



# Wisconsin Downtown Action Council

*...developing partnerships, sharing information and networking to revitalize Wisconsin downtowns as vibrant social and economic centers...*

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**2011 WDAC Downtown Partners Summit**  
**Wednesday, October 19, 2 pm – 5 pm**  
**Windhover Center for the Arts, Great Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**  
**51 Sheboygan Street, Fond du Lac, WI**

## MEETING MINUTES

### *Attendees:*

Wisconsin Downtown Action Council - Tim Anderson  
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (Wisconsin Main Street – Joe Lawniczak  
UW Extension - Bill Ryan  
Wisconsin Chapter American Planning Association – Wayne Rollin  
Wisconsin Main Street Alliance – John Sigwart  
Arts Wisconsin – Kevin Miller, Anne Katz  
Wisconsin Economic Development Association - Kristen Fish  
Wisconsin Rural Partners - Ricky Rolfsmeyer  
Wisconsin Alliance International Council of Shopping Centers - Bob Duffy  
Wisconsin Bid Association - Jennifer Stephany  
Wisconsin Historical Society - Joe DeRose  
1000 Friends of Wisconsin – Steve Hiniker (absent)

### **Part One: Critical issues and strategies for collaboration**

The Downtown Partners identified education about funding, advocacy and tools/resources as three ways that they can collaborate to assist the revitalization of Wisconsin Downtowns.

#### *Education About Funding:*

Funding forums  
Case studies – funding for projects, funding for operations  
Access to website databases (Wisconsin Historical Society, WEDC)  
How to gain support for local BIDs  
Webinars  
Brokering connections  
Coordinate access to Listservs –WAPA, WEDC, IDA, National Main Street  
Partnerships with community foundations  
Communication with WEDC Community Account Managers

#### *Advocacy:*

UW Extension study – “Employment in Wisconsin’s Downtowns” – paper to be released soon and available at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/>  
Reversing image that it is too hard to develop in downtowns  
TIF changes needed?  
Educate about the creative use of TIFs  
Coordinated messaging with partners

**WISCONSINDOWNTOWN.ORG**

*Tools and Resources (to help locals help themselves):*

Access to websites (National Main Street, Wisconsin Historical Society)

Case studies

Webinars

Community visits

Small town forums

Partner resource teams

ICSC exchanges

How to create local incentives

Educating banks

Utilize County Extension staff

## **Part Two: 2012 Action Plans**

The partners agreed on the following 2012 priority projects and identified a lead partner and support partners for each project. The lead partner will convene a meeting with their support partners to develop an action plan. I have also identified potential additional partners who are encouraged to assist the lead partner as needed. Lead partners will update the Downtown Partners on their progress.

### **1. 2012 Small Town Forums**

Identify two communities to conduct small town forums similar to the 2010 forums.

Lead: Wisconsin Rural Partners (Ricky Rolfsmeyer)

Support: WDAC, WEDC, UW Extension

Potential additional support: WAPA, Wisconsin Historical Society, USDA

### **2. UW Extension Downtown Webinars**

Identify future programming, expanded access, and sponsorships.

Lead: UW Extension (Bill Ryan)

Support: WEDC, WDAC

Potential Additional Support: WAPA, WEDA, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Arts Wisconsin, Main Street Alliance

### **3. Case Studies**

Create a template for future case studies, possibly using the WDAC model. Utilize a UW graduate student to compile case studies. Coordinate with partners to acquire existing case studies. Host case studies on WDAC website with links to partner websites.

Lead: UW Extension (Bill Ryan)

Support: WDAC, WEDC, Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin BID Association

Potential Additional Support: WAPA, WEDA, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin

### **4. ICSC Exchanges**

Showcase Wisconsin downtowns at ICSC Municipal Runways and ICSC Roundtables.

Lead: ICSC (Bob Duffy)

Support: WDAC

### **5. Downtown LinkedIn Site**

Create and host a LinkedIn site for sharing case studies and ideas for solving downtown problems.

Lead: WDAC (Communication Committee)

Support: All partners

### **6. 2012 WDAC Conference on Downtowns**

Engage all partners in planning, programming and sponsorships for 2012 conference.

Lead: WDAC (Education Committee)

Support: All partners

### **7. Downtown Partner Webpage**

Coordinate with all partner organizations to host the WDAC Downtown Partners webpage on their respective websites to expand the visibility of the Downtown Partners. Work with each partner to update their organizational descriptions.

Lead: WDAC (Communications Committee)

Support: All partners

### **8. Board Updates**

Partner representatives will communicate the results of the 2011 Downtown Partners Summit to their respective Boards and build ongoing support for collaboration.

Lead: All partners

### **9. Partner Communications**

Identify ways to improve communication between partners.

Lead: WDAC (Strategic Alliances Committee)

### **Part Three: WDAC 2012 Public Policy Agenda**

Tim Anderson and Anne Katz presented the draft WDAC 2012 Public Policy Agenda, an educational piece for local and state representatives and candidates for office summarizing the importance of downtowns to the Wisconsin economy and quality of life and requesting increased financial support and targeted investments. Tim and Anne asked all partners to sign on to the document to show a unified voice for Wisconsin downtowns. WEDC and the Wisconsin Historical Society stated that, as public institutions, they could not engage in lobbying. Tim and Anne will contact the other partner organizations to discuss their interest in supporting the document. We will also consider other ideas to create a positive and compelling branding message about the importance of Wisconsin downtowns.

Submitted by:

Tim Anderson, Chair, WDAC Strategic Alliances Committee

Please let me know if you have any additions or corrections to these notes. Thank you for your commitment to Wisconsin downtowns.