



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved DOWNTOWN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

Thursday, January 21, 2021

5:30 PM

Via Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Michael E. Verveer; Patrick W. Heck; Gregory O. Frank; Adam J. Plotkin;
Ted Crabb; Davy Mayer; Sandra J. Torkildson and Madison T. Taychert
Absent: 2 - Barbara Harrington-McKinney and Lori J. Henn

APPROVAL OF October 15, 2020 MINUTES

A motion was made by Heck, seconded by Plotkin, to Approve the October 15, 2020 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. [61242](#) Public Comment
Helen Bradley, with BCycle

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

2. [63692](#) Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2021

Mark Kiesow, Parks Staff, updated the Committee on Mall Maintenance activities. He followed up with the owners of the businesses in the 500 block of State Street about the effect of the removal of the benches. Businesses reported that the drug dealing disappeared and that sales were up about 45% more than what they were before, likely saving their businesses from closing. Kiesow reported that Parks staff has not seen the same groups congregating elsewhere in the downtown.

Staff has seen an uptick in abandoned property, especially in entrances to vacant storefronts. The BID has decorated their windows, and added a winter selfie station in Lisa Link Park. Due to COVID and other issues, mall staff only installed the light pole snowflake lights and holiday wreaths on the Square bus shelters. All other lights, usually coordinated with the BID, were cancelled for the season.

Mall/Parks staff has been coordinating with Traffic Engineering, as they replace the missing/broken pedestrian light poles. Staff has also been cooperating with Streatery participants in cooperative snow removal within the cafe areas.

3. [47627](#)

Bcycle program expansion update and discussion

Helen Bradly, BCycle, gave a presentation on BCycle usage during COVID, as well as some potential expansion plans for the downtown area (see attached).

Heck asked about the 3.0 dock system and whether more residential developments could participate in the expansion of the system. Bradley said that BCycle needs housing developers to pay for their stations to expand the system. Bradley says that she has had little to no luck getting housing developers interested and willing to pay for docks at their developments, but she hopes that the less expensive 3.0 docks may be more palatable. Verveer said that he will encourage developers to contact Bradley directly in the future.

Mayer said that while he was skeptic at first, he has grown to love the system, and would like BCycle to consider stations at Woodman's East, Union Corners, and would love bigger baskets/cup holders. Mayer also mentioned that he liked the locks on the old bikes for when people needed to pop into shops or locations while they are riding. Bradley said that BCycle is looking into potential cargo bike options at a few locations.

Verveer asked that Meghan Blake-Horst be put on the staff team to make sure there are no café/vending conflicts, and noted that a few of the Overtire locations may have operational conflicts during events. He asked Cnare to work with Bradley on including Overture/MMOCA staff on these potential stations.

Crabb suggested that all of the libraries be considered as potential stations. Crabb also suggested that Bradley should give this presentation and discuss the TDM aspect of this program with the UW Transportation Policy Committee.

Taychert said that the free 3-month pass that was given to freshman was a great introduction to the system to students and it really helped students learn to use the system. Bradly said that the system really suffered this fall when students were not on campus, as they are one of the main rider groups in the fall and off-peak season.

4. [61021](#)

Downtown Recovery Discussion

Jason Ilstrup, President of Downtown Madison Inc. (DMI) gave an overview of the public/private partnership that has created a DMI Downtown Group that is looking at recovery efforts for the downtown. Ilstrup said that there are three sub-groups working on Equity, Economic Recovery and Programming/Activation.

- The Equity Team just fished implementing a 2500 person community meal to celebrate the life of Dr. King on Martin Luther King Jr Day. The event was originally going to be downtown, but due to concerns about some potential protest activities, they partnered with the Boys and Girls Club.
- The Economic Recovery Team has been meeting with Public Health officials to look at how re-opening can occur, as well as created the "Shop Madison" Campaign. They are exploring vacant storefront pop-up shops and other ways to increase economic activity downtown,
- The Programing and Activation Team partnered with the UW Union to promote the "Hounds Hike" which brought a lot of people and their dogs to the downtown. The windows of the Visitor's Center have been painted with winter art adjacent to a #WarmupMadison interactive selfie station. DMI is also working with Futurist Rebecca Ryan to look at scenario planning for State Street and Downtown.

Rebecca Cnare, Planning Staff provided an update on several different projects and programs that she has been working on that relate to the downtown.

- The Interdisciplinary Staff Team that developed the Streatery Program has proposed an extension of the program to April 14, 2022. This extension would allow businesses to continue to survive and recover during COVID, and provide staff time to look into ways the program can become a sustainable permanent program. A resolution, sponsored by the Mayor will be introduced on February 2.
- Cnare also gave a brief update on the SBER grant program, noting that there have been hundreds of businesses that have been applying and receiving funds.

Crabb asked Ilstrup about the future of office space downtown. Ilstrup said that industry experts predict that about 75% of office workers will return, but it might look different. He said that several developers might pause developments to see how things start to work out, as so many office tenants are in the middle of their leases, and renegotiations might occur later. He added that there will likely be an acceleration of a trend we have been seeing, where people were starting to telework 1-2 days a week with 3-4 days at the office. Office layouts will likely change as well, with people sharing spaces. He believes that the culture and benefits of people working in an active downtown will not go away, as Madison has been a benefactor of the tech migration, where tech companies leave Silicon Valley for places like Madison, which have a high quality of life.

Verveer would be happy to co-sponsor the Streatery extension, and understands that there is a need to move quickly to give restaurants some assurance that they can continue into 2022. Verveer would like the DCC to be involved with the creation and development of the permanent program moving forward. Crabb also asked that DCC be greatly involved. Cnare made a commitment to bring this issue to the Committee as it gets developed.

Torkildson would like the City to consider moving the busses off the square, and onto the outer loop for the summer of 2021, especially during the dinner hours. Verveer said that he has been working with the new Metro Manager on ideas and that there is a plan going through approval processes that proposes to move 5 permanent routes off of State Street and onto West Washington starting in August of 2021. The DCC asked Cnare to invite Justin Stuehrenberg, Metro Transit Manager to a future Committee meeting to talk about the bus and BRT system as it relates to Downtown.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mayer, seconded by Crabb, to Adjourn at 7:30 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote/other.