



# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Mukwonago Municipal Building / Board Room  
440 River Crest Court, Mukwonago, WI 53149  
May 28, 2026 at 5:30 PM

## AGENDA

### **Municipal Code Section § 2-146 Purpose**

The Downtown Development Committee shall be a citizen advisory committee whose purpose shall be to advise the Village Board on matters of implementation identified in the Downtown Strategic Plan and to otherwise advise the Village on matters of development activities that will promote the development of the downtown.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - 3.1 Approve Minutes of April 23, 2026
4. **Public Comment**
5. **New Business**
  - 5.1 Training Sessions Attended; [Building Long Lasting Community Utilizing Anchor Institutions in rural communities](#), building community through outdoor concerts, and Instagram-Worthy spots.
  - 5.2 Downtown including parking and wayfinding
6. **Old Business**
  - 6.1 Discussion of Historic Sign design and placement as reviewed and forwarded by the Village Board.
  - 6.2 2026 Downtown Strategic Plan Update for presentation to the Committee of the Whole on June 3, 2026.
7. **Adjournment**

It is possible that a quorum of, members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information. No action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice. Please note, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to

request this service, contact the Municipal Clerk's Office, (262) 363-6420.

# MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

## Thursday, April 24th, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm

Place: Mukwonago Village Hall 440 River Crest Ct

### 1. Call To Order

Trustee Scott Reeves called the meeting to order 5:30pm

### 2. Roll Call

**Members Present:** Trustee Scott Reeves, Tina Chitwood, James Pauer, Jason Wamser, Eliza Pautz, Dave Carpenter and Village Administrator Diana Dykstra

**Excused:** Brock Anderson

**Membership:** Trustee Scott Reeves, Jason Wamser, Eliza Pautz, Dave Carpenter, Brock Anderson, James Pauer, Tina Chitwood, Village Planner and/or Village Administrator. **Vacancy:** Non Voting Member, Alternate Non-Voting Member, Alternate Voting Member

### 3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve both minutes by Tina Chitwood. Seconded by Jason Wamser.

### 4. Public Comment

The Public Comment Session was opened by Chair Reeves:

No public comments

### 5. Old Business

#### 5.1 Finalize the Historic Sign

- Village Administrator Diana Dykstra had some clarifying questions about the sign, Jason Wamser was able to answer all the questions.
- Discussed map art and some details about naming. The details of the map art needs to be defined by this committee.
- Outstanding Items: final wording, map art.
- Approved Items: Eliza Pautz motions to adapt the sign, Jason Wamser Seconds.

#### 5.2 Final Beautification Flyer included in Utility Billing (no action required)

- Fliers already mailed out.
- Some donations were received.

#### 5.3 2026 Downtown Strategic Plan Update

- Tina Chitwood presented and reviewed suggested changes.
- Eliza Pautz motions to approve the changes as presented, Dave Carpenter Seconds.

### 6. New Business

#### 6.1 Objectives for the Committee & Review of Voting/Non-Voting positions.

- Confirmed that Trustee Scott Reeves is a voting member.

- Eliza Pautz proposed working on our Best Practices.
- Tina Chitwood proposed maintaining the beautification program.
- James Pauer proposed implementing a business feedback loop for the businesses to reach out to the committee. Suggesting the Village website and/or social media.
- Trustee Eric Brill suggests reviewing ordinance and scope to present to the COW.
- Marketing of the DDC for awareness.
- Look into opportunities for funding to present to the COW.

#### 6.2 Updates to share with the Village Board

- Trustee Scott Reeves will update the Village Board about more open communication between the Board and the committee at the May COW.

#### 6.3 Referral Items; Committee members identify the items to be discussed at the next meeting

- The committee will review objectives, come up with top options and bring ideas of measure of success to May's meeting.
- Pedestrian kiosk progress.
- Review of DDC Revenue and Expense Budgets

#### 6.4 Review of DDC Revenue and Expense Budgets

- No update at the meeting. Will get updates in May.

#### 6.5 Announcement of the STH83 Public Informational Meeting

### **7. Adjournment**

Motion made by Tina Chitwood. Eliza Pautz seconded. Adjourned at 6:52pm



## **Creating Instagram-Worthy Spots Downtown**

May 2026 Promo Call



On Broadway Inc., Green Bay, WI

## What is an Instagram-Worthy Spot & Why It Matters

### What It Is

- A place people are drawn to photograph
- Visually distinct or meaningful
- Tied to identity
- Designed for sharing

### Why It Matters

- Free Marketing
- Builds identity
- Drives visitors
- Builds community pride



# Built-In Photo Destinations

- Gathering space
- Scenic riverfront
- Frequent photos + events

## Eau Claire, WI





Stevens Point, WI



Port Washington, WI



# Murals & Public Art

- Bright, bold, recognizable
- Encourage interaction
- Easy to promote

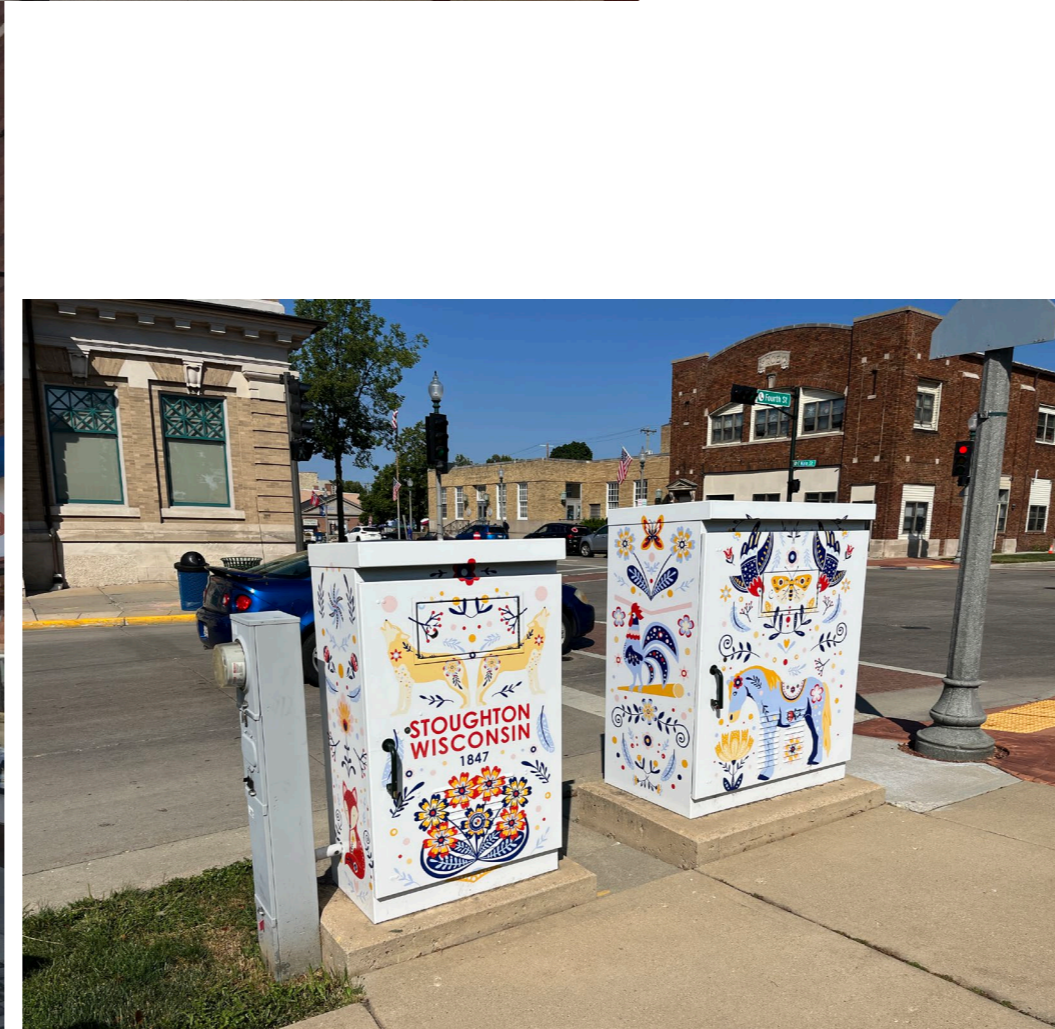


# Identity-Based Photo Spots

- Architecture
- Cultural identity
- Recognizable visuals



Stoughton, WI



New Glarus, WI





Ripon, WI

# Lighting & Atmosphere

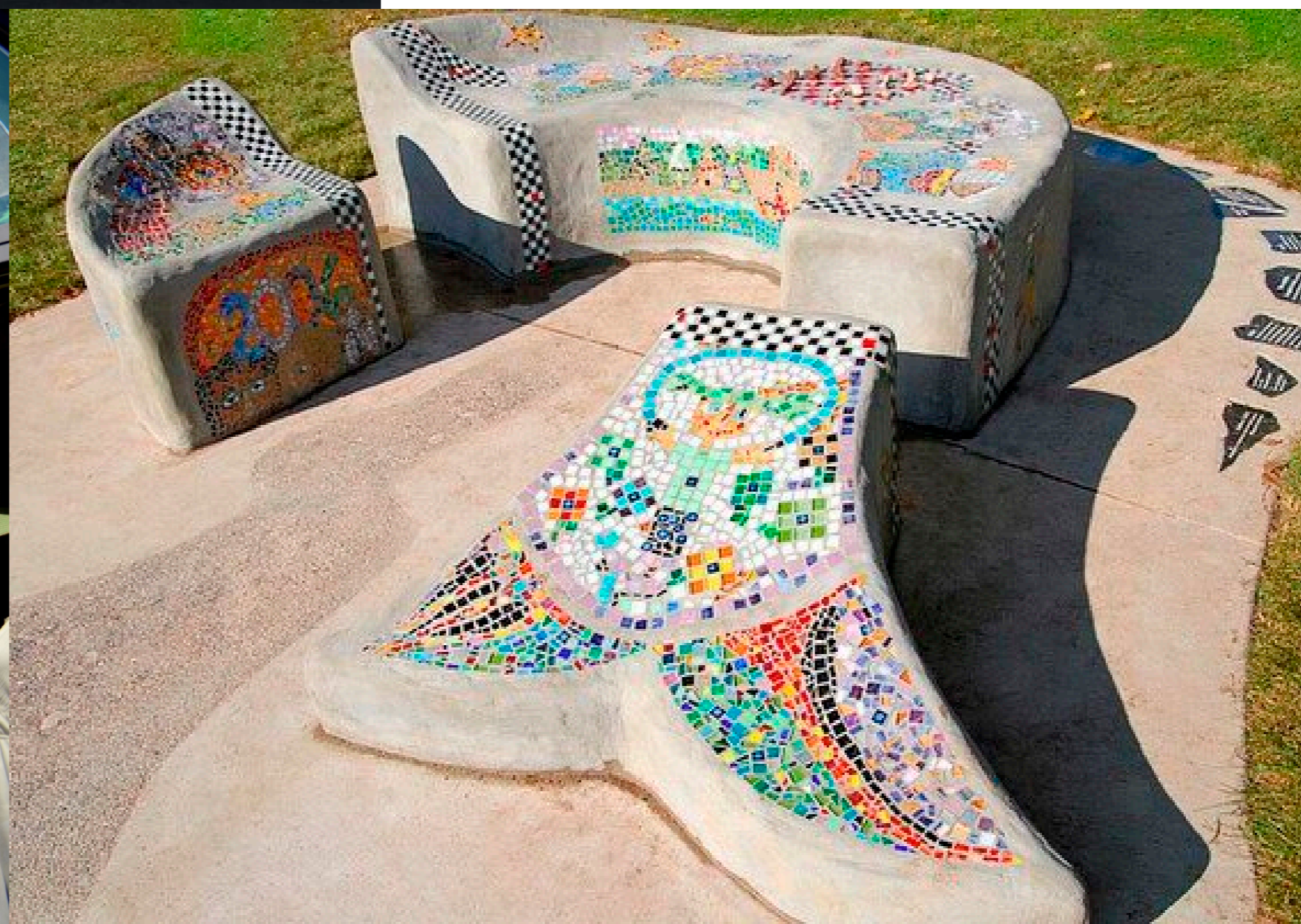
- Warm lighting
- Evening ambiance
- Creates "vibes"



Hudson, WI

## Walkable & Multi-Stop Photo Experiences

- Multiple photo opportunities in one walkable area
- Encourages movement between businesses
- Turns downtown into a “photo journey”
- Increases exposure for more businesses





Lake Mills, WI

# Easy Wins You Can Start This Month

## ➤ Low-Cost Ideas

- Add string lights to one block
- Create a simple photo wall (painted mural or backdrop)
- Add a branded hashtag sign
- Decorate one alley or corner
- Install flower planters or seasonal décor
- Encourage businesses to light window displays



## EVEN EASIER: Business-Level Actions

- For Individual Businesses
  - Create a photo corner inside store
  - Design your space intentionally (lighting, materials, layout)
  - Style window displays for photos
  - Add a small “selfie spot”
  - Make everyday interactions visually appealing



**Eau Claire, WI**



# How to Market These Spots

- Create a downtown hashtag (#Downtown[City])
- Post "Top 5 Photo Spots Downtown."
- Add Google Maps listings for spots
- Feature them on your website
- Add signage: "Take a photo & tag us!"



Racine, WI



De Pere, WI



La Crosse, WI



Port Washington, WI



Milwaukee, WI

# How to Get User-Generated Content (UGC)

## ➤ Simple Tactics

- Ask directly: "Tag us to be featured"
- Repost customer photos
- Feature "Photo of the Week"
- Create a dedicated hashtag
- Comment on posts to encourage more



Osceola, WI

## Photo Contests (Simple + Effective)

- Monthly contest
- Seasonal themes
- Gift card prizes
- Multi-stop challenges



Wausau, WI

## Why This Works

- Builds identity
- Drives visitation
- Supports businesses
- Creates community pride



# Simple Action Plan

1. Identify 2-3 photo-worthy locations
2. Improve lighting or visuals
3. Create a hashtag
4. Promote the spots
5. Launch a photo contest
6. Repost user content weekly

# Food for Thought

- Where would someone take a photo downtown today?
  - What's missing visually?
  - What's one spot you could improve in the next 30 days?
  - Which business would be easiest to partner with?
- 
- Use a Photo Spot Audit Tool with your board

**Questions?**

## **DOWNTOWN PHOTO SPOTS AUDIT WORKSHEET & SCORING TOOL**

Instructions: Rate each item from 1 (not at all) to 5 (excellent). Add notes and action ideas.

1. Presence of murals or public art

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Recognizable landmark or branded photo spot

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Warm, inviting lighting (especially at night)

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Attractive storefront after hours

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Seasonal or rotating displays

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Interactive elements (benches, props, art, installations)

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOOK FORWARD** ➤

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Signage encouraging photos or tagging

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Consistent hashtag usage

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Business participation in photo-friendly spaces

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Active reposting of user-generated content

Score (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORING SUMMARY**

Total Score (out of 50): \_\_\_\_\_

0-20: Major opportunity to improve

21-35: Moderate presence, needs strengthening

36-50: Strong photo-friendly downtown presence

# Downtown Small Business Startup Guide



## Table of Contents

3 .....	Introduction
4 .....	Business Startup Timeline
5 .....	Idea Generation
6.....	Business Planning
7 .....	Customer Profile
8 .....	Business Funding
9.....	Operations Planning
10.....	Location Selection
11.....	Space Planning
12.....	Local Considerations
13.....	Business Registration and Licensing
15.....	Startup Checklist
16.....	Restaurant & Food Business Extras

## INTRODUCTION

Small businesses are the heart and soul of Wisconsin's economy and a critical element of every thriving community. It takes people with vision and, frankly, guts to build those businesses. Starting your own business can be a very rewarding experience filled with opportunities and challenges. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur or looking to turn passion into a profit, understanding the various detailed steps and certifications needed is crucial. This guide will walk you through the essential stages of business creation, from identifying your niche and business plan to finding a location and completing legal requirements to site selection and space planning.

In total, registering and setting up a new business can take anywhere from 1-12 months, with the bulk of time dedicated to physical space planning and improvements. Actual licensing, if done proactively, will take less than three months, but many licenses (such as restaurant or liquor) will require that the space be completed before final approval. The timing of this process can vary significantly depending on your specific community and its requirements for on-site inspections and/or plan approvals. Many common delays experienced by new businesses are associated with challenges in navigating local codes, regulations, and processes.

For more useful information and resources, visit your municipal website, downtown organization or chamber website, and WEDC's small business page at <https://wedc.org/build-your-small-business/>. Although this guide includes many relevant tips, communicating with business partners, friends and family, city managers, downtown organizations, chamber representatives and economic development specialists to understand local dynamics is also a critical step early in your startup journey.

## Business Startup Timeline

This timeline is intended to provide a basis for planning your business venture. However, many businesses will take 18 months to three years to move through the process from inspiration to opening, especially when starting a brand-new establishment. Additionally, the steps required to secure a location and open typically require coordinating various activities and accommodating public meeting schedules which can create delays if not optimally planned. Understanding the steps required and creating a contingency for delays will significantly improve the likelihood of success for new business ventures.

	Timeline	Description
<b>Idea Generation</b>	1-3 months	Brainstorming, market research, identifying trends, assessing your skills, and evaluating potential competitors.
<b>Business Plan</b>	1-2 months	Develop a roadmap for your business, outlining goals, target markets, operational plans, and financial projections.
<b>Customer Profile</b>	1-2 months	Clearly define your ideal customer to tailor your products, marketing, and sales strategies.
<b>Funding</b>	3-6 months	Explore various funding options like self-funding, loans, angel investors, venture capital, crowdfunding, etc.
<b>Marketing and Branding</b>	2-4 months	Building a brand identity (name, logo, mission statement), creating a website, setting up social media accounts, and planning marketing campaigns (digital marketing, content, public relations, etc.).
<b>Finding a Location</b>	1-3 months	Identifying the right type of location (retail, office, manufacturing space), negotiating leases or purchases, and considering factors like foot traffic, rent, and proximity to suppliers or customers.
<b>Setting Up Operations</b>	2-6 months	Setting up supply chains, hiring employees, developing operational workflows, securing necessary tools and technologies, and setting up legal structures (licenses, insurance).
<b>Launching the Business</b>	1-3 months	Finalizing operations, launching a website or storefront, promoting the opening (events, discounts, online campaigns), and executing a customer acquisition plan. <i>Note: Many businesses may launch first as a popup, home-based, or other limited-scope business, in which case this step would appear before finding a location.</i>

## Idea Generation

Generating ideas for a new business can be an exciting and creative process. It involves identifying opportunities, solving problems, and leveraging your interests or expertise, while being honest about shortcomings. Here are some structured steps you can take to generate business ideas:

1. Assess your strengths and weaknesses
  - a. Consider what excites you and where your passions lie. Starting a business around something you care about can sustain motivation in the long run.
2. Identify problems or gaps
  - a. Think about problems people face every day that could be solved with a product or service. This could be a new product or something missing from your community.
3. Brainstorm ideas
  - a. Start with a broad theme and use a mind map to explore subcategories. Then, conduct brainstorming sessions with friends, colleagues, or mentors.
  - b. Visit this site for recent business trends: <https://www.guidantfinancial.com/small-business-trends/>
4. Research market demand
  - a. Engage with potential customers through surveys, interviews, or focus groups. What do they wish existed? What do they feel is missing?
5. Explore different business models
  - a. Consider who you want to sell to and how you can best reach this audience.
6. Consider who you want to sell to and how to best reach them. Leverage technology and innovation
  - a. Understand the systems you will need to manage and market your business. Research common industry metrics and trends to set goals for your business.
7. Validate your ideas
  - a. Start small and test your idea before investing heavily. Then, get feedback from friends, family, and customers. What methods can you use to test your idea and iterate before committing to a lease? Markets, online sales or collaborations with other businesses are all great strategies to build a brand and a customer base.
8. Consider profitability and scale
  - a. Will the business generate enough revenue to cover its costs and generate a profit? Create a basic financial model to estimate potential margins and earnings. Identify best and worst-case scenarios and plan accordingly. Seek feedback from like-minded individuals
9. Seek feedback and outside expertise
  - a. Reach out to experienced entrepreneurs, mentors, or advisors for feedback on your business idea. Groups such as the SBDC, SCORE, WWBIC, Western Dairyland and others offer regular bootcamp-style training sessions and individual counseling opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs.

**Wisconsin Business Planning Resources**

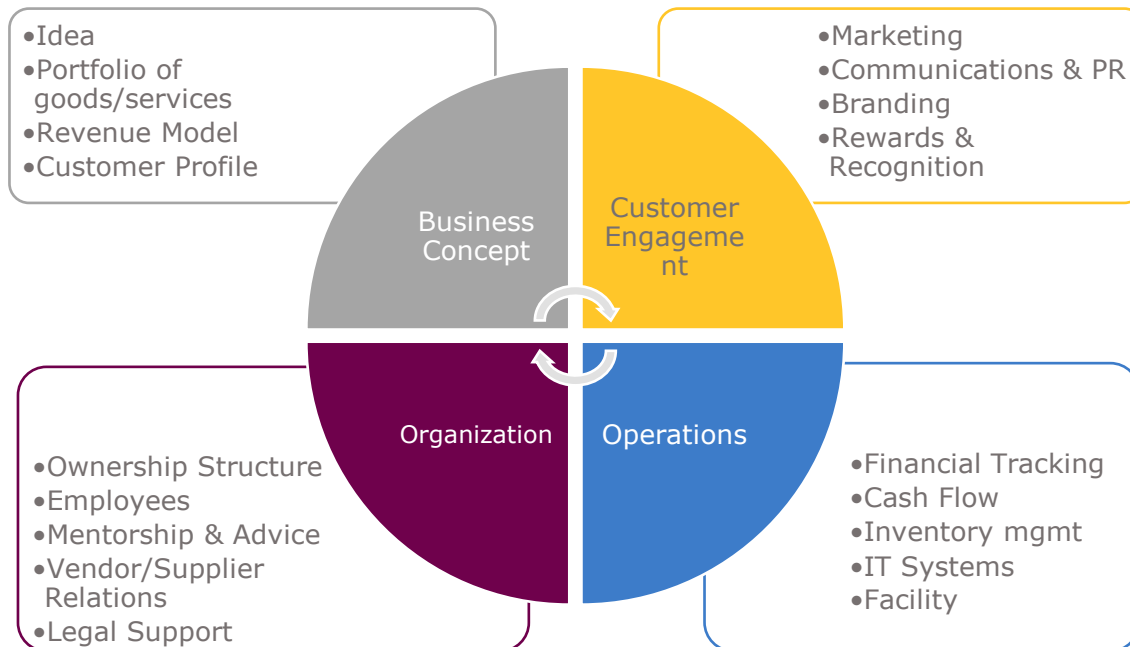
- » The BizStats tool provides typical business cost ratio by industry to help project expenses more effectively:  
<http://www.bizstats.com/>
- » SBDC offers a useful Beginner’s Guide to Financial Projections to help identify expenses and revenues: [SBDC Financial Projections – UW–Madison](#)
- » WEDC’s [SizeUpWI Tool](#) provides information on earnings by industry and location, along with some demographic information that can help you build your customer profile and sales projections.

**Business Planning**

Creating a business plan is a crucial step in launching and growing a successful business. It serves as a roadmap for your business's goals, strategies, and financial projections, and is necessary to attract investors or secure loans. Here's a structured breakdown of the key steps involved in writing a comprehensive business plan:

- > Executive Summary
  - > This section includes owner backgrounds and experience, an overview of the business model, business objectives, financial goals, and success factors.
- > Business Description
  - > Define how your business will operate. Is it a product-based business, a service, or a combination? What revenue streams are anticipated?
- > Products or services
  - > Describe in detail what your product or service is, how it works, and the benefits it provides to customers and/or competitive advantage you hope to achieve.

**Business Planning – Elements of a Successful Business**





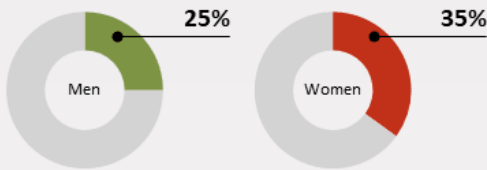
- > Market research and analysis
  - > Define a target consumer, including demographic information (age, gender, location, income, etc.), psychographics (lifestyle, interests, etc.), and buying behaviors.
- > Organization and Management
  - > Create a business structure, including identifying roles and responsibilities of employees.
- > Business Structure
  - > Your business structure will depend on your ownership structure and tax situation. Common options include a sole proprietorship, partnership, c corporation, or LLC. This link explains the types of business structures: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure>
- > Marketing and sales strategy
  - > Outline how you plan to promote your business and reach your target market. This includes creating a brand image and sales strategy. Find marketing strategy information here: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/marketing-strategy-examples>
- > Operational Plan
  - > List the anticipated business location, vendors and suppliers, and production/inventory management process. Include all aspects of the distribution or inventory cycle of your product.
- > Financial Plan
  - > List all costs associated with business startup, your business revenue model, and financial projections for the future (usually 3-5 years).
  - > These templates can help identify elements to incorporate in your business modeling.
    - i. [Restaurant Cash Flow Template](#)
    - ii. [Startup & Operations Cost Spreadsheet](#)

## Example Profile Elements

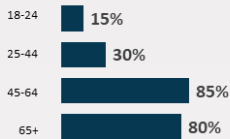
Kiva is a crowd-funded loan program that provides businesses with access to micro-capital. Businesses demonstrate market demand by recruiting local supporters to pledge \$25 or more towards their project. Once local fundraising goals are reached, businesses can access a global network of nonprofits and microfinance institutions to support network businesses.

### Demographics & Spending

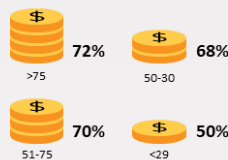
#### Gender



#### Age



#### Income



### Customer Persona



**NAME**  
Frugal Frankie

**AGE**  
25

**OCCUPATION**  
Associate Product Manager

**INCOME**  
\$65,000

**LOCATION**  
New York City, NY

**INTERESTS**

- Music
- Crocheting
- Social media

**GOALS**

Send sustainable, cost-effective gifts to out-of-town family members

**PAIN POINTS**

- Limited funds
- Avoids large retailers (prefers supporting eco-friendly options with low carbon footprint)
- Physical distance from gift recipients

**MESSAGES**

Focus on low-cost plant options, convenient online ordering with gift messages, and environmentally conscious local delivery

## Customer Profile

A customer profile is a document that contains key information about your ideal customer. The goal is to identify, describe, and segment customers based on numerous characteristics and variables, based on their personalities, buying habits, and behaviors. It also helps to shape marketing plans and cash flow projections based on market competition, customer spending profiles and industry trends.

- > Conduct Market research
  - > Look at who your competitors are targeting. Research their customer base, their marketing strategies, and how they position their products. This can help you identify potential gaps or underserved customer groups. Remember that competitors include both physical and online businesses.
  
- > Analyze Demographics
  - > Identify the age, gender, and income level of customer that is a best fit for your business. How many of these individuals live within your trade area? How much do they spend annually on your product?
  - > Use [Census Quick Facts](#) and [Locate In Wisconsin's Community Comparison](#) tool to understand local demographics and spending patterns.
  
- > Explore Psychographics
  - > Consider the lifestyles and values, motivations, and buying behavior of your target consumer. The information is available online via providers such as Esri or Claritas, but it is also recommended to interview potential customers to understand their values and media consumption habits.
  
- > Create a Customer Persona
  - > Identify a representation of your ideal customer to guide your marketing efforts, content creation, and product development. Even if you hope to serve multiple demographics, your customers are likely to have common needs or values that should inform your business decisions.
  
- > Refine your Customer Profile and Marketing Plan
  - > As your business grows, continue to gather feedback and data about your customers. Look for changing trends, emerging needs, or shifts in behavior that might impact your target market. No business goes exactly according to plan, so updating expectations with actual observations is important for ongoing business planning.

## Kiva Loan Program

Kiva is a crowdfunded loan program that provides businesses with access to micro-capital. Businesses demonstrate market demand by recruiting local supporters to pledge \$25 or more towards their project. Once local fundraising goals are reached, businesses have access to a global network of nonprofits and microfinance institutions to support network businesses.

Kiva loan basics:

- 0% interest loans up to \$15,000 with 3-year terms
- Fee-free loans and simple repayment via PayPal platform
- Engaging customers in your business enhances loyalty.

Visit the website to learn more or start an application: [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

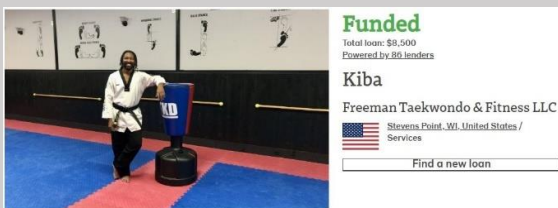


**Paying back**  
8% interest  
\$6,416.65 to go

Total loan: \$7,000  
Powered by 54 lenders

**Aaron**  
Lakeside Music/Amplify Cafe  
Port Washington, WI, United States / Services

Find a new loan



**Funded**  
Total loan: \$8,500  
Powered by 80 lenders

**Kiba**  
Freeman Taekwondo & Fitness LLC  
Stevens Point, WI, United States / Services

Find a new loan



**Paying back**  
13% interest  
\$6,458.30 to go

Total loan: \$7,500  
Powered by 116 lenders

**Jamie**  
K-STREET CAFE  
West Allis, WI, United States / Restaurant

Find a new loan

## Business Funding

Funding a business is a critical step in turning your idea into a reality. Undercapitalized businesses are more likely to fail in the first few years as they are unable to weather unexpected adverse events. Make sure to carefully assess the terms of any funding opportunity to ensure it aligns with your goals and business vision and is sustainable given your case flow projections.

Most micro businesses with one to three employees require at least \$5,000 to start. Additionally, it is recommended that startups have at least three months of expenses on hand in case of an emergency. In most cases, it is wise to have up to six months of expenses. New businesses often experience unexpected costs, especially during the startup period.

Common business funding sources include:

- > Self-funding
  - > Using your own savings, personal assets, or income to fund your business. This is often the first step for many entrepreneurs, as it doesn't require giving up equity or taking on debt. Many other investors will want to see that the owner is investing in the business before committing resources.
- > Friends and Family
  - > Raising funds from people you know, such as family members, friends, or acquaintances is common for . This can be a quicker and more informal route compared to other funding sources.
- > Bank loans and lines of credit
  - > A traditional method for obtaining business funding. Banks provide loans with fixed repayment terms and interest rates and offer products for various needs ranging from real estate and capital equipment to working capital. Talk to your local lenders, or visit <https://www.wbd.org/> for information on SBA lending options.
- > Grants & Targeted Loans
  - > Businesses in certain industries or geographies may be eligible for grants or business competitions that offer targeted funding. For businesses purchasing and renovating downtown properties, many communities also offer grants or loans for certain types of projects, especially façade rehab, upper floor conversions or energy efficiency improvements.
  - > The Start In Wisconsin website provides information on resources to start, scale or accelerate new businesses: <https://www.startinwi.com/>

## Operations Planning

- > Define Key operations
  - » List the key areas needed for day-to-day functioning (product vendors, inventory/production, customer service, marketing, sales, financial tracking etc.).
- > Set up your Financial Systems
  - » Open a Business Bank account
  - » Set up bookkeeping and accounting software.
  - » Finalize financial plan with cash flow projections, operational costs, and sales forecasts by week/month/year.
  - » Set up payment methods for customers (credit card processing and online payments). Establish financial management policies and procedures.
- > Establish a Supply Chain Management
  - » Identify reliable suppliers or manufacturers for your product or service.
  - » Set up a system to track inventory levels to reduce stockouts or overstock.
  - » Plan for warehousing, shipping, and delivery if applicable.
- > Develop Operational Processes
  - » Set up standard operating procedures
  - » Define employee roles and responsibilities, create a HR handbook
  - » Implement tools for team communication (text, email, Microsoft Teams, etc.)
- > Launch or Expand your Operations
  - » Gather feedback from customers, employees, and suppliers to improve operations.
  - » Closely monitor metrics like sales, profit margins, customer satisfaction, and employee performance to track operational efficiency.



## Location Factors

Key considerations when choosing your business location include:



### *Local ordinances and zoning:*

Contact your zoning administrator and discuss your business. Understand municipal ordinances, rules and limitations, including special considerations such as additional permitting for patio cafes, sandwich boards, local taxes, etc.



### *Market demographics:*

Understand mix of locals, visitors and event traffic. What is the demographic of the core customers? What marketing avenues are effective at reaching them?



*Foot traffic:* Understand local traffic patterns by day/time/season. What other destinations exist near potential locations? Use DOT or geofencing data to understand vehicular and foot traffic patterns.



### *Proximity to other businesses:*

All businesses benefit from proximity to customers, destinations and other similar businesses. Consider the visibility of your space relative to travel patterns of your customers.



*Total cost:* Know how much you can afford to pay in monthly rent. There are often ratios of rent relative to anticipated revenues. Consider other location costs such as permitting, space improvements, parking reimbursement, etc. when comparing locations.

## Location Selection

### Zoning

- > Make sure the building you plan to rent/buy aligns with local zoning regulations for the type of business you own (Connect with your local planning office to see local zoning)
- > For more information on zoning, visit: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/landusetraining/zoning-districts-and-regulations/>

### Space Planning

- > Consider accessibility to your space (link to ADA checklist from inclusion toolkit), loading for pickups and deliveries, and parking for employees and customers. Lease terms and Flexibility: Ensure you have an enforceable executed lease (link to standard templates). Regardless of how nice your landlord is, insurance may not cover you if something happens and there is no formal lease. Discuss how improvements to the space will be funded and how future space needs (more/less space) can be accommodated.

### Negotiations and Deal Structure

- > Commercial broker: will help you locate potential properties meeting your price range and requirements.
- > Accountant: will advise you on what your business can afford and navigate you through tax implications of lease/purchase negotiations and collections/budgeting plans.
- > Lawyer: will help negotiate and complete the transaction

### Comparing Locations

- > Tour sites and talk with other local businesses, downtown directors, economic developers or other business assistance offices.
- > Ask your municipality about potentially available spaces or land in your community that meets your needs
- > Tour preferred spaces with an architect or engineer to ensure that they will work for your business and understand code compliance and cost implications of any necessary changes.

### Other Resources

- > Location Strategy Checklist: <https://www.guidantfinancial.com/becoming-a-small-business-owner-guide/how-to-find-the-best-small-business-location/>

## Engaging with Events

One of the benefits of a downtown location is the ability to share customers with nearby businesses and capitalize on existing foot traffic. Downtowns are also typically the venue for many community events. As a small business, engaging with events is a simple way to build brand awareness, attract potential customers, and establish credibility. Events provide opportunities for direct interaction with target audiences, building brand identity and creating lasting relationships.

Many events allow businesses to showcase their products or services in a dynamic way, to generate leads, and gather valuable feedback. Engaging in events enables new businesses to stand out, network with key industry players, and build a strong community presence, all of which are critical for long-term growth and success.



(Wine Walk On Broadway, Green Bay)

## Local Considerations

While property location, community demographics, space characteristics and cost considerations are the most important factors influencing future business success, some ordinances and policies set at the local level that can significantly impact business operations. Key questions that should be asked of local representatives include:

- > What local business organizations exist to support my business? Are there training or educational opportunities available in the community?
- > What building permits are necessary for the type of renovations being considered? What is the process and cost associated with securing these permits? What individuals need to be consulted, and in what order? Consider both interior and exterior planned improvements. What is the process and timeline for securing a Certificate of Occupancy to begin operations in the new space? Is there a local business registration requirement?
- > What additional permits and approvals are needed to open my type of business in the locations being considered? What individuals or committees are responsible for these approvals, and with what frequency are applications reviewed? Depending on your business, you may want to specifically inquire about:
  - » Historic preservation
  - » Alcohol licensing
  - » Sidewalk cafes
  - » Temporary signage (such as sandwich boards)
  - » Outdoor merchandising
- > Are there financial incentives available to support business operations or property renovations? What are the requirements and deadlines associated with these programs?
- > Who are the utility providers that serve the community?
- > What are the requirements for parking, loading and trash removal near my proposed location?
- > What are key event dates that happen in the community? Who is responsible for these events?
- > Who are the contacts for local media outlets? What days do they go to press?

## Wisconsin Business Resources

Businesses in Wisconsin can take advantage of technical assistance, training and other resources from many regional and statewide partners. Statewide resources relevant to small businesses include:

WEDC -Start In Wisconsin  
<https://business.wisconsin.edu/start-in-wisconsin/>

UW Office of Business & Entrepreneurship  
<https://business.wisconsin.edu/>

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) <https://wisconsinsbdc.org/>

Small Business Administration (SBA) <https://www.sba.gov/>

SCORE Business Counseling  
<https://www.score.org/>

WWBIC <https://www.wwbic.com/>

WBD (Non-profit SBA finance entity) <https://www.wbd.org/>

## Space Planning

Designing the interior and exterior of your physical space is a critical step in business planning. Exterior elements help customers locate your business and provide a critical first impression, while interior design and layout shape the customer experience and influence the time (and money) spent in your business.

### Signage & Storefront Design

Good signage and storefront design is essential to creating a strong first impression, enhancing brand visibility, and attracting foot traffic. Well-designed signage and storefront merchandising clearly communicates your image, builds trust with customers, and differentiates a business from competitors. A visually appealing storefront reflects the quality and professionalism of the business, which can have a direct impact on success. Effective signage should include the following elements:



- » Flush mounted sign over the storefront visible to automobile traffic
- » Projecting sign (unless on a state highway) visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk
- » Window signage (on door and/or storefront) indicating the address, business names, goods and services offered, hours of operation and website

Storefronts themselves should be highly transparent, feature simple and striking displays that showcase products and change at least quarterly to create visual interest.

### Accessibility

By making buildings more accessible, businesses not only comply with legal requirements but also expand their customer base and foster a positive, welcoming environment. Even small changes can have a big impact on customer experiences and therefore spending.

The helpful checklist linked below helps businesses identify the most beneficial improvements so they can improve accessibility over time. Tax credits and deductions are available to small businesses for this type of improvement – consult your accountant to take advantage of these programs.



<https://www.adachecklist.org/doc/fullchecklist/ada-checklist.pdf>

## Lease Negotiations

Regardless of the location selected, structuring an effective lease is critical. Even if you purchase the building, or have a personal relationship with the landlord, having a written and executed lease is critical if issues arise. Leases can protect against unforeseen circumstances such as rent increases or a change in ownership, may provide tax benefits, and make negotiations for insurance claims and other claims far simpler and easier, which is an advantage if adversity strikes. Some elements that should be included in your lease:

- > **Define the premises.** What space(s) is your business allowed to use and when. Include storage and exterior parking or loading areas.
- > **Define the terms.** What is the rent, how often is it paid, how long does the lease run, and how will renewals and rate increases be handled?
- > **Maintenance and repair expenses.** What is the obligation of the owner and tenant when it comes to space improvements, maintenance, and repairs?
- > **Interference or disruption.** Identify recourse in the event of business disruption caused by landlord activities (such as construction) or the activities of other tenants.

## New Business Registration and Licensing

Many legal requirements are associated with starting a business, some of which may be unfamiliar to many entrepreneurs. The list below provides a list of many important legal requirements along with the agency or entity that oversees the process. Keep records of these items, as many need to be renewed regularly. Understand tax filing requirements for your structure and retain necessary records and receipts to make this a seamless process.

### Register your business name

- > Ensure that your business name is unique and not already in use. Check name availability through the US Patent and Trademark Office ([www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)) and the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI). You need to register in Wisconsin with DFI once you select a name. (<https://apps.dfi.wi.gov/apps/CorpSearch/Search.aspx>)
- > Obtain an Employer Identification Number from the IRS—often needed even if you don't plan to hire employees. <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-identification-number>

**Register for state and local taxes** Your business will likely need a state tax ID number and a sales tax permit.

- > Register for business taxes with the Department of Revenue ([www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/pcs-btr-on.aspx](http://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/pcs-btr-on.aspx))
- > Register for a sales tax number ([www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/pcs/seller.html](http://www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/pcs/seller.html))

**Secure business insurance** to protect your business and employees.

- > Some tips for selecting appropriate coverage: [www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/get-business-insurance](http://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/get-business-insurance)
- > If you will have employees, register for unemployment insurance and workers' compensation insurance: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uitax/> and <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc/>

**Obtain licenses and permits.** Depending on your industry, you may be required to secure additional state or local registration.

- > Review the list of industries and professions requiring permits or licensure with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Licenses\\_Permits/](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Licenses_Permits/)

**Plan for employees.** Hiring employees requires additional paperwork and registration.

Have new employees complete a W-4 (for tax withholding) and an I-9 (for employment eligibility verification): <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uinh/>

## Lease Negotiations

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- > **Interference or disruption.** Identify recourse in the event of business disruption caused by landlord activities (such as construction) or the activities of other tenants.

## Restaurants and Food Service Businesses

Restaurants have the same requirements as other businesses, plus additional permitting related to health codes and liquor licensing. Restaurants also typically have more employees, and deal with inventory with expiration dates, requiring more diligent record-keeping and planning than other business types. Additional insurance is also likely required, such as liquor liability and auto insurance (for delivery/food trucks). Additional food business startup tips are included below.

- > **Funding.** Unless you are taking over an existing restaurant space, building out a restaurant space requires significantly more capital than other types of businesses. This link explains some typical financial considerations for food-based businesses: <https://pos.toasttab.com/blog/on-the-line/restaurant-financing>
- > **Space Planning.** The flow of the seating area and kitchen can make a big difference in the efficiency and profitability of a restaurant operation. Consider engaging a knowledgeable architect early in the space search to ensure that potential spaces are suitable for the equipment and type of experience you hope to create.
  - » Verify local zoning and permitting to ensure that restaurants are an allowed use, that sufficient alcohol licenses are available, and that additional desired amenities such as food trucks or outdoor dining are allowed.
- > **Permitting.** Additional permitting requirements for food service businesses include:
  - » **Restaurant License:** This license is required to prepare, serve, or sell food to the public. You can apply for this license through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The annual license fee ranges from \$105 to \$540, plus a one-time pre-inspection fee of \$130 to \$770.
  - » **Seller's Permit:** Required to charge sales tax on food sales.
  - » **Food Handler's License:** Also known as a Food Service License or Wisconsin Food Handler Card; this ensures that all employees are certified in food preparation and handling procedures.
  - » **Food Facility Health Permit:** Ensures that the restaurant space is set up with the equipment and processes that keep patrons and employees safe.
  - » **Liquor License Permit:** Required to sell and serve alcohol to your patrons.

**Getting Started Checklist:** a guide for service, retail and restaurant businesses.

	<b>Service Businesses</b>	<b>Retail Establishments</b>	<b>Restaurants/ Food Service</b>
<i>Business Permit</i>	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
<i>Sign Permit</i>	✓ Varies by municipality, always for additions, relocations or temporary signs	✓ Varies by municipality, always for additions, relocations or temporary signs	✓ Varies by municipality, always for additions, relocations or temporary signs
<i>Building &amp; Zoning Permits</i>	✓ For any improvements made	✓ For any improvements made	✓ For any improvements made
<i>Certificate of Occupancy</i>	✓ If change of use or improvements made	✓ If change of use or improvements made	✓ If change of use or improvements made
<i>Employer ID Number</i>	✓ If employees hired (including self-employed)	✓ If employees hired (including self-employed)	✓ If employees hired (including self-employed)
<i>Professional License/Certification</i>	✓ Varies by industry (legal, real estate, salons do)	✗	✓ Food Handler and/or Bartender
<i>Sales Tax Permit</i>	✓ If goods are sold	✓ Always	✗
<i>Health Department Permit</i>	✓ For many personal services	✓ For personal care or health related items	✓ For food safety compliance
<i>Fire Safety Inspection</i>	✓ Depending on customer traffic/industry	✓ Depending on store size	✓ Always
<i>Waste Disposal Permits</i>	✗	✓ Often	✓ Always
<i>Resale Certificate</i>	✗	✓ For previously used goods	✗
<i>Consumer Protection Certifications</i>	✓ For financial services	✓ If products are manufactured	✗
<i>Inspections</i>	✓ Fire - Annually	✓ Fire- Annually	✓ Fire-Annually Health Inspection - Annually

# COMMUNITY-POWERED PARTNERSHIPS

## How Anchor Institutions Can Support Local Growth

Anchor institutions can help play a vital role in community success. They hire community members, support local businesses, and act as resource hubs. This toolkit will help explain how to utilize large local organizations as anchors and set up a network to help facilitate long-term economic prosperity for your community.

### WHAT IS AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION?

Anchor institutions are local organizations—both for-profit and nonprofit—that have a significant geographic or market presence in their community. The term *anchor* reflects their role in stabilizing and driving local economic activity through employment, purchasing power, and investment. While anchor institutions commonly refer to universities or hospitals, the term can also include community colleges, faith groups, and volunteer fire departments, among other organization types. Any local institution that drives a large portion of employment and brings capital into the town has the potential to serve as an anchor. These institutions can leverage their resources to support community growth through partnerships with local businesses, advocacy in local politics, and strategic investments.

### HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS BECOME ANCHORS?

There are four key strategies that help institutions serve as anchors in their community: purchasing, employing, investing, and community involvement. Each of these methods creates a framework for sustainable, place-based economic development.

1. **Purchasing:** How is the anchor spending in town? For example, is the anchor supplying its gift shop with locally made products or buying furniture from local artisans?
2. **Employing:** How does the organization bring and support jobs in town? Is it hiring locally, bringing jobs to the community, or investing in the local talent pipeline?
3. **Investment:** What is the anchor's spending strategy? Is it buying local land to build new office space or working to make a place-based impact?
4. **Community impact:** How does the anchor interact with the local community? Is it they making an effort to participate in strategic planning or sitting on any local boards?

The following examples illustrate how communities have successfully used each of the four methods to nurture partnerships to make the most of anchor institutions' presence.

## PURCHASING

**Communities: Appleton and Neenah**

**Anchor institution: ThedaCare**

The ThedaCare hospital in Appleton and Neenah is one example of how strategic purchasing can help both the anchor and the community. Working with the Northeast Wisconsin Food Hub, the hospital established a partnership to purchase the hospital's produce through the hub, an organization that supports farmers in Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. Through strategic purchasing, the hospital was able to cut down on shipping times for produce—since items were now being farmed in communities across the state rather than sourced from nationwide distributors—and at the same time, support their local farmers and businesses by circulating funds back into the local economy. This kind of strategic purchasing allows the anchor institution to provide healthier, fresher ingredients while supporting farmers and the local economic ecosystem.

## EMPLOYING

**Community: Gilman**

**Anchor institution: Gilman School District**

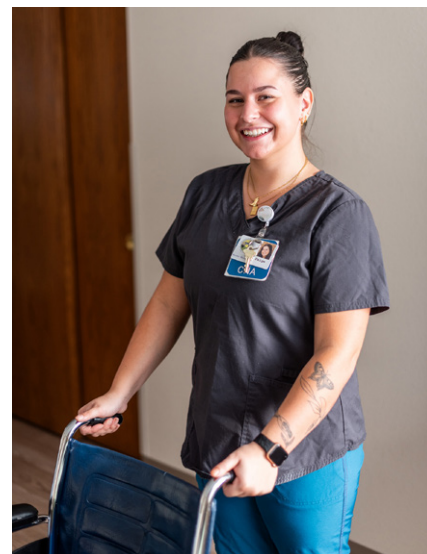
In Gilman, the local school district partnered with the University of Wisconsin Division of Extension through the Community Economic Analysis for Rural Wisconsin Communities (CEA-RWC) program to develop the Gilman School District Area Strategic Plan. In a community-oriented process, Gilman stakeholders identified priorities including cultivating a growth mindset, revitalizing Main Street, and strengthening community engagement. Translating these priorities into action led to reimagining local spaces—transforming an empty bank into the Vault Village retail and gathering space and a grocery store into a new community center called Celebrations Hall. Housing developments that were in need of renovation or no longer in use got new life as efficient, multi-unit developments. With its participation in Thrive Rural Wisconsin, Gilman completed a study of zoning laws in their county to identify ways to improve supply of affordable workforce housing and restructure zoning laws to enable growth. Through the support of the Gilman School District, Gilman was able to conduct studies that allowed them to identify opportunities and solutions—and then to put those solutions into practice. These efforts demonstrate how anchor institutions like school districts can drive community-wide development by investing in research, convening townspeople, and championing local priorities.

**Thrive Rural Wisconsin** addresses challenges rural communities raised through the Rural Voices Report that support community driven solutions to economic development challenges across rural Wisconsin and Tribal Nations. Communities that participate in Thrive Rural Wisconsin receive project management, financial support, and technical assistance to advance local and regional initiatives and connect them to the resources they need to be successful.

## Community: Sheboygan County

### Anchor institution: Lakeland University

The cooperative education program at Lakeland University in Sheboygan County offers another example of a workforce-driven anchor strategy. Facing a regional labor shortage, Lakeland University partnered with Sheboygan businesses to create a cooperative education program that allows students to earn course credits and get paid to work during school. The students have collectively earned more than \$10 million and receive investment coaching through the school to help pay off student loans and make smart investment decisions. The program also addresses a key issue facing rural communities: youth retention. By providing students with meaningful work opportunities during college—most of which end up in full-time offers for post-graduate students—the program helps young people envision a future for themselves in Sheboygan County. As Lakeland University Director of External Relations David Gallianetti says, “This program connects young talent to meaningful career opportunities but also strengthens their sense of belonging in the community.” Many of these opportunities culminate in full-time offers after graduation and provide students with crucial work experience they can leverage for other opportunities, helping sustain a cycle of young families choosing to put down roots locally.



*Paige, a Lakeland student, works as a CNA for academic credit*

## INVESTING

### Community: Hayward

### Anchor institution: Tamarack Health Hospital System

In Hayward, the Tamarack Health hospital system partnered with the local school district to build a state-of-the-art fitness center in the high school, a project made possible through a community referendum that approved funding for vital school renovations, with the high school agreeing to pay for the additional renovations to the health facility. The hospital contributed all the gym equipment, community education courses, and marketing support. This facility is available to students and community members, offering monthly passes and day passes. The facility is open at no cost to students and at a low cost to community members. Beyond fitness, the center offers community education classes such as CPR training, music lessons, and fitness classes. As Tamarack Health President and CEO Luke Beirl says, “a healthy community is a strong community.” By creating this space, community members have a center to gather around beyond work and school, allowing them to connect to one another. This collaboration between the school and



*Hayward seniors participate in fitness activities at the new facility.*

the hospital is a shining example of how strategic institutional investments can create lasting community infrastructure and support the well-being of each community member.

**Community: Fort Atkinson**

**Anchor institution: Fort HealthCare**

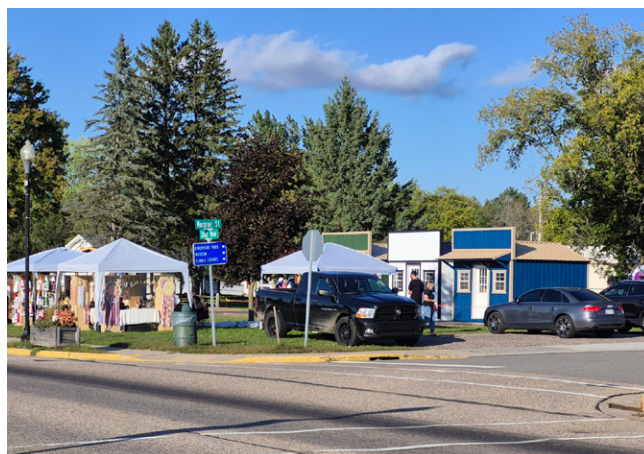
Fort HealthCare in Fort Atkinson offers another instructive example of an anchor institution investing in its community. Recognizing that housing availability was posing a barrier to community growth, the hospital worked with the Jefferson County Economic Development Organization to contribute \$3 million to the Thrive Live Local development fund, a low-interest fund that provides up to \$25,000 per unit for developers building affordable homes. The hospital also holds a seat on the Thrive board, maintaining ongoing engagement in community-level decision-making. James Nelson, senior vice president of finance and strategic development with the hospital, reflects, “The only thing holding us back is our own lack of imagination.” The hospital’s broader community commitments include a free clinic, hospice service, and a dental clinic, all symbolizing a lasting commitment between the hospital to strengthen the community’s health and economic resilience.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

**Community: Pittsville**

**Anchor institution: Pittsville School District**

In Pittsville, the local school board and economic development group joined forces to identify and address the community’s most pressing needs. The school board led a community economic analysis with UW-Extension to uncover what kinds of projects would be best suited for the community’s needs. The school board also participated actively in the planning process to inform the community’s growth. As a part of Thrive Rural Wisconsin, the local economic development group CranCity Corner was registered as a 501(c)3 and created a community hub that will serve as a gathering space, foster new business development, and provide housing. The city also used a \$29,000 Vibrant Spaces Grant to create a market village—a space that will serve as a micro-incubator for businesses, with four small vendor booths with vintage commercial façades, and will also serve as a pillar for the community to hold gatherings and connect to one another. Pittsville’s success reflects what becomes possible when anchor institutions like schools, local government, and small business owners work together toward shared goals. These kinds of community partnerships model the integrated community leadership that enables projects to move from ideation to implementation.

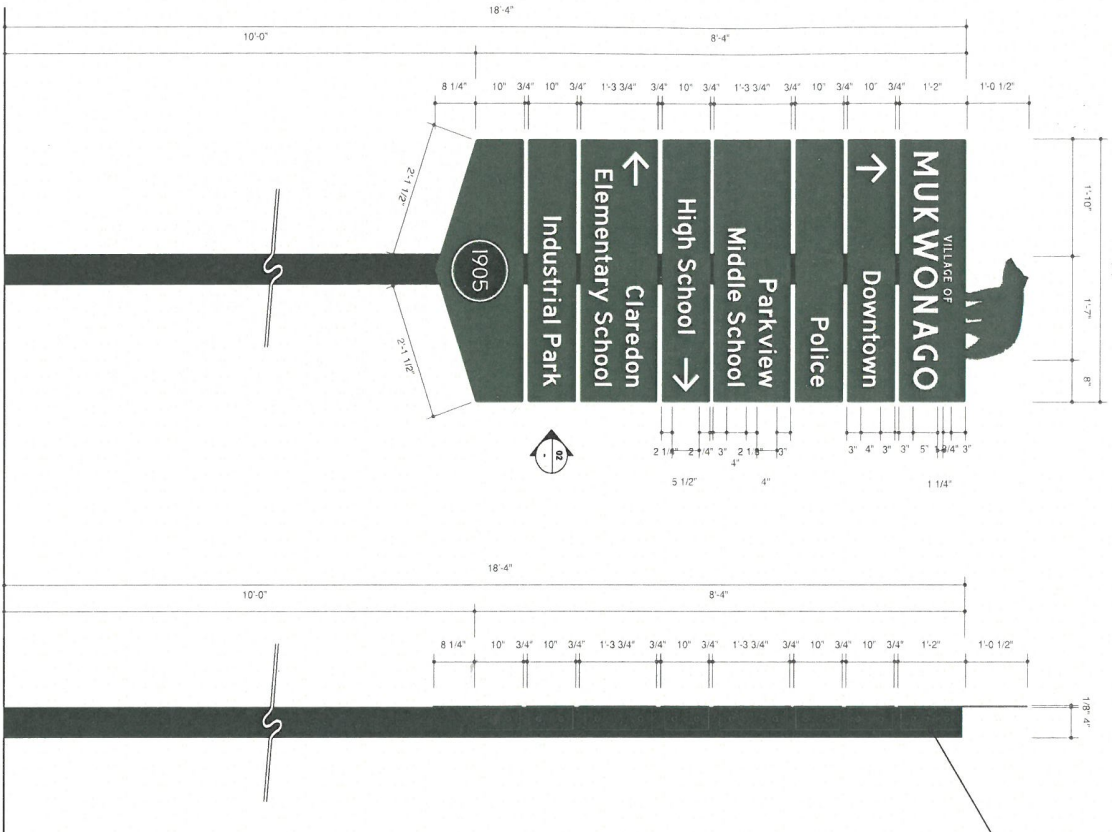
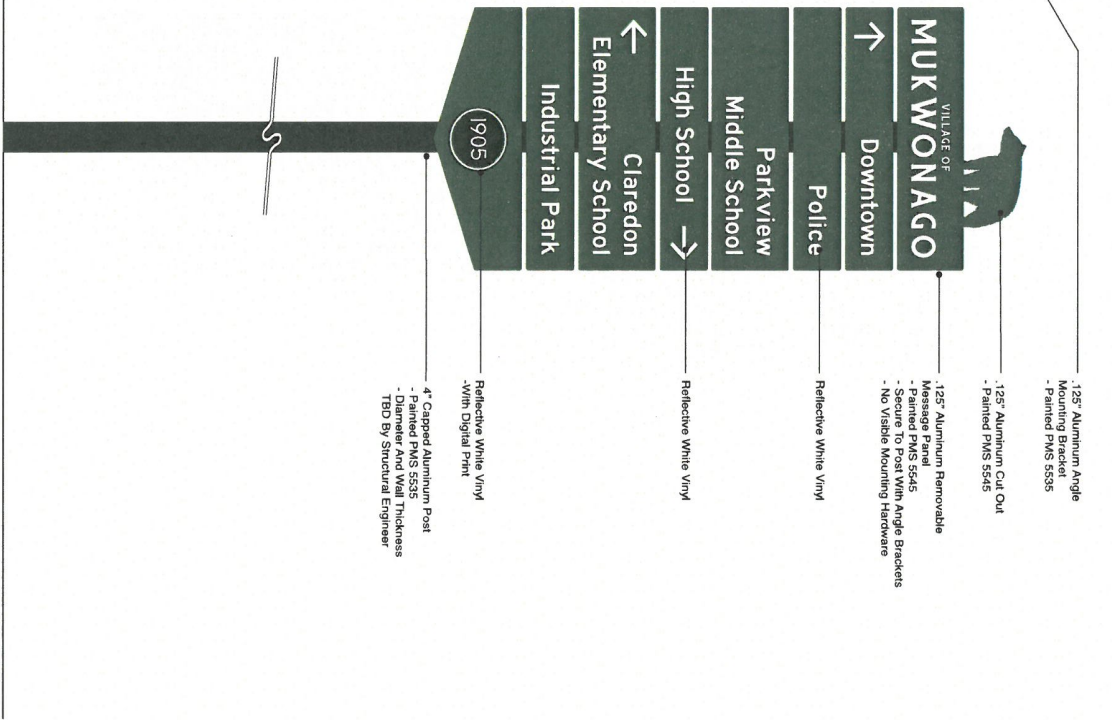


*Pittsville's market village*

Visit [ruralwi.com/leadership](https://ruralwi.com/leadership) for more resources and guidance for rural communities.

<b>Project:</b>	Village of Mukwonago Brand Signage + Wayfinding
<b>Address:</b>	-
<b>Project Number:</b>	2103.02
<b>Date:</b>	03/26/2022
<b>Project Manager:</b>	Jeremy Jeweller
<b>Sign Type:</b>	-
<b>Issued for:</b>	Construction Documents

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# VILLAGE OF MUKWONAGO

## REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS TO THE VILLAGE BOARD



<b>Topic:</b>	Historic Sign Replacement Project from the Downtown Development Committee		
<b>Date:</b>	May 15, 2026		
<b>Presenter:</b>	Diana Dykstra/Scott Reeves	<b>Department:</b>	Village Administrator/DDC Chair

### Conformance with Strategic Plan

Approval of this action would conform to the following strategic goals:

- Energized Workforce
- Balanced Development
- Responsible Finances
- Quality of Life
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Overview/Background Information

The DDC has been visiting the update of the old Historical Sign on the square. Several members of the DDC met with the Library and Historical Society representatives to correct the language. Chair Reeves confirmed with the Waukesha County Historical Society the continued inclusion in their historical markers.

The DDC has the funds to cover this improvement.

Public Works worked with members of the DDC to try to incorporate the branded secondary park sign design layouts.

The location for placement, in advance of the STH83 improvements, would be moved to the front lawn of the Red Brick Museum.

### Key Issues (if necessary)

### Fiscal Note/Budget Impact

DDC Budget for 2026 is \$3,500.

### Action Required/Recommendation

Approve the recommendation for a replacement historical sign placed on the lawn of the Red Brick Museum.

### Attachments

Quotes, Pictures

# MUKWONAGO

Human presence in this area stretches back over 10,000 years. By the 1600s, the Potawatomi were the primary Indigenous people here, and by the early 1700s, permanent villages had been established throughout Waukesha County.

One of the largest Potawatomi settlements in the Wisconsin Territory thrived at the confluence of the Mukwonago and Fox Rivers—today's Mukwonago. Wigwams lined what is now Main Street, a council house stood on the north bank of the Mukwonago River, and a horse racing track once occupied the land now known as Field Park.



The 1833 Treaty of Chicago, which ceded Illinois and Wisconsin Indigenous lands to the U.S. government, encouraged land prospectors Sewall Andrews, Henry Camp, and Major Jesse Meacham to scout this area for land. Early discussions with the Potawatomi in 1836 led to two homes being built near the established village and a year later a trading post was constructed next door to the present day Red Brick Museum.

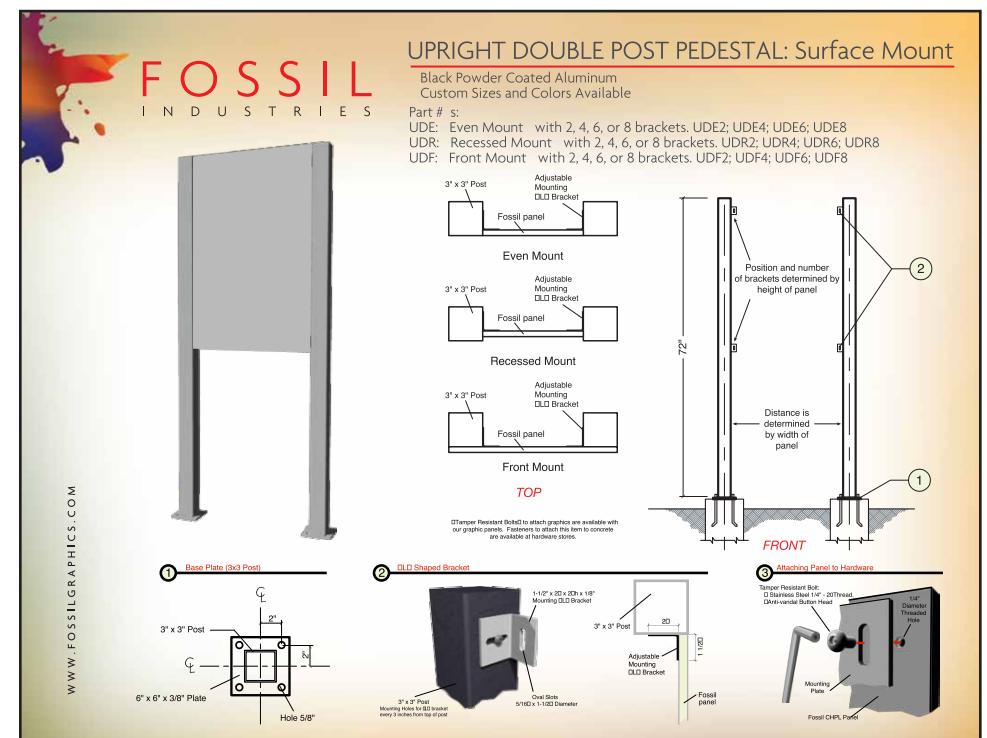
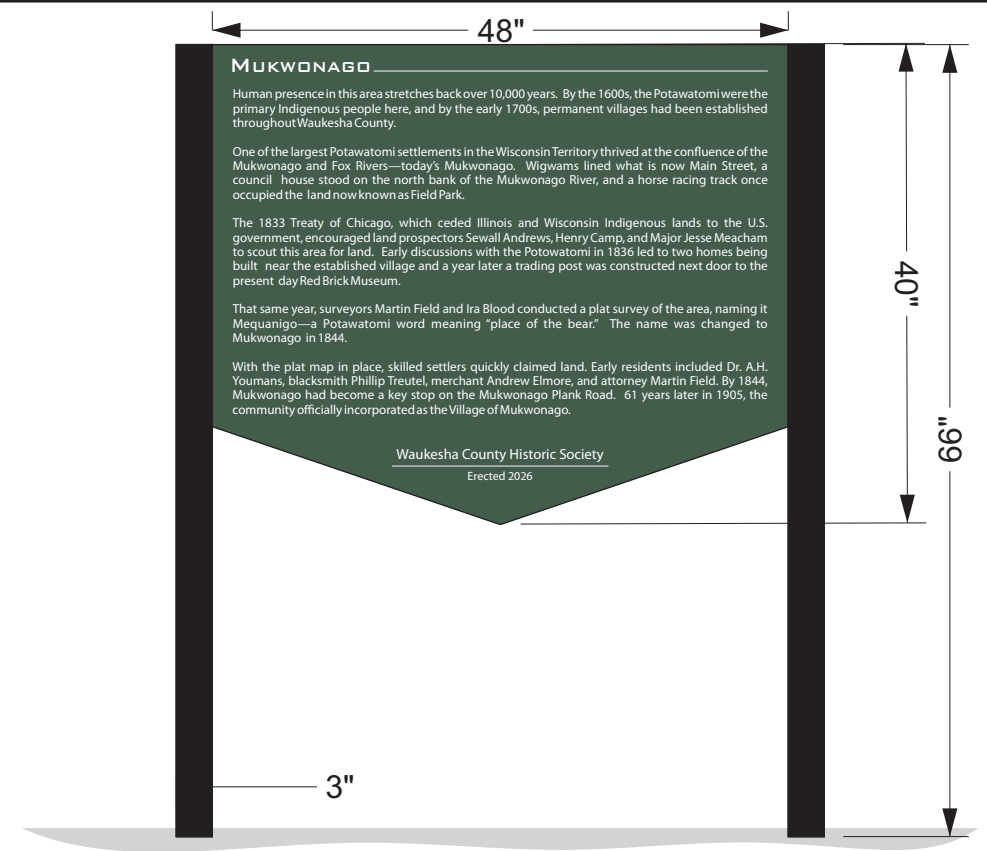
That same year, surveyors Martin Field and Ira Blood conducted a plat survey of the area, naming it Mequanigo—a Potawatomi word meaning "place of the bear." The name was changed to Mukwonago in 1844.

With the plat map in place, skilled settlers quickly claimed land. Early residents included Dr. A.H. Youmans, blacksmith Phillip Treutel, merchant Andrew Elmore, and attorney Martin Field. By 1844, Mukwonago had become a key stop on the Mukwonago Plank Road. 61 years later in 1905, the community officially incorporated as the Village of Mukwonago.

Waukesha County Historic Society  
Erected 2026

Enlarged for Copy

White - Standard   
Green - PMS 5545 



Village of Mukwonago  
440 River Crest Court  
Mukwonago, WI 53149





# Status Report of the Downtown Mukwonago Strategic Plan

Prepared by: Downtown Development Committee

April 23, 2026



## **Downtown Development Committee Members**

Trustee Scott Reeves - *Village Board & Village Resident*

Jason Wamser – *Plan Commission Member and Village Resident*

Tina Chitwood - *Village Resident*

Brock Anderson - *Downtown Business Owner*

Eliza Pautz - *Downtown District Resident*

James Pauer – *Village Resident*

Diana Dykstra - *Village Administrator*



# Downtown Mukwonago Strategic Plan - 2026 Status Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Mukwonago Village Board on the current status of the recommendations identified in the 2018 Downtown Mukwonago Strategic Plan. The last update presented to the Board was with the April 26, 2023, update of this report.

## Geography Included in the Plan

The 2018 Plan focus included the Village Center Overlay Zoning District and the residential areas in the boundaries between Field Park on the North and Indianhead Park on the southwest as well as on Hwy. 83 to the railroad overpass in the southeast.

**EXHIBIT 1**  
**Ordinance No. 931**

Village Center Overlay Zoning District Boundary and Sub-Districts



**Sub-Districts**

- Red—Retail Center**
- Green—Multi-Purpose Perimeter**
- Yellow—Residential Perimeter**



# Status of Projects from June 2018 through April 2026

## Tier 1 - Recommendations

These recommendations were of the highest importance to the committee and the community and were to be acted upon within a one to two-year timeframe. Additional details for each recommendation can be found at the end of this document under "Recommendation Descriptions."

### 1-1 | Engage a firm to create a roadway design and streetscaping enhancement plan.

Such as sidewalks, crosswalks, beautification, lighting, safety, connectivity and gateways. Begin implementing crosswalk safety enhancements.

Status	Completed
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foth Streetscape Master Plan completed in 2020</li> <li>● Ruekert &amp; Mielke, Inc. prepared Hwy. 83 30% design plans for WisDOT. DDC recommended 30% plans to the Board and approved on 2/23/2023. Board OK'd DDC to move forward with development of design standards in March 2023.</li> <li>● Flashing crosswalk signals installed at multiple locations on Rochester St.</li> <li>● Temporary bump outs on Rochester St. tested in 2022 and 2023 and in March 2023 DDC recommended to the Board to incorporate bump outs throughout downtown into the Hwy. 83 reconstruction plan.</li> <li>● Downtown placemaking banners installed 2022. New banners with Village branding installed in 2025.</li> <li>● Flower planters installed at six locations in 2022. 3 additional locations added in 2024 for a total of 9 locations.</li> <li>● LED holiday lights replaced old holiday lights in 2022</li> </ul>

### 1-2 | Adopt an ordinance to change the trucking route onto Veterans Way/Holz Parkway to bypass downtown.

Status	Completed
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preferred Truck Route signs directing trucks to Holz Pkwy. and Veterans Pkwy. installed on Hwy. 83 at the North and South entrances of the community. Ongoing education can still be in process.</li> <li>● Committee engaged in dialogue with WisDOT to discuss rerouting Hwy. 83 options and alternatives</li> </ul>

### 1-3 | Encourage opportunities for community spaces to allow for activities, community meeting and relaxation spaces in downtown.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Phantom Junction Stage in Indianhead Park constructed in 2022. WEDC Vibrant Spaces Grant received in 2025 to construct a canteen, create pathways, purchase chairs and a fire pit.</li> <li>● Ongoing support of Chamber and community events held in Downtown including: Fall Fest, Midnight Magic Parade, Business Trick or Treat</li> <li>● Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) created and approved February 2023. Focus on trails to connect Indianhead Park to downtown</li> <li>● Bench donation by village resident installed downtown near Music Café store.</li> </ul>

### 1-4 | Re-establish a Historic Preservation Commission (Landmark Commission) to guide and support historic preservation and compatible redevelopment.

Status	Completed
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Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HPC does exist, but it's focus area is the Grand Avenue and Pearl Street residential area; not the Village Center Overlay District nor the Retail Center.</li> <li>● February 2026 the HPC voted to support the historic preservation of the East Troy Electric Railroad with a stop at Phantom Junction Stage.</li> </ul>
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1-5 | Engage a firm to conduct a market analysis with the goal of attracting new businesses and growing the existing economic base, and maximizing the existing commercial space in downtown.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Redevelopment Resources Market Strategies report October 2020</li> <li>● Finalized a Business List of all businesses operating in the Village in March 2023 (Includes: Industry, Company Name, Address, Primary Contact E-mail, Name and Phone #)</li> <li>● February 2026, DDC member Brock Anderson agreed to spearhead the 2026 update of the Business Contact List.</li> </ul>

1-6 | Investigate the development of a Downtown Business Owner's Association to support and enhance downtown.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DDC members and Village Administrator have participated in the WEDC Connect Communities program since 2021 attending events and webinars. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investigating the development of BIDs is part of the resources offered by the Connect Communities Program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Tier 2 - Recommendations

These recommendations were recommended to be acted upon within a three to four-year timeframe, as some recommendations build off of the Tier 1 plans. Additional details for each recommendation can be found at the end of this document under "Recommendation Descriptions."

2-1 | Invest in the maintenance and replacement of pedestrian safety features and roadside amenities. Continue with pedestrian safety and crosswalk enhancements.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sponsorship program for planters was revamped to a "beautification program" to support a variety of elements such as: planters, signage, benches, maintenance, etc. (ongoing)</li> <li>● Downtown business owners are working with DDC's Trustee Reeves for the care and maintenance of the planters (ongoing)</li> <li>● Thomas Greenhouse has donated flowers, and the planting of flowers, for all planters since program inception (ongoing)</li> <li>● Foth Design Plan 2020 includes rendering for downtown entryway signs.</li> <li>● DDC recommended to the Board to include bump outs with Hwy. 83 30% Design Plans in March 2023</li> </ul>

2-2 | Engage a firm to develop a design plan with specific guidelines focusing on exterior building improvements which are consistent with Recommendation 1-1 to achieve a cohesive environment.



Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial discussions about design guidelines and recommendation to the Plan Commission and Board to move forward with the development of design guidelines in March 2023</li> <li>DDC members held a walk-through tour of Downtown to review and discuss preferred design elements in March 2023</li> <li>Discussions were revamped due to zoning code delay. Instead of design guidelines the DDC is discussing best practices.</li> <li></li> </ul>

2-3 | Promote and collaborate with the Library, Chamber of Commerce, Red Brick Museum and the Wisconsin Historical Society for historical and cultural events and programming.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DDC member Eliza Pautz is also a member of the Library Board</li> <li>DDC member Trustee Reeves attends Red Brick Museum events</li> <li>Historical marker sign redesigned collaboratively with Library Director and Mukwonago Historical and Museum Society President and Vice President. Existing sign to be removed from downtown square location. New sign to be installed at the Red Brick Museum site.</li> </ul>

2-4 | Marketing to highlight the uniqueness of Mukwonago and to showcase events, culture and recreational activities.

Status	In Process
Narrative	Two videos highlighting downtown tourism and quality of life promotion and restaurants videos were commissioned and created in 2025 & 2026.

2-5 | Create financial support programs to encourage and support downtown building improvements and business development.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DDC members and Village Administrator have participated in the WEDC Connect Communities program since 2021 attending events and webinars.</li> <li>Letters of Support written for WEDC Main Street Bounceback Grants 2022</li> </ul>

2-6 | Invest in wayfinding signage around the downtown and to key points of interest in the Village.

Status	In Process
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KMG signage design plan created and adopted in March 2022</li> <li>2022 Board approval to implement signage plan over four years</li> <li>DDC recommended to the Board to install gateway signage at six (6) locations entering the community in December 2022. Gateway signs have been installed at four entrances of the Village.</li> </ul>

2-7 | Marketing of existing public parking options in downtown.

Status	In Process
Narrative	Village Center Parking Map done April 25, 2024. <a href="https://www.villageofmukwonago.gov/1214/Village-Center-Parking-Map">https://www.villageofmukwonago.gov/1214/Village-Center-Parking-Map</a>

2-8 | Implement a Business Improvement District (BID) to support and enhance downtown.

Status	Not Done
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Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● DDC members and Village Administrator have participated in the WEDC Connect Communities program since 2021 attending events and webinars.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Investigating the development of BIDs is part of the resources offered by the Connect Communities Program.</li></ul></li></ul>
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## Summary and Next Steps

The Downtown Development Committee recognizes the difficulty in completing the recommendations in the recommended timeframe in part due the COVID-19 pandemic and Village staffing changes.

The DDC will engage with the Board to determine next steps for the DDC to undertake.



## Recommendation Descriptions

The following details have been offered by the DSPSC for background and support for each recommendation. The estimated costs have been included for capital expense planning purposes and offer a range of cost based on committee members' history and knowledge for the items. When available, actual cost estimates have been noted.

### Recommendation 1-1

*Engage a firm to create a roadway design and streetscaping enhancement plan. Elements to be included: sidewalks, crosswalks, beautification, lighting, safety, connectivity and gateways. Begin implementing crosswalk safety enhancements.*

Mukwonago has a fair amount of historic buildings at its core, but the Hwy. 83 roadway corridor through downtown leaves a lot to be desired with many concrete surfaces, mismatched benches and lighting and limited color in the downtown. The downtown environment should be a key reason why people want to visit, shop, work and live in the center of the Village. Other considerations include:

- Overall cleanliness, attractiveness, maintenance and repair, and safety
- Connect to the rest of the community through signage and sidewalks
- Inventory existing sidewalks, crosswalks and other amenities such as benches, planters and garbage bins
- Address sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian safety features such as activated flashing pedestrian crossing signs, banners, street lights, benches, garbage/recycling cans, bike racks, shade, vegetation, restrooms, water fountains, gathering spaces and gateways
- Connect and enhance Indianhead Park on the southern boundary of downtown
- The plan should also include a comprehensive recommendation for the downtown along with a list of potential funding sources
- Regarding implementation (see Tier 2 recommendations), consider a manageable block-by-block plan instead of attempting to improve the entire district at once

This recommendation addresses enhancing the environment in downtown to be a welcoming, friendly, attractive, colorful, connected and safe environment.

❖ **Estimated Planning Cost: \$10,000-\$50,000**



## Recommendation 1-2

*Adopt an ordinance to change the trucking route onto Veterans Way/Holz Parkway to bypass downtown.*

To reduce heavy truck traffic, the DSPSC has recommended to the Village Board to adopt an ordinance diverting heavy truck traffic from Hwy 83 to Veterans Way/Holz Parkway. This should be supported by:

- Educating truck drivers of the preferred truck route
  - Installation of new signs indicating the bypass route
  - Educating residents and visitors about the option to use Veterans Way/Holz Parkway if they do not intend to stop at a business/location in downtown
  - It is important that this recommendation does not negatively impact the business community, so the DSPSC is recommending the installation of additional signage to direct traffic to the historical downtown retail center
- ❖ **Estimated Cost: \$250-\$2,000 for new signs to be installed informing drivers of new routes and limited costs associated with the Village Attorney's time spent on the project.**

## Recommendation 1-3

*Encourage opportunities for community spaces to allow for activities, community meeting and relaxation spaces in the downtown area.*

An engaged network of neighbors, community groups and volunteers should be created to develop additional cultural opportunities while capitalizing on the Village's existing assets (Red Brick Museum, Community Library) and events (arts, culture and heritage). The goal will be to articulate the unique character of downtown culture, heritage and recreational activities.

- Strengthen relationships with individuals and organizations to build a common vision and thereby maximize resources
  - Allocate additional human and fiscal resources for marketing and promoting the activities of this group
  - Encourage a connected parks and trail system that promotes a link to nature, recreation, and the downtown. Consider the goals for the Village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2017) to make informed decisions pertaining to facilities and parks before making capital investment plans
- ❖ **Estimated Cost: TBD based on the amenities and resources to be developed.**



## Recommendation 1-4

*Re-establish a Historic Preservation Commission (Landmark Commission) to guide and support historic preservation and compatible redevelopment.*

In recent history, the Village had a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) which was absorbed by Mukwonago's Plan Commission. Reinstating a HPC is a top priority activity in the Tier 1 recommendations based on the community survey, feedback from the open house as well as the committee members' research on this topic. The Village also maintains a Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS). The recommended activities for this group include:

- Assess the benefits of activating the Village's CLG status
- Conduct walking tours to promote the historic features and cultural assets of downtown (in cooperation with the Red Brick Museum)
- Coordinate with the Red Brick Museum and Chamber to educate property owners about the benefits of historic preservation
- Conduct an architectural review based on newly created Design Guidelines (Tier 2 activity)
- Develop financial tools to support historic preservation and compatible redevelopment (Tier 2 activity)

❖ Estimated Cost: \$0

## Recommendation 1-5

*Engage a firm to conduct a market analysis with the goal of attracting new businesses and growing the existing economic base, and maximizing the existing commercial space in downtown.*

By engaging a firm such as the UW-Extension to conduct a market analysis, relevant market data and information can be used to support existing and new business growth. Additional areas to be addressed in this report should include:

- Industry cluster targets and a market gap-analysis
- Programs to attract locally-owned, independently-owned, niche/specialty businesses as well as existing businesses seeking a second location in downtown
- Conduct a business and building inventory
- Compare attraction prospects with existing land use and zoning ordinances within the Downtown Overlay District
- The results of the program should be communicated with existing businesses and property owners via a business outreach program (Tier 2 activity)

❖ Estimated Report Cost: \$5,000-\$10,000



## Recommendation 1-6

*Investigate the development of a Downtown Business Owner's Association (DBA) and in years 2-3 a Business Improvement District (BID) to support and enhance downtown.*

Downtown business development is most successful when led by a strategically-focused group. The DSPSC recommends the creation of an organizational structure to lead downtown business redevelopment activities and projects. Potential structures include:

- Downtown Business Owner's Association (DBA)
- Existing Village Economic Development Committee (EDC)
- A committee to be created under the Chamber of Commerce
- A Business Improvement District (see Tier 2 recommendation)
- Main Street program
- Connect Communities program

The DSPSC is not recommending the Village coordinate the ongoing management/organization for downtown business development, as this is best done in a partnership with the Village, business owners, property owners and key downtown stakeholders. The Village should continue to highlight downtown economic development efforts during the annual Economic Development Breakfast, and for the Village President to continue with business retention visits, as well as engage in discussion with the newly created entity.

❖ **Estimated Cost - DBA (Tier 1): \$0**

## Recommendation 2-1

*Invest in the maintenance and replacement of pedestrian safety features and roadside amenities.*

Building off of Recommendation 1-1 there will be needed maintenance as well as additional features to consider for the beautification of downtown. Elements to be assessed include but are not limited to:

- Maintaining sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian safety features such as activated, flashing pedestrian crossing signs, banners, street lights, benches, garbage and recycling bins, bike racks, elements that offer shade, vegetation, restrooms, water fountains and gathering spaces
- Developing an annual flower/perennials planting/tree planting and maintenance program throughout downtown with an eye toward adding more color for prolonged periods of time
- Enhance the entrances to the historical pedestrian-friendly downtown with prominent visual upgrading and/or utilizing landmarks to serve as gateways

❖ **Estimated Cost: Varies depending on the elements to be installed.**



## Recommendation 2-2

*Engage a firm to develop a design plan with specific guidelines focusing on exterior building improvements which are consistent with Recommendation 1-1 to achieve a cohesive environment.*

Historic buildings are critical to the fabric of downtown. The Village Historic Overlay District ordinance provides guidance for maintenance and improvements made to existing commercial and residential properties in the District. By engaging a firm to develop a Design Guidelines Plan that focuses on exterior building improvements, the fabric of downtown will be enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

The guidelines should serve as a tool for commercial and residential properties during building renovations and new construction to support a cohesive image and branding for downtown. This will promote the preservation of the historic attributes of existing buildings while maintaining the historic authenticity of our community. Incorporating the recommended roadway improvements from the previous recommendation in the Tier 1 (see Roadway Improvements and Streetscaping Enhancement Plan) will maintain compatibility with the existing environment.

The firm will also conduct an independent analysis of commercial properties for the entirety of Mukwonago's downtown and include action items, funding sources and a consideration of multi-use housing opportunities.

It is recommended that the selected firm and the Village engage the public through several methodologies:

- Include downtown stakeholders and residents in several visioning as well as community workshops. Items to be addressed include the current status of properties, identification of properties suited or marketable for commercial use and areas that lend themselves to possible redevelopment
- Present results to the public for comment in informational feedback sessions
- Share design guidelines with the public via the Village's website and other resources

❖ **Estimated Cost: \$10,000-\$50,000**



## Recommendation 2-3

*Promote and collaborate with community-based organizations for historical and cultural events and programming.*

Mukwonago has existing groups, such as the Community Library, Chamber of Commerce and Red Brick Museum, that offer programs and other activities which enhance the historic and cultural identity of the Village. The DSPSC recommends developing partnerships with these groups, the newly formed Historic Preservation Commission, the Mukwonago Area School District and Education Foundation, as well as downtown property and business owners to support existing events while encouraging new activities and cultural programming in the downtown.

❖ Estimated Cost: \$0\*

*\*New events/activities may require funds for implementation and marketing.*

## Recommendation 2-4

*Marketing to highlight the uniqueness of Mukwonago and to showcase events, culture and recreational activities.*

The DSPSC recognizes the existing events and offerings by the Community Library, Chamber of Commerce, Red Brick Museum, School District, among others that provide historic and cultural benefit to Village residents and visitors. The Committee recommends actively conducting cross-promotions by each of these groups to create a strong and engaged network that will showcase activities throughout the community. The end goal is that residents have a greater sense of belonging and civic pride to support local, cultural and recreational activities.

- Promote the development of a community calendar to consolidate all planned activities and events

❖ Estimated Cost: Varies depending on the type of marketing to be deployed.



## Recommendation 2-5

*Create financial support programs to encourage and support downtown building improvements and business development.*

A part of implementing the new Design Guidelines and Market Analysis, financial support programs must be developed to encourage and support downtown building improvements and business development.

- Identify and research financial tools to support historic preservation, building improvements and compatible redevelopment (ex. Local lenders low-interest loan pool and Façade, White Box Grant and Signage Grant)
  - Identify other funding mechanisms to support business development (ex. Rent Assistance Grant, TIF, BID, housing financial assistance, Revolving Loan Fund, etc.)
  - Implementation of selected financial assistance programs to be conducted by the Village and/or newly created HPC (or BID)
  - Grants which aid in the revitalization of specific properties within downtown should also be pursued (ex. WI Economic Development Corporation's Community Development Investment Grant and Brownfield Grant)
  - Continue the existing business retention program conducted by the Village President
  - Create marketing materials to summarize all the available local and regional/state resources and business services organizations such as (SBA, SCORE, WWBIC) with property and business owners
- ❖ **Estimated Cost: Varies with the program to be created\***

*\*Source of funds may come from the Village's General Fund, TIF, BID, etc.*



## Recommendation 2-6

### *Invest in wayfinding signage around the downtown and to key points of interest in the Village.*

Develop a plan and install a coordinated wayfinding signage system throughout the Village including Downtown and Downtown Neighborhoods (ie: Pearl Street as a destination).

A system of well-balanced parks as well as land and water trails that connect and direct users to downtown, engages people of all ages and backgrounds, while enhancing the overall quality of life for Village residents and visitors. The Village has many trails that serve a range of uses (walking, biking, East Troy Railroad Trolley, boating, canoeing and kayaking on the rivers and lakes).

- Signage will be installed to direct trail users to downtown
  - Install wayfinding signage from neighborhoods to downtown parks, public spaces and the business district
  - Downtown parking options must be signed and should present a positive and aesthetically pleasing image
- ❖ **Estimated Cost: Varies, but may range between \$10,000-\$25,000 depending on the number and style of signs to be installed.**

## Recommendation 2-7

### *Marketing of existing public parking options in downtown.*

Public parking spots exist within downtown in both public parking lots and on-street parking. These parking spaces serve visitors, daytime workers and attendees of special events.

The Chamber of Commerce, in its function as a visitors' bureau and special events coordinator, existing businesses, and other community stakeholders offer numerous tools to educate the public about the location of public parking options in downtown.

Recommendations include:

- Develop a map to share with business owners; online map resource
  - Identifying the location of all parking spaces
  - Install wayfinding/directional signage to identify the location of parking lots
  - Develop and undertake a capital repair and replacement plan for parking lots and parking spaces in downtown
- ❖ **Estimated Cost: TBD**



## Recommendation 2-8

Investigate the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) to support and enhance downtown.

See Recommendation 1-6.

- ❖ Estimated Cost - BID (Tier 2): Each property owner in the BID pays an annual special assessment tax.