

# Wisconsin Downtown Action Council

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

### Internal Strengths

- ~ Diversity of Board members – different areas of expertise
- ~ Ability to partner with other organizations
- ~ Strategic planning/plan itself/self-directed Board
- ~ Good will/good reputation developed over time
- ~ Access/leveraging experts
- ~ open mindedness-respect for different views
- ~ Committed Board and Board members
- ~ Have a web site
- ~ Key partners in WI Main Street and UWEX
- ~ Strong structure and by-laws

### Internal Weaknesses

- ~ Have not leveraged members or maximally involved them & experts – haven't exploited
- ~ Haven't recruited to Board as well as we can
- ~ Institutional memory not as strong as it could be
- ~ Not enough 'key' (influential) members
- ~ No staff – human resource constraints
- ~ No operating plan
- ~ Weak structure
- ~ Not as widely represented across state
- ~ Lack of focused, achievable agenda – we try to do too much
- ~ Could be better at communication – in/outside
- ~ Support a 'shop downtown' attitude
- ~ Website management – follow through on expectations
- ~ Forget about smaller, unique downtowns
- ~ Ability to grow new members
- ~ \$\$
- ~ Accountability
- ~ Can't access and leverage information fast enough
- ~ Haven't effectively communicated benefits to membership
- ~ No guiding principles

### External Opportunities

- ~ More partnership opportunities (WEDA collaboration, BID conference)
- ~ Information technology (as a tool)
- ~ Increasing importance of "place"
- ~ Statewide growth as an organization
- ~ Regional approach to downtown organizing
- ~ Central city redevelopment
- ~ Retirees moving downtown and others
- ~ More Business Improvement Districts (BID) and funding strategies are emerging
- ~ Need for what WDAC does
- ~ Historic preservation on the rise

### **External Challenges**

- ~ 'Competing' downtown organizations
- ~ Growth of non-profit organizations – fund raising more difficult
- ~ Big box development, lifestyle centers, e-retail
- ~ Lack of unique shops that really are unique
- ~ Changing roles of downtown – living wage (businesses)
- ~ Falling downtown revenues
- ~ Lack of downtown organizations/organization
- ~ Growth in convenience, e-shopping, and pace
- ~ Dropping discretionary income
- ~ Challenges to small towns – economic
- ~ Neighborhoods re changing downtowns
- ~ Gentrification
- ~ Highways through and around (downtowns)
- ~ Lack of partnership/collaboration among downtown organizations

### **Strategy Ideas (services, roles, structures)**

- ~ Assessment of community needs
  - solicit input to define how to carry out strategies
- ~ Web/computer-based distribution system
- ~ Establish partnership agreements with agencies and organizations who would feed into information distribution system
- ~ Take lead in initiating the Governor's Conference
- ~ Establish a presence at various other events to increase WDAC visibility, build awareness of downtowns, share information, and network
- ~ New roles:
  - Paid staff – economic development, webmaster
  - Board of Directors, members
- ~ Board sub-structure with Board in an advisory role but “work” done through subcommittees
- ~ To be an opinion leader on downtown issues
- ~ Devise a set of guiding principles to guide positions on issues