



SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

**October 8 – Reinvesting in the City of Waupaca:
Planning Adaptions to Strengthen Community Resilien**

Andrew Dane, AICP - City of Waupaca Economic Development

Aaron Jenson, City of Waupaca City Administrator

This presentation will share case study examples from Waupaca, WI (pop. 6,000); highlighting recent planning adaptations aimed at strengthening community resiliency. Waupaca and its residents, like many smaller communities, faces a broad range of challenges including population stagnation, housing affordability, and uncertainty over its economic future.

Over the past five years the City's Community Development Department has spearheaded a number of key reforms aimed at addressing these issues including an updated Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, Downtown Plan, Community Wayfinding and Branding Plan, and Arts and Culture Plan. We will reflect on lessons learned as these plans have been implemented, including innovative steps to support downtown businesses, stimulate new housing development, and support stronger corridors and districts through planning and zoning modifications.

October 15 – Rapid Transit in a Rapidly Changing World

Michael Zabel, Transit Planner - HNTB

David Locher, Transportation Manager/BRT Quality Manager - Milwaukee County

Kevin Muhs, AICP, P.E., Executive Director - Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Two efforts to enhance transit in Milwaukee County—the East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the North-South Transit Enhancement Study—have continued to make progress despite the many challenges and changes that have occurred over the last 18 months.

This presentation will provide an update on the status of these efforts, and describe how the projects are adapting to virtual and hybrid public and stakeholder engagement models, amplifying the focus on social justice and transportation equity, and tackling the million-dollar question: “What is the future of commuting in the post-pandemic world?” (Spoiler alert: we don't actually know.)

About the projects:

The East-West BRT is Milwaukee County's planned 9-mile, regional, modern transit service connecting major employment, education, and recreation destinations through downtown Milwaukee, Milwaukee's Near West Side, Marquette University, Wauwatosa and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. BRT would provide improved access to the region's most vital, most traveled, and most congested corridor. The East-West BRT has begun construction and expects to be open for service in 2022.

The North-South Transit Enhancement Study is the first step in a transit enhancement along or near 27th Street in Milwaukee County where people of color or of Hispanic ethnicity make up 73% of the population within a half mile of the route alternatives under consideration. Both rail and bus services are being evaluated, and could increase frequency, add amenities, and potentially expand the existing Milwaukee County Transit Service (MCTS) PurpleLine service area—one of the most popular transit lines in the County.

October 22 – HOUSING! One Issue to Rule them All! Revelations, Strategies, and Discussion

Jason Valerius, AICP, Senior Planner - MSA Professional Services

Becky Binz, AICP, planning consultant with MSA Professional Services

Housing, Housing, Housing! Housing issues are consistently present in community conversations across the US. Communities are realizing that some housing issues can't be solved by market forces alone, nor will the state or federal government be jumping in to help. Local action is necessary – even elected officials are seeing it (though not yet all our neighbors.)

Planners are uniquely trained and positioned to see the linkages between housing issues and other challenges that our communities face, such as economic development (workforce housing), racial equity (housing type segregation and disparate access), transportation (density-enabled walking, biking and transit), placemaking (leveraging housing development capital) and resilience (adaptable housing stock and neighborhoods).

In this interactive session, the moderators share lessons from their work focused on neighborhoods and housing markets, including both surprising and common findings across the Midwest. After setting the stage with the issues and the needs, the session will transition to a series of group discussions that help peers compare and share local responses to specific challenges.

The session will conclude with a discussion of best practices for planning processes to help a community adopt housing policy and begin addressing housing challenges.

October 29 – Bringing the Wisconsin Idea to Your Community: The UniverCity Year program @ UW-Madison

Gavin Luter, Managing Director - UniverCity Alliance

Todd Schmidt, Village Administrator - Village of Waunakee,

Bryan Gadow, Village Administrator - Village of New Glarus

Alfonso Morales - University of Wisconsin

Localities are continuously looking for ways to improve their own equity, sustainability, livability, economic opportunity, health, and government performance, but often lack the time or expertise to succeed. Many projects they want to work on are “stuck” for a variety of other reasons (fatigue, elected official turnover, staff capacity, prioritization, political divisions, etc.) or have been delayed because of COVID-19. These localities also have a lot of wisdom to share based on their experiences in connecting with residents and confronting challenges in their communities. Universities have faculty, staff and students with time and expertise to help, but outside of Extension and service-learning programs, its community outreach efforts are generally episodic and small scale.

We will introduce a program at UW-Madison called UniverCity Year which connects local government-identified needs with UW-Madison courses and other opportunities. The model is flexible – it works with all types of communities – large, small, urban, rural – and can accommodate different primary partners, including city and county government as well as quasi-governmental bodies like economic development authorities. During this session, you will hear university staff, a city manager, a village administrator, and a university faculty offer their perspectives about the existing partnerships and how they have benefitted from this program by offering examples of projects that have happened and are currently underway (advancing sustainability in cities, racial equity, affordable housing siting, flood mitigation, GIS management, downtown placemaking and land use, ground and surface water quality, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and economic development). We will have a planning session with participants about how universities and communities can work to leverage these partnerships to bounce back from COVID-19 together. Lasting community impacts of these projects will be shared.

The webinars are free of charge but registration is required.