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## WISCONSIN DOWNTOWN ACTION COUNCIL DOWNTOWN PROJECT CASE STUDY PROFILE

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**Date:** January, 2007

**Project Name**

Onalaska City Hall

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**Project Location**

City of Onalaska

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**Project Type** (check all that apply)

- Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Adaptive Reuse
  - Redevelopment
  - Signage
  - Creative Partnership
  - Financing
  - Mixed Use
  - Historic Preservation
  - Transportation
  - Open Space
  - Other: Public
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**Project Completion Date/Schedule**

Completed 2000

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**Brief Project Description**

The City of Onalaska constructed a new municipal center in the heart of its downtown in 2000, reusing a 1969 structure and consolidating all municipal departments and services in one structure. Early debate about the project centered around moving the facilities out of the downtown area and constructing a less expensive (conservative) building. As officials considered the pros and cons of these decisions, it was determined that municipal center could play a vital role in the redevelopment of downtown by keeping the 80 full time City employees downtown and creating a landmark structure that would raise the bar for new investment in the area.

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**Project Location**

415 Main Street

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**Site Size**

1.7 acres

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**Land Uses**

City Hall, Police and Fire Department

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**Key Words, Special Features**

Redevelopment, adaptive re-use, landmark building, civic campus, destination

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**Project Address**

415 Main Street

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**Owner**

City of Onalaska

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**Developer**

City of Onalaska

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**Architect**

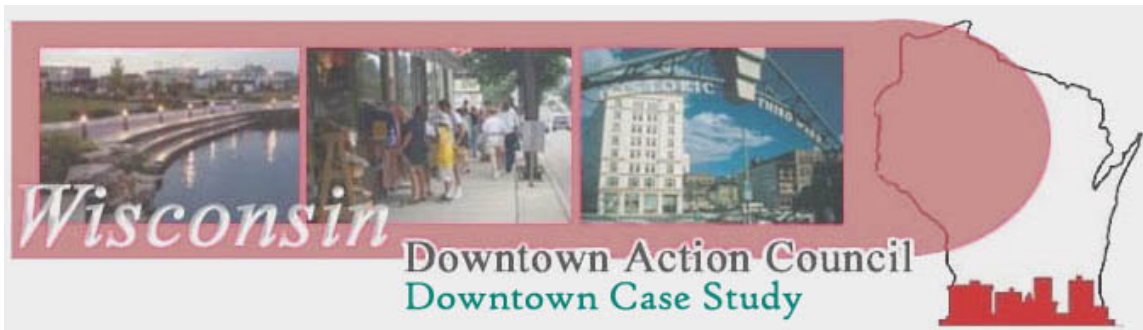
The Zimmerman Design Group

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**Landscape Architect**

Zimmerman Design

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#### **Other Key Development Members**

Arnold and O'Sheridan

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#### **General Description (Use, Density, Partners, Strategy, Details...)**

The site was formerly occupied by a 1960's era structure containing approximately 3,000 square feet with a basement. The building was in fair shape with years of wear from various municipal uses, but it was severely lacking in aesthetic qualities, ADA compliance and adequate expansion space. The proposed redevelopment considered using the existing structure, completed gutted and remodeled and expanding it to make better use of the site, particularly along the Main Street Frontage with a landmark style structure that would stimulate community pride and invite the public into a user friendly environment symbolizing open and accessible government. The final structure is two stories with a third story elevator tower that is a significant architectural component and allows for future expansion. Total square footage is approximately 56,000 with a total project cost of 8.1 million dollars.

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#### **Site Description (Infill, Adjacencies, Transportation, Age, Opportunities...)**

The Site lies directly on Main Street in Onalaska with residential uses bordering it to the north and east, a funeral home to the west and a school and church across Main Street to the south. It is accessible in all directions by alleys and parking lot drives.

#### **Development Process (Explain, in detail, the development story)**

The City of Onalaska Council explored the possibilities of moving the structure outside the downtown area due to space needs but determined that we could acquire needed property and benefit the downtown area by remaining in the vicinity of the former structure. Land was acquired and the City went through a lengthy qualification based selection process to hire Zimmerman Design Group to design and layout the proposed structure, beginning with a detailed space needs analysis.

#### **Planning and Design (Partners, Challenges, Tools Used, Innovation...)**

The public's support through citizen advocacy groups like Centering Onalaska to build a lasting structure with attractive architecture was very important. In the end, the structure was very cost efficient in that the City took advantage of historic interest rate lows and Zimmerman Design was able to design an attractive but yet cost effective structure coming in at less than \$100.00 per square foot.

#### **Approvals and Permitting (Agencies, Challenges, Costs, What was learned...)**

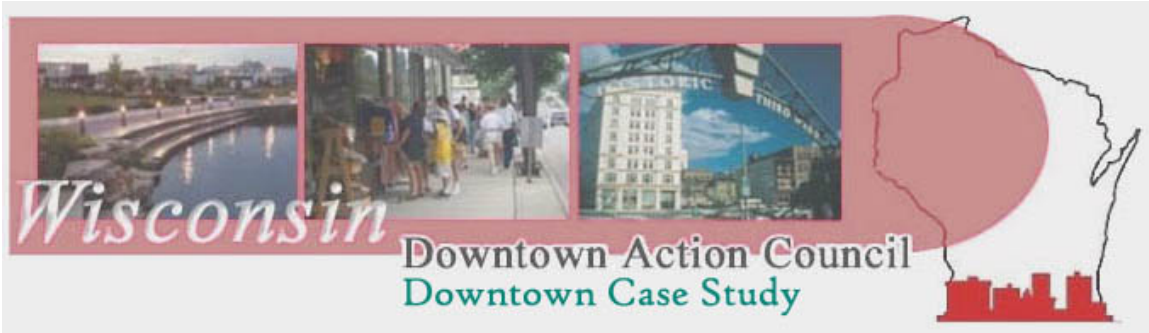
Generally the approvals involved a building permit and site plan permit approval in addition to the general hearings and approval of architecture by the public.

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#### **Financing (Partners, Level of Participation, Equity, Grants, Loans, Revenue...)**



The project was financed primarily by general obligation bonds with some streetscape funding coming from State enhancement funds when Main Street was reconstructed during the same time period.

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**Marketing and Management (Keys to success, Promotion, Target audiences...)**

The support received from the public for a well designed an aesthetically attractive structure that would serve Onalaska’s image well was paramount and this in turn ended discussions about developing an inexpensive structure that would have to be remodeled of added to later.

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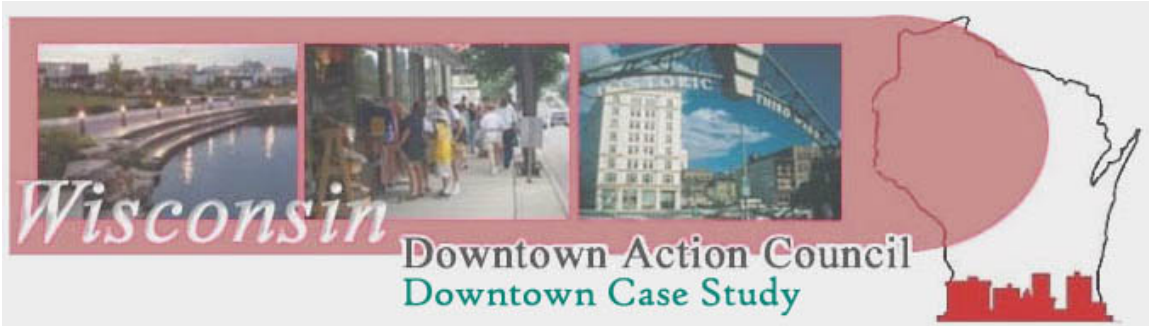
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**Experience Gained (Key Issues, Difficulties, Challenges overcome, Solutions..)**

Hiring a good qualified architect by qualification and not price was crucial as the project management and design, lack of change orders and streamlined construction process were worth any extra architectural fees the City had to pay. Secondly, the structure has undoubtedly affected other investment in the downtown, resulting in improved property values and increased investment speculation.

**General Project Data**

<b>Land Use Data</b>
Site Area: 1.7 acres
Percentage Complete: 100
Gross Density: 75% of the site is structure
Number of Off Street Parking Spaces: 146
<b>Land Use Plan</b>



Use: Institutional	Acres	Percentage of Site
Buildings: 1	56,000sf	75
Streets/ Surface Parking: 146	18,052	25
Landscaping/Open: Urban/ Minimal	<10%	<10
Total:	74,000sf or 1.7 Acres	

**Residential Information**

Unit Type	Number of Units	Area/ Square Feet	Percentage Leased	Initial Rental /Sales Price

**Commercial Information**

Classification/Type	Number of Stores/Spaces	Total Gross Land Area
Municipal/ Institutional	1	74,000 sf

**Development Cost Information**

Site Acquisition Cost: \$200,000+/-  
 Site Improvement Costs:  
   Public Infrastructure:  
     Demolition: None  
     Relocation: None  
     Environmental: None  
   Paving:  
   Structures:  
 Total Construction Costs: \$8,100,000

Soft Costs:  
   Architecture and Engineering: 6.75%  
   Marketing:  
   Taxes/ Insurance:  
   Construction Interest and Fees:  
   Other:

**Development Schedule**

Planning: 6 months  
 Site Purchase: 3 months  
 Demolition: N/A  
 Construction: 8 months  
 Sales/ Leasing/ Occupancy: 1 month  
 Project Completion: 18 months total