

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, APPLETON DOWNTOWN INC., and CREATIVE DOWNTOWN APPLETON INC. 2017 Plan of Action

Mission

Our mission to establish a vibrant and accessible destination for business, learning, living and leisure is anchored in our focus to create an environment of success and sustainability for the new exhibition center, a robust employment center and a more livable Downtown. Our strategic initiatives build support for an exceptional visitor experience, a strong business climate and an attractive, accessible and inclusive downtown where more people want to live.

Vision Statement

Downtown Appleton is a great American urban neighborhood and employment center with world class arts and entertainment.

Guiding Principles (Downtown plan rewrite)

- Fully embrace and leverage the diverse arts, cultural, and educational assets of the community
- Support additional neighborhood serving businesses
- Provide more housing options downtown
- Increase connectivity between the downtown, the river, and the region
- Support trails and recreational development along the Fox River
- Foster a culture of walking and biking
- Stimulate investment north of College Ave.
- Promote quality development along the Fox River by embracing the region's industrial and natural heritage
- Support diverse partnerships which make downtown more attractive for residents and visitors through: activities and events; public art and place making; on-going maintenance; and promotion and marketing
- Promote a safe, welcoming downtown
- Embrace diversity while fostering inclusiveness and accessibility for all
- Supporting downtown as an employment center for the region.
- Continue to support events and entertainment which draw visitors to Downtown Appleton including the exhibition center

Key Accomplishments from The Past Year

Over the last 12 months our organization has experienced significant progress through several key initiatives and new projects including:

- The development of the CARE (Clean. Assess. Refresh. Enhance) Team established in partnership with Riverview Gardens and the City of Appleton. The CARE program is designed to provide employability skills to those experiencing homelessness or other barriers to employment while providing general cleaning service to the public areas of the Downtown district.

- Involvement in the Downtown Plan (Chapter 14) rewrite and community engagement resulting in guiding principles, unified vision statement, updated market study, cultural plan framework and strategic initiatives. The process has engaged over 1000 community members to discuss their hopes for the future and share ideas for growth. The plan will be finished in September and will be the basis for future ADI programs of work.
- Downtown engaged in important conversation hosted by the Plunge: Being Black in the Fox Cities whereby we identified and more fully unearthed the challenges and shortfalls we face as a community struggling with diversity and inclusion.
- ADI invested in expanding our capacity by hiring a Director of Community Partnerships to further our message of One Great Place and establish long lasting relationships with a variety of partners.
- Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. expanded the reach of public art with the addition of the Water Street Mural and the traffic control box project.

The State of Downtown Appleton

The state of Downtown Appleton is strong. Across the nation there is a trend toward urban living amidst vibrant cultural districts. People, especially those without children, are desiring convenient, car-optional neighborhoods where residents can walk to work, shop and access entertainment. Downtown Appleton has benefited from this trend and the ADI board is optimistic that we are still in the very early stages of that trend.

Downtown Appleton has become the central social district in the area. ADI sponsored programs such as the Saturday Farm Market and Thursday concerts continue to grow in popularity. Special events such as the Mile of Music and Oktoberfest are attended by tens of thousands of people. With funding approved for the Exhibition Center, Downtown Appleton is poised to see even greater growth in visitors.

The employer base in Downtown Appleton is thriving and demand for office space has increased of late. Opportunities exist to further engage workers to take advantage of what Downtown Appleton has to offer.

Downtown Appleton enjoys many assets, and the opportunity to better leverage these assets is exciting: a riverfront district that is growing in popularity; a highly regarded university that brings world-class entertainment to Downtown Appleton; and historic buildings that are the core of good urban design.

Statistics indicate that Appleton is one of the safest cities in the country. However, as more people come downtown there are more security incidents and a concern about the safety of downtown.

More crowds also make it challenging to keeping our downtown clean. Today, downtown cleanliness is of utmost importance. Our recent launch of the CARE program is expected to improve downtown cleanliness, but we need to do more and ensure that we have a long term solution in place for continued financial support and growth.

In the last 25 years Downtown Appleton has become more diverse racially and ethnically. It is increasingly obvious that we need to be proactive about inclusivity. This is a challenge that ADI is recently recognizing. ADI has much to learn and our goal for this year is to better understand how

we can make positive improvements. We look forward to our participation in the formation of a business diversity council under the arm of the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce. Our goal is a downtown where ALL people feel safe and welcome.

Our work to create One Great Place is also about talent attraction. As the premier arts and entertainment district of the Fox Cities, downtown is a quality of life benefit highlighted by employers throughout the region to attract and retain a talented workforce. Employees are more often making decision on job selection based on community and quality of life. By adopting a creative placemaking approach to activating public spaces, recruiting a healthy business mix and integrating public art, we position downtown for employment growth and increased residential capacity.

Trends Impacting Future Downtown Development

Placemaking

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired. In turn, these creative locales foster entrepreneurs and cultural industries that generate jobs and income, spin off new products and services, and attract and retain unrelated businesses and skilled workers. Together, creative placemaking's livability and economic development outcomes have the potential to radically change the future of American towns and cities. (Source: *Creative Placemaking*, National Endowment for the Arts)

New Urbanism and Urban Living

New Urbanism promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities composed of the same elements as conventional development, but assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities. These contain housing, work places, shops, entertainment, schools, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily lives of the residents, all within easy walking distance of each other. New Urbanism promotes the increased use of multi-modal transportation options. Urban living is rapidly becoming the preferred way to live for people of all ages.

An annual outlook on real estate trends by the non-profit Urban Land Institute said urban living has ceased to be an emerging trend and is now the "new normal." "Younger workers in particular, though not exclusively, continue to flock to the urban core, preferring to work where they live, rather than take on long commutes," the report says. Members of the millennial generation are not the only ones giving up the more generous living space of suburbia for downtown living. Baby boomers with empty nests and the generation following the millennials, which the report calls "Generation Z," are also joining the trend.

Walking and Biking

According to Smart Growth America, "Local economic development has revolved around enticing companies to relocate with tax breaks and subsidies. There are a lot of problems with this approach, but perhaps the biggest is that today, it's a strategy that often simply doesn't work. A new trend in local economic development is emerging. Talented workers—and the companies who want to employ them—are increasingly moving to walkable neighborhoods served by transit, with a vibrant mix of restaurants, cafes, shops, cultural attractions, and affordable housing options."

Homeowners are increasingly looking for walkable neighborhoods to settle down in. According to [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com) Appleton's most walkable neighborhood is downtown. Walking score: average for downtown between 600W. College – 300 E. College: Current score average is: 82 <https://www.walkscore.com>

Trends and preliminary recommendations for Future Development: Source: Redevelopment Resources from the Downtown Plan rewrite Trends:

- Consumers demand a multi-media, primarily mobile approach to shopping.
- Consumers are spending in a more focused, deliberate manner; less overall.
- Retailers must be adept at marketing in multiple channels.
- Retail and office space is being leased and used more efficiently, so needs appear to be shrinking.
- Downtown residential demand is growing.

Recommendations:

- **Retail:** Existing space should be absorbed; any new development will be demand-driven per project.
- **Office:** Demand driven by project, estimates indicate +/-30,000 sq. ft. will be required over the next five years.
- **Hospitality:** Some absorption of existing bar/restaurant space ideal; additional capacity to follow housing increases in the downtown. Current market could absorb 2-3 mid-to- high end restaurants, and limited additional small meeting space.
- **Residential:** Over the next five years, downtown rental housing demand expected to total 385 units, where 245 units command rents of \$700-\$799; 140 units to command over \$1,000 per month. Townhomes and condos are expected to experience modest demand increases of 50 units. Single family homes are expected to add 470 units city-wide.

Forward

For the next year, the ADI board has identified three imperatives for advancing ADI's Mission:

1. ADI needs to continue to play a vital role in the creation and launch of a successful Exhibition Center
2. Advance downtown living to increase the number of downtown residents and the economic diversity of those residents.
3. Play a more integrated role in business recruitment and retention efforts in partnership with Downtown property owners

Goals

The following goals are crafted to be inclusive of the work by Appleton Downtown Inc. and Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. supported in part by Business Improvement District funds. Please note several of the key performance indicators are tracked on the Vitality Index attached. New key performance indicators have also been included.

Goal A: The premier destination of the Fox Cities		
Key objectives		
Convention and visitor attraction	Tell the One Great Place story	Provide an exceptional visitor experience
Initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and the Radisson with convention and event attraction Continue to host 100+ events annually Advocate for the redevelopment of Jones Park including the addition of an amphitheater Continue to partner with Mile of Music and Octoberfest on event coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance our social media depth with content creation One Great Place for your convention promotion Expand our message about the role downtown and ADI's work plays in talent attraction for the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Ambassador program focused on enhancing the convention visitor's experience outside of the Exhibition Center Explore opportunities to connect visitors to the riverfront Continue the CARE program in partnership with Riverview Gardens and the City of Appleton Plan to respond to visitor feedback
Key Performance Indicators – Please reference the Vitality Index		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown hotels increase occupancy Exhibition Center bookings are attained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media numbers increase Number of talent recruitment programs that ADI participates in or leads increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVB reports high satisfaction from visitor groups and meeting planners Exhibition Center meets revenue targets

Goal B: A liveable and walkable downtown neighborhood		
Key Objectives		
Increased residential demand and capacity	Enhanced walkability	Strengthened Neighborhood
Initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define trends and craft a vision and messaging for residential investment Host a Tour of Homes event to showcase the variety and quality of downtown living options Encourage second floor residential improvements to increase property values, retain tenants and increase rental rates Partner with the City and private developers to identify sites for potential housing options and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and expand the Downtown CARE program (Clean.Assess.Refresh.Enhance) in partnership with Riverview Gardens and the City of Appleton Add more seating options to public spaces Add dog friendly amenities to the district Promote the Fox Trot Trail to further enhance connectivity to the riverfront Explore the creation of a dog park within the district on private property or within an existing park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with the Downtown Appleton Neighborhood Group (DANG), administer a Downtowner survey to identify needs and desired amenities Establish a grocery store recruitment taskforce Explore amenities like: bike, kayak and car sharing programs Work with law enforcement, business and residents to develop a security strategy with specific initiatives for the 2018 plan. Develop a residential garbage strategy
Key Performance Indicators – Please reference the Vitality Index		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential rental rates increase Housing stock options expands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARE reports indicate less high level maintenance needs Walkability Score (82) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A needs and amenities baseline list is compiled and a Livability Score established Grocery store is recruited to the district

Goal C: A healthy business climate		
Key Objectives		
Entrepreneurism Support	Employment Center Growth	Riverfront Development Support
Initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue grant programs: business recruitment, façade improvement, marketing Distribute new market study data Participate in the development of a Business Diversity Council Provide exhibit and sales opportunities for local artisans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a multimedia business recruitment packet in partnership with the City of Appleton and the Fox Cities Regional Partnership Present and distribute new Downtown plan initiatives and opportunities at a development summit and open house event Administer a business retention survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverfront BID feasibility task force
Key Performance Indicators - Please reference the Vitality Index		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of businesses in the district Number of minority owned businesses increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment numbers increase Occupancy rate increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation for a riverfront BID or other development support tool is determined

Goal D: An inclusive physical and social architecture		
Key Objectives		
Improved accessibility	An inclusive environment	Activated public spaces
Initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include accessibility improvements in façade grant criteria in partnership with Access Appleton Preparation for Mobility study recommendations: communication and parking adjustments Add bike friendly amenities Participate in Jones Park renovation planning Bike to work program established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide diversity training sessions for our members that reflects our aspiration for all cultures and communities of people to feel safe and welcome downtown Provide opportunities for multicultural inclusion in events and public art projects Adopt a policy for vendor and sponsor conduct at ADI events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an arts and culture plan in partnership with Fox Arts Network (FAN) New placemaking initiatives that create social and safe public places
Key Performance Indicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Big Bell or access grants are awarded Number of employees biking to work increases – baseline established this year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from community leaders representing the cultural communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Culture plan for the CBD and Riverfront is adopted

