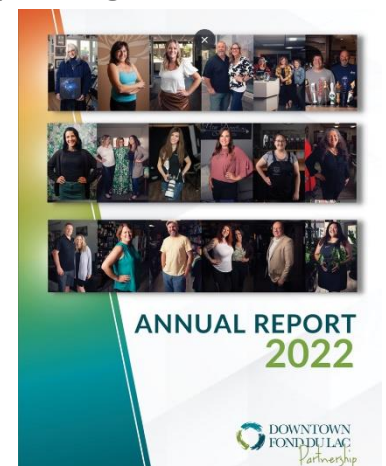
- Create a monthly news bulletin. This can be as simple as bullet points of information intended to keep business and property owners in the know.
- Create a Business and Property Owners Facebook Group - Define the parameters of topics allowed. It is recommended to have a few admins to approve new posts. This allows stakeholders to engage privately on topics of concern, and to coordinate around events effectively.

Tell Your Story

While the SPA and CVB will be the primary avenues for external marketing about district events and businesses, the BID will need to establish its own communications vehicles to coordinate resources, demonstrate value, and effectively communicate district needs.

Many of the BID's activities will primarily take place behind the scenes. However, it is important to demonstrate that the property owners and BID are actively involved in improving and caring for the downtown. Coordinating visible initiatives that allow new individuals to easily support the effort is one way to achieve this goal.

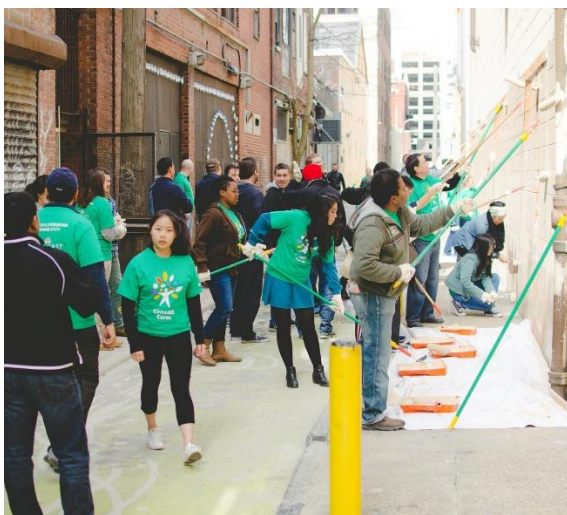
» **Publish an Annual Report** – the goals of this report are to visually tell your story to business and property owners, elected officials, potential sponsors/donors, potential new businesses, to provide transparency about organization operations and to educate the public about the organization's mission and vision.



DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID GETTING ORGANIZED

- » **Speak to local civic groups** to tell your story. Make sure they are aware of partnership opportunities, such as activities in conjunction with downtown events, your wish list of physical improvements downtown, etc. Many local civic groups also have grant opportunities for local non-profits.
- » **Meet with candidates for public office** to better understand their position on downtown initiatives and to educate them on the goals of the organization and the importance of downtown for the City's economic success.

Spring and Fall Clean Up Days are highly visible and easy-to-engage opportunities for direct district organizations. Our conversations with various youth organizations indicated that students are often looking for ways to get involved. One opportunity would be for the BID to organize a Spring and Fall cleanup day downtown, where volunteers spend a weekend afternoon sweeping, pulling weeds, picking up trash, cleaning, and even painting. This could be on Main Street and in alleyways. The BID could incorporate fun activities such as chalk art for younger children, and work with local businesses for things like food and refreshments for the volunteers, or donations of brooms, trash bags, cleaning supplies, chalk, paint, etc.



Clean up days allow for various groups to help improve downtown, and are a visible presence and sign of progress (especially with branded shirts)

COORDINATE RESOURCES

As a new Main Street community, there are numerous resources available to businesses and property owners. Providing useful and timely information about technical assistance and funding can encourage businesses and property owners to undertake improvements or initiatives that would otherwise be intimidating. Some common strategies:

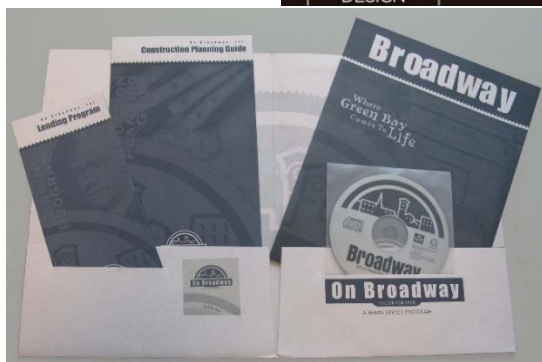
Be the Go-To Organization for Downtown Starting a new business or buying a historic building can be a daunting task. The Downtown Stevens Point BID should be the first stop for all information related to opening and operating a business or renovating a property downtown. Streamline all information available in an organized binder and/or electronic file.

- » Determine a process to introduce new business and property owners to the district. 'Meet & Greet', announcements on social media, introductions at Council meetings, etc.

**PORT
WASHINGTON
WISCONSIN**

**BUILDING
IMPROVEMENT
PACKAGE**

**MAIN STREET
DESIGN**

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DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID GETTING ORGANIZED

Coordinate Main Street Consultant Visits

As with the recent Restaurant Consultant visit, Downtown Stevens Point will be eligible to host additional Main Street consultants in coming years. These visits typically feature a morning presentation followed by individual consulting opportunities for businesses. Common topics include storefront & interior merchandising, restaurant consulting, social media/marketing and district photography. Contact Wisconsin Main Street to get on the list for your preferred type of visit.



Retail Merchandising tech visit with Retailworks, Inc.

TRACK IMPACTS

One important way for the BID to establish itself as a valued partner in revitalization is to consistently track and demonstrate the impact of its activities and economic progress in downtown. Not only is monthly reporting required of Main Street communities, but having data to demonstrate demand and support further investment is key for advocacy and grant-writing. In addition to required reporting on business activity, investment and volunteer engagement, the downtown BID should also collect the following:

- » Track prospect interest and activity to demonstrate business interest in downtown to potential developers, and/or to follow up to interested entrepreneurs as spaces become available. Work with the City, SPA, Chamber and CVB to track interest and coordinate responses.

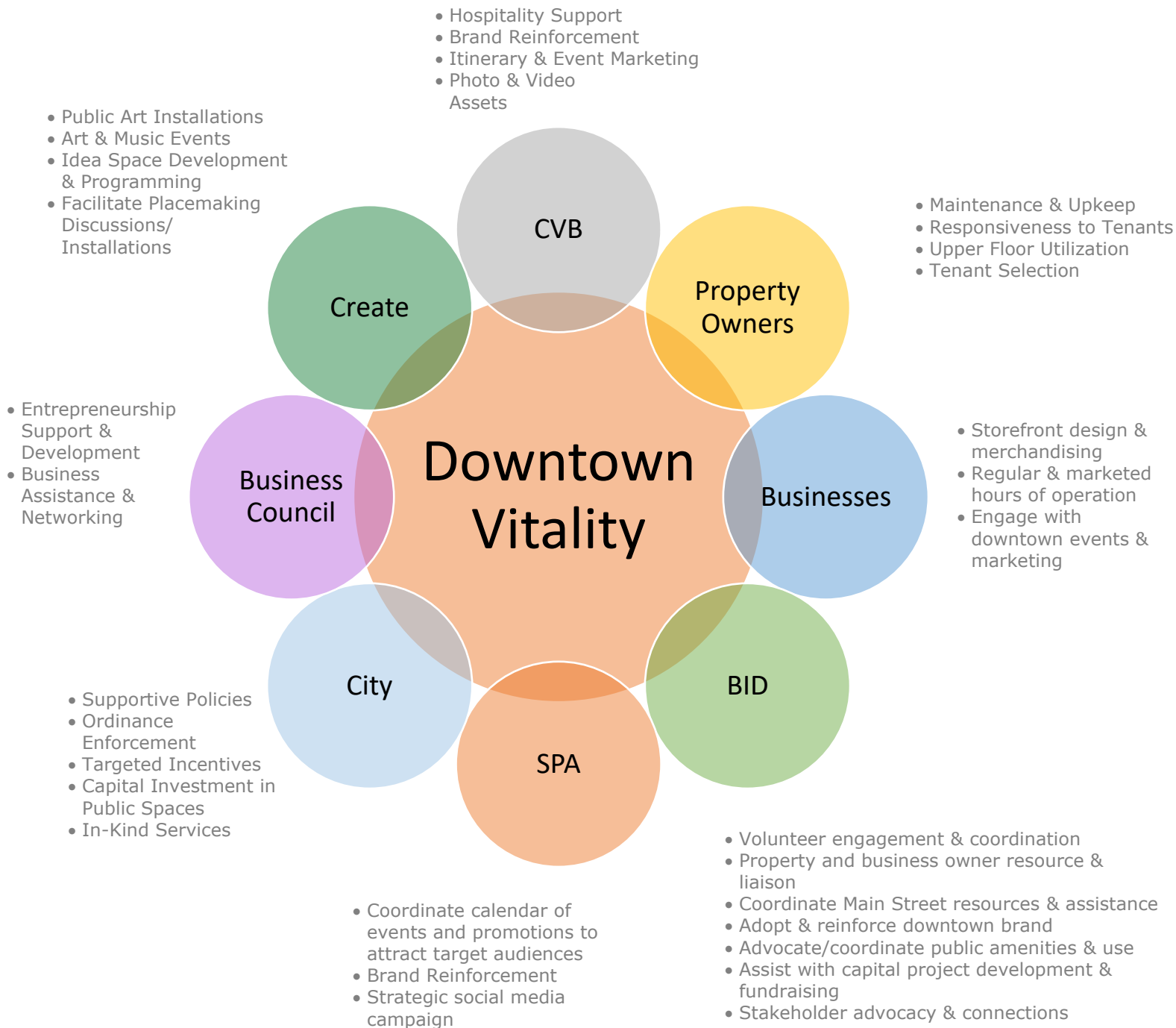
- » Work with SPA to set goals for events, collect information from participants and adjacent businesses. Measure impact, business engagement and use geofencing to identify target audiences. Refine event marketing or planning as needed to meet goals.
- » Conduct an annual business and property owner survey to understand and track rental rate trends in the district. As is often the case, there is limited information available for prospective businesses or new property owners on fair rental rates based on location and building condition. By collecting rent information (potentially for commercial and residential spaces), aggregating it and communicating it to businesses and property owners, investors can make educated decisions about investment and location decisions.

DEFINE RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the strategic planning and MOU process each year, stakeholders and partners in downtown revitalization efforts should define their role and objective in the coming year. Overall, the chart at right highlights suggested primary and support responsibilities of each organization, although these roles may evolve and change depending on capacity, funding and priorities of various partners.

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID GETTING ORGANIZED

PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES (With Regard to Downtown)

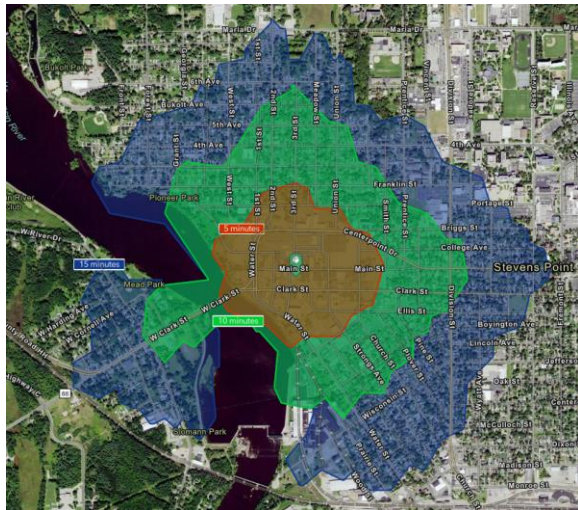


WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

STRATEGY INTRODUCTION

The strong and growing residential market near downtown Stevens Point provides a robust opportunity for customer recruitment and authentic marketing. Effective marketing, wayfinding and streetscape improvements can significantly boost the frequency of visits by these customers while also marketing downtown as a desirable neighborhood, further supporting development and investment.

The image below shows the 5, 10, and 15-minute walkshed for the core of downtown. The 15-minute zone represents nearly 5,000 individuals with a median household income of over \$50,000. As this population is generally young and comprised of singles and couples, this income supports a robust discretionary spending market, especially for entertainment, restaurants, home goods and technology.



Downtown Stevens Point Walkable Neighborhoods

Additionally, many residents in this area have purposely relocated to the community, and to central neighborhoods, because they are attracted to the walkable lifestyle and access to natural amenities. Expanding and improving these assets will make the area even more marketable to these audiences, which represent a growing segment of the market.

Organization

Establishing downtown as a neighborhood requires targeted outreach to existing and potential residents as well as effective coordination among downtown stakeholders.

Quick Wins

Conduct a resident survey on their wants and needs as it pertains to living downtown.

- » Work with the city to address top-priority issues identified in the residential survey.
- » Create an ambassador program to serve as your downtown greeters for new residents. These may be existing downtown residents who are familiar with downtown businesses, events, and activities.
- » Host periodic meetings at the larger complexes to share what's happening downtown and hear from constituents.

Long Term Opportunities

Lead a community capital campaign centered around an initiative that will serve the residents of downtown. While implementing this plan, there will be some consensus on larger-scale initiatives required to maximize opportunities. For each of these, determine the most logical path to attain funding.

- » For each larger project, assemble draft plans of projects, quantify need, create renderings of finished product, etc. These additional elements will be helpful when grants become available.
 - Identify potential grants and other funding options and plan for future applications. Consider a capital campaign or crowd-funding option for other projects to maximize funding streams. We heard from many corporate stakeholders that they would be interested in supporting strategic projects, and certain improvements may lend themselves to public-private campaigns.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

Design

Neighborhoods traditionally have certain elements that are recognizable and welcoming to residents and demonstrate the level of care by property owners for their neighborhood. Downtowns, while being home for some people, are also places of business. In past decades, this business role has taken a front seat in the design of public spaces and amenities, usually at the expense of other amenities that are used for more leisurely purposes. The re-introduction of green spaces, quiet relaxation areas, and active spaces that accommodate resident-related activities such as dog walking can reverse this trend.

Quick Wins

» **Walk Audits:** A simple way to get people thinking differently about a district is to conduct walking audits. The AARP offers a how-to guide for communities looking to conduct an accessibility audit. Other groups might walk the district in the evening to identify locations that are particularly dark or uninviting, especially if these corridors connect residential neighborhoods, parking areas or hotels with popular dining and entertainment districts. Include both residents and representatives from public works, police and property owners in these walks.

Using Wisconsin Main Street's Lighting and Accessibility Toolkits, identify improvements needed to create a welcoming and accessible district both day and night. In addition to improving public space lighting, the most cost-effective way to make downtown more welcoming at night is to incentivize storefront lighting. This can be an eligible use within existing façade programs or a standalone program.



Walk audits assess accessibility and pedestrian comfort navigating a district.

A secondary audit and/or use study can observe which public amenities are utilized and which could be relocated to better serve community needs. Take note of benches that face parked cars or bike racks not located near trails/routes or not visible from common destinations.



Placemaking guidelines suggest people feel most comfortable in benches with their backs against a protected wall or placed facing each other to allow for conversation.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

Short Term Strategies

Strategic Public Art: Stevens Point has an active arts community and a complement of public art installations. Building on these assets to create a cohesive design experience throughout the district, and strategically using public art to improve and facilitate wayfinding will further enhance the pedestrian experience.



Example of successful public art and pedestrian lighting along the riverfront, but not continued into downtown.



A utility box currently covered in graffiti, but perfectly placed for a wayfinding map.



Public art can be used as wayfinding and to create identity for spaces lacking in identity, such as parking lots.

Long Term Opportunities

» **Targeted Amenities:** During the previous initiatives, the community is likely to identify public space amenities lacking from the district. These might be as simple as additional pedestrian lighting and dog clean-up stations and bike racks or as complex as dog parks, kayak launches or accessibility upgrades. This type of physical improvement is a prime candidate for crowdfunding initiatives, as they are highly tangible, relatively short term, and offer the opportunity to invest in an amenity that will be used by a defined audience.

Once a list of potential amenity gaps has been identified, it is recommended that temporary or popup versions of these amenities be installed, perhaps in various locations. This iterative placemaking approach has several benefits; demonstrating demand, identifying preferred location and layout, and creating a buzz/generating media attention which can be used to further fundraising.



This 'Pawp-up' dog park highlighted the demand for pet-friendly amenities, supporting a future permanent park.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

Economic Vitality

While the downtown residential market is already strong, the current demand for all types of housing, coupled with new incentives designed to support housing development, creates an opportunity to grow this market. Additionally, the presence of vacant first-floor spaces in and near residential areas presents an opportunity to allow entrepreneurs to test the market and/or to provide amenities desired by residents but not yet supported by the market.

Quick Wins

» **Parking Policies:** With the increase in residential units comes a shift in parking demand. Not only is there increased demand for overnight permits, but there is also a need for a user-friendly guest registration system. We heard from many downtown residents and property owners that there are insufficient numbers of overnight permits available, and/or those available are located far from residential areas or in areas perceived as unsafe. Conducting the nighttime audit, discussed in the design section, can address some of these issues, but updated parking policies are also recommended.

- Since residential users and daytime employees typically do not conflict, it is often possible to issue both overnight and daytime permits for the same space, thus meeting customer needs and increasing parking revenues.
- To accommodate overnight guests of downtown residents, an online overnight permitting system for on-street or open lot spaces should be implemented. This practice is also helpful in limiting drunk driving from bar patrons, allowing them to leave their cars downtown overnight. Downtown Oshkosh has an online overnight registration system allowing free overnight parking up to three nights per 30-day period.



» **Popup Shops:** The presence of vacant first-floor spaces, especially in new construction, creates the public perception of a lack of demand and/or market for businesses downtown. In many cases, the underwriting for these projects requires a minimum rental rate to meet projections and limits the tenant pool. In the interim, it is recommended that the BID work with these property owners to program a series of pop-up shops or activities. Not only will this make the spaces appear vibrant (and better market them to businesses), but it will also allow potential businesses to test the local market and develop an effective business plan. Some potential strategies:



Downtown Marshfield Collaborative Popup Shop

- Some popup programs negotiate discounted short-term rental rates for a defined period (i.e. summer or holiday shopping). A coordinated campaign solicits proposals from artisans and others interested in opening downtown. Selected businesses may be paired with a single space, or with like-minded businesses in a shared space and required to maintain consistent minimum operating hours during the popup period. In many instances, these businesses become permanent tenants downtown, either in the popup space or elsewhere.
- » Other programs create a master lease between the downtown organization and one or more spaces in the district at a reduced rate (typically the cost of utilities). This gives the property owner a credit-

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

worthy tenant and single point of contact while creating options for space activation. Examples include a popup event space that offers a rotating calendar of classes and activities for various age groups, a curated retail collective space (such as The Collective, a cooperative retail space in La Crosse). The 4th Street Stage is another La Crosse popup; a collaboration with the local music school to create a storefront stage performance venue where pedestrians can engage with (and tip via Venmo) a variety of musicians playing in the storefront while music is piped onto the sidewalk.



4th Street Stage Popup Music Venue

Short Term Strategies

- » **Upper Floor Funds:** The Restore Main Street Loan fund recently created by WHEDA provides low-interest funds to renovate dated or create new residential units on upper floors of downtown buildings. To access these funds, the City would need to update its Comprehensive Plan within the next four years when the funds will be available.
- » **Development Tours:** Held alone or as part of a larger Tour of Downtown Living event (discussed in the promotions section), this tour introduces development opportunities (sites and properties) to development and real estate professionals. Held in conjunction with a downtown living tour, participants can also see the result of successful projects, hopefully inspiring them to consider the opportunities posed by underutilized properties.

Long Term Opportunities

- » **Live/Work:** Where possible, encourage the use of smaller historic buildings or first-floor spaces in newer developments for live/work opportunities. Not only do these spaces allow entrepreneurs to leverage residential and lower-interest loan instruments to finance their business space, but they introduce new owner-occupied property types into the district. In older, smaller properties, an upstairs residential space over a storefront works well for this type of arrangement, while in larger buildings or new construction a first floor space with streetfront commercial and rear residential (as allowed for in Downtown Whitewater's ordinances) can have the same benefit – either as a rental or owned-occupied unit. This strategy creates more affordable spaces and diversifies the type of businesses able to access downtown storefronts.
- » **Targeted Recruitment:** Based on the feedback of resident surveys and the success of popup programs, there will likely be several gaps in goods or services needed for downtown to be a truly walkable residential neighborhood. Depending on the business needs, this recruitment may take the form of a business recruitment contest, soliciting business proposals from potential operators (or existing businesses) to provide the needed goods or services (i.e. outdoor rentals, weekend entertainment, restaurants, etc.) in exchange for a community-developed package of supports and incentives. For larger needs, a crowd-funding model may be more appropriate, as was used for Beloit's Ironworks hotel, which sold rooms to local supporters in a condo-operator model to raise funds for development.



Won't you be my neighbor? Business recruitment campaign.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

Promotion

Developing a neighborhood identity for downtown will require a change in perceptions. Many residents will either be unaware of the presence of downtown living options outside of the senior apartments or new ‘expensive’ units and need to be educated about the breadth of options and diversity of residents living downtown. Additionally, residents of downtown may not view themselves as residents of a neighborhood, and by reinforcing that identity may feel more connected to the district and its future – therefore willing to participate in initiatives to improve it.

Quick Wins

- » **Local Mailer Campaign:** The first quick win for promoting the downtown as a welcoming neighborhood is to start a monthly local mailer campaign. Despite the digital age’s dominance, print marketing retains a unique charm and effectiveness, particularly when it comes to fostering a sense of community and belonging among residents. This campaign, designed to reach households within a 10-mile radius of downtown, aims to not only bridge the physical distance but also strengthen emotional ties to the downtown, showcasing it as the heart of community life. By featuring a mix of uplifting local news, exclusive business promotions, and highlights the upcoming events, these mailers are designed to illuminate the vibrancy of downtown life, encourage support for local businesses, and invite residents to partake in the cultural and volunteer activities available.



Example community mailer.

In addition, this campaign could serve as a platform for introducing new businesses to the community, fostering a sense of continuous growth and renewal within the downtown. Incorporating feedback mechanisms within the mailers can also facilitate a two-way conversation with residents, allowing for a more responsive and inclusive approach to downtown development. This not only enhances the campaign’s effectiveness but also reinforces the sense of ownership and belonging among community members, positioning downtown as not just a place to visit, but a place to actively contribute to and call home.

- » **“Meet Your Neighbor” Social Media Series** The second quick win for promoting the downtown as a welcoming neighborhood is to start a “Meet Your Neighbor” social media series. This series would serve as a platform to showcase the diverse array of individuals and businesses that contribute to the vibrant life of downtown Stevens Point. By featuring engaging stories of residents and entrepreneurs, the series aims to foster a deeper connection among community members, celebrating the unique contributions of individuals to the downtown.



We suggest collaborating with local apartment complexes and landlords to make this series most complete and effective. They can help identify residents who embody the spirit of downtown living, from long-standing locals to newcomers eager to share their experiences.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORHOOD

In addition, by utilizing design tools like Canva, you can create a visually appealing and cohesive aesthetic, making the content both engaging and recognizable.

The goal of this “Meet Your Neighbor” series is to create a sense of familiarity and belonging among all members of the downtown community. By highlighting personal stories and achievements, you can humanize the downtown experience and encourage locals, both new and old, to explore, engage with, and appreciate the diverse community around them.

Short Term Strategies

- » **Host a New Resident Social Event (Pre-Party to Discover Downtown or other event)** The short-term goal for Downtown Stevens Point involves the organization and execution of a welcoming social gathering specifically designed for new residents. This initiative, spearheaded by the Stevens Point Main Street organization, aims to serve as a warm introduction to the community, showcasing the best of downtown life. The event should offer a relaxed atmosphere where new residents can receive a business directory, learn about current promotions, and get acquainted with the Main Street organization through branded merchandise and provided information. This event also presents an opportunity to highlight volunteer opportunities, encouraging new residents to engage with their community actively.



One opportunity is to strategically schedule this event as a pre-party to the popular Discover Downtown! event and host it at Daisy Lounge. This

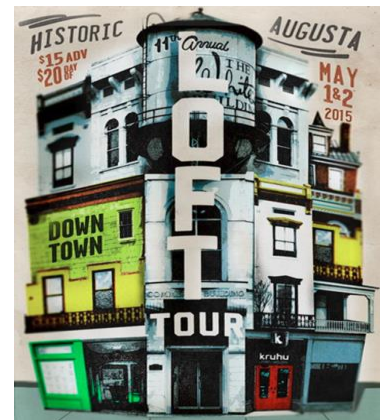
social event provides an exclusive opportunity for new residents to connect and familiarize themselves with downtown Stevens Point before joining the larger community celebration. This approach not only makes new residents feel special and welcomed but also integrates them into the community, fostering a sense of belonging from the start. Through this initiative, the Stevens Point main street organization is seen as reinforcing its commitment to building a close-knit, inclusive community that values and supports its residents.

Long Term Opportunities

» **Host a Tour of Downtown Living Event**

The long-term opportunity for promoting the downtown as a welcoming neighborhood is to host a Tour of Downtown Living event. There is often a perception among long-time residents that downtown apartments are dated or geared toward bar and restaurant workers. This initiative would spotlight both meticulously renovated historic properties and modern new units, showcasing the diversity and appeal of living options available in the downtown. By highlighting the charm, convenience, and contemporary living standards these residences offer, the event aims to not only alter outdated views but also spark a broader interest in downtown living.

This could also serve as a catalyst for other property owners, inspiring them to undertake their renovation projects by demonstrating the potential value and appeal such investments can bring. (In fact, some communities include a vacant upper floor space as part of the tour to solicit investors). This tour, therefore, is not just an event but a pivotal moment to redefine downtown living, encouraging a renaissance of both perception and development in the heart of the city.



DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

STRATEGY INTRODUCTION

Downtown Stevens Point has the potential to serve as a home base for visitors to the area with its ample restaurant and entertainment amenities and convenient access to the Green Circle Trail and water recreation assets. However, only a small percentage of community visitors make downtown a part of their visit. In part, this may be due to the difficulty in navigating downtown for both cars (one-way streets and limited wayfinding) and pedestrians/cyclists (the necessity of crossing large streets and limited visual cues for navigating between major destinations in different areas of downtown). Additionally, while area visitor guides do include downtown destination marketing, they are not marketed as downtown destinations, meaning that visitors to one can't easily identify additional nearby complementary businesses.

Creating curated itineraries to showcase complementary businesses and activities that use downtown as a hub of activity and creating a clear 'downtown' brand that can be used by businesses and partners to market events and businesses as part of the downtown will reinforce public perception of downtown as an experience worth visiting.



Organization

This strategy, even more than the Welcoming Neighborhood, requires collaboration among the various stakeholders working to enhance and market the community. Creating a method for communication and coordination will ensure that the community is focused in its efforts and communicating with one voice.

Quick Wins

Coordinate organization responsibilities. In addition to establishing official MOUs, representatives from the various organizations should meet regularly to discuss progress and coordinate efforts. Generally, the downtown Stevens Point BID should;

- » Serve as a unifier of all local organizations, property owners, and business owners with an interest in improving downtown.
- » Promote all events/activities happening in the downtown district from all entities.
- » Work with downtown businesses to build off and add to already existing downtown events. Encourage and identify ideas for businesses to be involved in events organized by SPA. For example – what can businesses do to entice attendees of 'Notes at Night' to stroll through the rest of downtown?
- » Expand a Business Owners Facebook Group to share marketing ideas. Use this forum to share ideas for collaboration.

Bonus Win: Conduct a community survey (area residents and/or visitors) to identify community assets, needs and wants as it pertains to the downtown experience.

- » Create a work plan of items within your control. These might be quick wins, or long-term initiatives that require further planning and fundraising.



DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Short Term Strategies

Encourage partner investment to enhance the downtown experience, complimenting public sector investments.

- » Make downtown the preferred place to host events. Work with partner organizations and the city to streamline the event approval and implementation process for all events held downtown or offer a service to help organizations navigate event permitting (for a fee).
- » Work with business owners to encourage outdoor amenities and merchandising. Offer education and ideas for business owners to activate their public areas. Possibly offer a grant program to encourage outdoor amenities.
- » Minimize confusion between various organizations. Visitors to the community are looking for easy to find information in a one-stop shop.
- » Create unified marketing message, a shared vision. A partnership among organizations. <https://downtowngreenbay.com/about>
- » Brand the downtown - colors, logo, and website. It might be of interest to the organization to bring in a brand consultant to assist in the process. Especially how it relates to the branding of other local organizations including the CVB and SPA.

Long Term Opportunities

Invest in large-scale improvements to enhance downtown experience. As with the creation of a neighborhood feel, there are likely to be one or more larger improvements needed to create the desired experience. Examples might include a central gathering place, expanded outdoor dining or other unidentified possibilities.

- » For each identified project, assemble draft plans of projects, quantify need, create renderings of finished product, etc. These additional elements they will be helpful when grants become available.
 - Identify potential grants and other funding options and plan for future applications. Consider a capital campaign or crowd-funding option for other projects to maximize funding streams.



Example of a character-defining installation.

Design

The ability to effectively navigate a district is essential for visitors to feel comfortable visiting and exploring downtown. Wayfinding is a critical first step in the visitor process. Visitors unable to locate downtown, identify appropriate parking and navigate on foot to their destination are unlikely to visit and less likely to return.

Wayfinding Signage

- » The City will soon be installing its newly-designed **wayfinding signs** throughout the city. This should not only improve the visual experience of the community, but make a significant improvement in getting people to the downtown, and finding parking, points of interest, etc. Once installed, the BID should take the lead in determining where there are opportunities to add supplementary signage geared more for pedestrians once they park their cars. These signs would be smaller in scale than the automobile-focused signs, and could direct people to places within walking distance, such as the square, the riverfront, the Children's Museum, murals, public art, the bike trail, etc. This could also be an opportunity to incorporate unique signage that lets people know they're somewhere special. Things such as custom street signs, traffic signs, business open flags, and more unique experiences like the creative crosswalk.

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE



Visually distinct signage and wayfinding aid in navigation and provide a sense of place and vibrancy.

Visually Connecting Downtown Districts

The connection from downtown south to the riverfront is a vital link that should be a priority of the BID from day one. There are some improvements that could be done immediately, some that may take a year or two, and others that will require long-range planning and funding. The following are three design improvements the BID and City should pursue during each of those phases...

- » **Quick Wins:** Extend the tree canopy lighting from Main Street south onto the pathway between the arts center and Chase Bank, and have both areas lit up year-round. Also consider a chalk art event (using long-lasting chalk paint) each season to brighten up the park section of the path.



Current pedestrian experience



Lit connection enhancements



Art-enhanced connection

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

- » **Short Term Strategy:** Work with the WisDOT to make the crosswalk at Main St. and Water St. more pronounced, inviting, and attractive.



Current connection.



Enhanced connection

- » **Long Term Opportunity:** Create a plan for more permanent enhancements to pathway and crosswalk, including archways at the downtown and riverfront sides, painted artwork on the path surface, and additional art lights to help define the connection between the two areas.



Current connection



One option to create visual continuity

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Economic Vitality

Customers today are seeking authentic experiences. With its strong complement of locally owned businesses, downtown is well-positioned to meet these needs. Capturing and sharing stories about the businesses, volunteers, and residents that call downtown home will highlight the breadth of experience available in the district and invite people of all interests and backgrounds to explore and experience. Similarly, by providing clear reliable information on hours of operation, frequently searched items, and event details, visitors are more likely to have a positive experience. Over time, growing and packaging the array of experiences available, especially during evening and weekend hours, will broaden the pool of potential customers for all businesses.

Quick Wins

- » While there are many destination businesses and entities downtown, there are many individuals that are unfamiliar with the businesses in the district or have a dated perception of what can be found in the district. Using the strategies from the Main Street Storytelling workshop, the BID should **collect stories** from the diverse individuals that make downtown vibrant. By showcasing the personal stories of the diverse individuals in the district, they will attract like-minded individuals seeking connections. Additionally, these new visitors will feel personally invested in and connected to the district, making them passionate potential volunteers.

"History is more than just 'neat'. It ties us to where we live. It's what people were doing when there was no internet, or electricity, or cars. It's that a building used to be the Saginaw Hardware Company catering to the mines and sawmills that were here. It's looking at how they built communities back then and what we could learn from that. It's not just about the buildings, but everything that went on around those buildings over 180 years of a city.

I feel like somethi... See more



Testimonials create personal connections.

- » A second short-term strategy is to identify those amenities that are most desired or visited and create top 10 or featured lists highlighting these amenities. Common categories include Outdoor Dining, Open Late, Pet-Friendly, Family-Friendly, etc. Rather than limiting marketing to businesses and sorting by 'type' this type of marketing helps audiences find the experience they are seeking, rather than just a meal (and as a bonus, highlights businesses making the effort to create these experiences). Additionally, this format of lists allows the district to market spaces or events that offer similar experiences along with businesses, creating a longer 'list' of options.
- » A final short-term strategy is to help businesses claim their Google and Apple Maps listings and ensure that these listings are accurate. While it is desirable to have businesses open longer, visitors are only truly disappointed when they expect a business to be open and find it closed. Similarly, businesses with limited or inactive accounts create concern that the business may be closed, causing visitors to go elsewhere. This is a great intern project since it is self-contained and can be conducted at any time.

Short Term Strategies

- » In the short term, it may be necessary to **incentivize businesses and/or property owners to create new entertainment options** in the district. New initiatives and expanded hours require a financial commitment and staffing, which may not provide an immediate return. However, over time, the addition of reliable evening and weekend entertainment options that can be marketed will grow the customer base for these activities and will create a reputation for downtown as a place where there are always activities available.

Both Fond du Lac and De Pere are offering small business incentives for new or existing businesses to add entertainment options, especially on evenings and weekends, recognizing that this was a gap in their district. Similar grants could be made to property or business owners with underutilized side lots or front patios to install chairs, yard games, or

DOWNTOWN STEVENS POINT BID

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

other interactive elements that invite the public into their space. These initiatives, coupled with the completion of the self-guided tours already in development, create additional options for activity even when other businesses are closed.



Example experience grant in Port Washington.

Once established, these entertainment options can be combined into packages with shows at the theater, dinner specials at restaurants, etc. and marketed together as an easy date-night, girls-night or other group gathering.

FOREVER ORIGINAL EXPERIENCES

Browse unique experiences in Galena Country, IL

Forever Original Experiences is a collection of brand-new, only-in-Galena Country experiences featuring unique educational workshops, delicious tastings, outdoor adventures, and more! Each to their own, and we're happy to launch in partnership with some of the area's most sought-after attractions and businesses. Don't just visit; make the most of your time with hands-on fun and traditions that only happen in this charming destination.

These authentic offerings are perfect for individuals, couples, and small groups. You'll get behind the scenes of favorite attractions and leave with souvenirs and memories that only a **Forever Original Experience** can offer. Check back often as we look forward to building this list with more unforgettable events soon!



Galena has incentivized numerous experience options and created sets of package options that can be purchased from their tourism site directly.

Long Term Opportunities

- » Long-term, there will be gaps in experiences and retail offerings that may not be met by the market, or where businesses to be recruited, or need additional support to provide these services. Examples might include canoe or kayak rental and bike and scooter rental. These amenities are currently lacking from downtown, and while they could potentially be provided by existing businesses such as sporting goods stores, or by civic partners such as Rotary groups, but may require municipal investment or special permitting to be successful. Examples of these concessions include park easements for storage and loading and dock access for boats, or bike/scooter corrals and permitting to accommodate larger fleets of public bikes.



- » Lastly, while there are currently vacant retail spaces available in downtown, many of them are larger and may not be accessible for smaller retailers, especially startups. Creating additional micro-retail options, either through the addition of seasonal spaces or supporting the subdivision of existing large spaces, creates opportunities for retailers to access reasonably sized spaces which require only a few hundred square feet of inventory, rather than several thousand. The artist shed model pictured below (also done in Altoona with shipping containers) typically offers weekly or monthly leases, while permanent micro-spaces using the window frontage of professional service firms can offer a permanent path to growth.

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE



Example artist alley in Hyannis.



The Sign Vault in Jefferson offers Self-Serve Micro Retail

Promotion

While 'Downtown as an Experience' is intended to resonate with multiple audiences, there is an opportunity to focus messaging and outreach on targeted audiences that represent high-likelihood visitor populations, and also audiences with the potential to amplify and share messages with others. The following promotions activities focus efforts on these groups initially to build traction.

Quick Wins

Engage with College Students (and their parents) The quick win for promoting downtown as an experience is to engage with the college students. Engaging college students in promoting Downtown Stevens Point as a vibrant place to live and visit is a strategic approach that leverages the youthful energy and fresh perspectives of students from UWSP and Mid-State Tech College. Downtown can also serve as the 'go-to option' for visiting families to spend time with their students. Additionally, in many communities, alumni with fond recollections of downtown become local business owners.

» Strategy: Orientation Engagement

Host a Table at College Orientation

- Introduce new students to Downtown Stevens Point as an essential part of their college life.
- Collaborate with UWSP and Mid-State Tech College to secure a spot at their orientation events and design an attractive setup that embodies the spirit of Downtown Stevens Point, making it inviting for students to approach.
- Hand out downtown information including:
 - **Map of the Downtown:** an easy-to-navigate map highlighting key attractions, student-friendly businesses, and essential services.
 - **Downtown Stevens Point Flyer:** a visually appealing flyer that showcases upcoming events, cultural spots, and historic insights.
 - **Downtown Coupons:** exclusive discounts and offers for students at local businesses to encourage exploration and patronage.
 - **Volunteer Opportunities:** information on how students can get involved with community projects and events, fostering a sense of belonging and community responsibility.
 - **Swag/Branded Merchandise:** Distribute items such as t-shirts, water bottles, and pens featuring Downtown Stevens Point imagery, logos, or slogans. This not only serves as a welcome gift but also a way to create walking ambassadors for the downtown area.



Main Street Menomonee Orientation Table

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

- Host Downtown Tours During Orientation or parents' weekend
- Organize guided tours that highlight the unique aspects of Downtown Stevens Point, including visits to local landmarks, popular eateries, and art installations. This immersive experience can help new students familiarize themselves with the area and view it as a home away from home.
- » **Strategy: Youth Advisory Committee**
- Establish a Youth Advisory Committee composed of student representatives from both colleges. This committee will act as a bridge between the student body and the downtown, ensuring that activities and initiatives are relevant and appealing to a younger demographic.
- **Event Planning:** The committee can spearhead the organization of events such as music festivals, art crawls, or themed nights that cater to student interests, encouraging regular visits to downtown.
- **Feedback Loop:** Serve as a feedback mechanism for downtown businesses to understand and adapt to the needs and preferences of the student population.
- **Social Media Collaboration:** Utilize the committee's insights to craft social media campaigns that resonate with young adults, promoting downtown attractions and events on platforms popular among students.
- **Benefits:**
 - **For Students:** Provides a platform for leadership and community involvement, enriching their college experience.
 - **For Downtown Stevens Point:** Drives foot traffic, fosters a youthful vibe and ensures the downtown area remains dynamic and relevant to a new generation.

Start a "We are Stevens Point" Social Media Campaign

Social media campaigns are a great way to create brand awareness and to engage with visitors and locals. "We Are Stevens Point" would be a vibrant social media campaign designed to celebrate the heart and soul of downtown Stevens Point. The purpose of the campaign would be to weave together the rich tapestry of the community by spotlighting the unique stories of local businesses, the diverse narratives of residents, and the deep-rooted history that shapes the downtown.

Through a series of engaging posts, videos, and interactive content, "We Are Stevens Point" can take followers on a journey through the streets of the downtown, introducing them to the entrepreneurs who bring innovation and passion to their crafts, the individuals whose stories reflect the spirit of the community, and the historical landmarks that stand as testaments to the downtown's collective past.

The importance of a campaign like "We Are Stevens Point" is to foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents, while also drawing attention from outside the community. By showcasing the unique blend of tradition and innovation that defines downtown Stevens Point, you not only celebrate the identity of the downtown but also attract visitors and potential new residents who are drawn to the vibrant culture and sense of unity that is shared.

This campaign would serve as a powerful platform for local businesses to gain visibility, helping to stimulate economic growth and encourage support for local commerce. By telling the stories behind these businesses, you humanize them, creating a deeper connection between them and the community.



DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Short Term Strategies

Guided Itineraries The short-term recommendation for promoting the downtown as an experience is for Stevens Point Main Street to create guided itineraries. Guided itineraries for various groups can bring visitors from farther away and help different groups of people to picture and schedule their time spent in downtown Stevens Point. Not only are guided itineraries a great way to help a group of people schedule their time downtown but it is also a great way to market the downtown Stevens Point business mix and assess if your mix meets the needs of these different groups.

Guided itineraries could be marketed together or separately in a brochure or flyer format and copies can be placed downtown in shops, at the colleges, in the lobbies of the apartment complexes, and at the visitor center. A QR code could also be included on these brochures or flyers to take visitors to a short video clip dedicated to each group and the video clip could include clues and tidbits of a guided scavenger hunt throughout downtown.

One Day Four Ways in Downtown Stevens Point

- » College Students / Families of College Students
- » Families
- » Bicyclists
- » Local Employees
- » **Families – Example Content:** Downtown Stevens Point is the perfect setting for families to visit for the day.
 - Because of the guided itinerary, they find themselves first at Emy J's CoffeeHouse to fuel the day, next stop is the Central Wisconsin Children's Museum to let the kids burn off some energy, then they head over to Wooden Chair for a quick lunch. After lunch, it is time for some shopping at Gepetto's Workshop and Bound to Happen Books. Then they end their day with a walk along the riverfront.

TOP

5

THINGS TO DO
in
JEFFERSON COUNTY
WISCONSIN

JEFFERSON COUNTY WISCONSIN

1. Hiking and biking on trails or in parks
2. Tickling your taste buds at award-winning restaurants
3. Making a splash on local lakes and rivers
4. Exploring history at museums, parks, archaeological sites
5. Lifting your spirits at local wineries and distilleries

enjoyjeffersoncounty.com

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Long Term Opportunities

First Fridays Event Series Downtown Stevens Point stands as an ideal location to establish and host a captivating First Friday series, providing a platform to showcase the city's unique cultural tapestry and vibrant community spirit. A "First Friday" event refers to a community-driven initiative where local businesses collaborate to host specials/special events and to stay open later than usual on the first Friday of each month. These events aim to promote and celebrate the local business mix, as well as the local arts and culture scene. The concept encourages residents and visitors to explore downtown areas, support local businesses, and engage with the community.

With your charming streets, diverse businesses, and welcoming atmosphere, downtown Stevens Point offers the perfect backdrop for a series that blends art, culture, and commerce. By enhancing the First Friday tradition, Stevens Point can bring people together, invigorate the downtown area, and create a recurring celebration that showcases the city's distinctive character, making it a must-visit destination on these special evenings.

Examples of ways to activate a First Friday event include:

- » Pop-up shops
- » Street musicians
- » Kid-friendly activities
- » Art vendors
- » Food trucks
- » Different themes throughout the year
- » Business promotions



Racine hosts a series of themed First Friday events during warmer months.

March 05, 2024 Business Improvement District meeting

2:30 Called to order

Roll Call

Tara Manzke

Hana Cutler

Mike Beacom

Bob Butt

Brian Cummins

Rosalind Kealiher

Alderperson Christianson

City Staff

Adam Kuhn

Chris Klesmith

Public

Angie Fischer

No comments from the public

Historical preservation plan- information shared by Adam Kuhn, there is commonality with links of the historic plans with some of our goals. There will be an opportunity for public engagement events in late April/early May to discuss and in regards to what the public would like to see. Confirmed historic districts: Public square, Clark St historic district, downtown design review district (similar to BID map).

City staff updates- spoke with Vanderwall two weeks ago, next step to have commissions and committees review plans by the end of April and come back into a session meeting on May 8th. Economic development projects and programs-Hunden partners exploring the convention center being in downtown Stevens Point, a preliminary report has been received but a few questions need to be answered before being shared. Barriers include the need for more restaurants and hotel capacity in downtown Stevens Point. WHEDA's second story residential plan. Will have to do some work to make that program accessible to downtown property owners. Trying to advertise vacant properties on one resource, communicating with realtors and property owners to list property's on LocateInWisconsin.com

Founders Network will be meeting on the first Wednesday of every month at the IDEA Center at 8am. Central Wisconsin Economic development fund will be releasing some forgivable loan programs. Kiva loans info will also be shared.

Treasurer's report: Meeting tomorrow with the Community foundation, Kristy Stacey-treasurer of SPA, Tara Manzke-BID treasurer, to get questions answered and establish policy.

Downtown manager report: Please BCC all emails to keep quorum laws. If you have a meeting about the BID, please consider that volunteer hours and track it.
Dates to remember-Reports due by the third week of the month. Share how long you met, anything that requires possible action.

Dates to note:

04/02 next meeting, special guest attorney Andrew Beverage

04/03 Visioning session

06/03 working on a clean up day

06/05 First Impression visit-will send calendar regarding where BID participation is required

Downtown events: Applications are currently being taken for trash canvas.

Planning to do a regular "End of week" email on Thursdays for BID members to watch for.

Shared Geo fencing data for our information

Directors meeting for SPA, CVB, BID, and CITY-Quarterly work plan meeting, found very helpful.

Workgroups-

Promotions (Tara), did work to recruit committee members, Tracy from Wooden chair, Sheri from Pallets and Planks, Connie from Turquoise on Main, and is hoping to talk with Rubina from Process. Mark suggests we consider other people who are not a part of SPA to get involved.

Design (Brian), recruited three members, Bill Schierl, Serena, and Kristin Carleson.
Would like a few younger people to join the fun. One more who has yet to confirm.

Economic Vitality (Rosalind), also recruited members, Jordan Hornung, Jeanna Trebatowski, and Michelle Venzke. Met and discussed the idea of hosting a social for business owners.

Hana-working on recruiting, no one nailed down but several in mind and some exciting ideas.
Hoping to divide and conquer.

Expectation from April: Find some options for our group to do and be prepared for us take possible action on those things.

Clarify what is required for each group-all want to be able to invest, need to report back.

Discussion and possible action:

Feb 6 meeting minutes. Brian motions to approve, second by Alder Christianson. Motion carries.
Feb 20th meeting minutes-correction, start time was 8:30 am. Tara Manzke motions to approve.
Brian Seconds.

Economic Vitality chair wants to host a downtown social for business owners only. We will need to find sponsors, want to make a good first impression. Rosalind makes a motion that we do go forward with hosting a downtown social for business owners only and Brian seconds. Motion carries. For next month they would like more specific updates, invite information, and run things by how we move forward.

WEDC Main street team fifth tech discussion -ideal to use it before July if we want to bring in a professional, would really like to see that be a branding. Mike suggests we table this until after the visioning meeting. Remind us about this in April, and decide to vote in May. Mark advocates we wait until after the first impressions visit.

Altering names of committees to work groups. Also changing the names of chairs, to Leads. Mark makes motions that we rename committees to workgroups and those who are in charge of each group to be called "Leads" second by Rosalind. Motion passes.

Agenda exhausted, meeting adjourned at 3:38pm