

15TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT REPORT

Crossing Boundaries:

Downtown Development > Civic Engagement > Neighborhood Impact

Presented by the Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin

On October 26, 2016 UEDA welcomed just over 120 attendees to the 15th annual Summit at St. Marcus Lutheran School to discuss how civic engagement can be used as a tool to connect city neighborhoods to the opportunities present in major projects being developed downtown.

The program featured an overview of the [MKE United](#) initiative and a panel that discussed what it means to foster a civic culture that lends itself to collaboration, resource activation, and engages people across backgrounds and geographies. Attendees represented various sectors and over 45 neighborhoods and 15+ cities or regions were represented at the Summit, as displayed to the right and on the next page.

This report captures the conversations had, and summarizes the ideas and issues raised during the 2016 Summit. Following the report is a list of possible next steps and strategies that emerged from feedback provided by attendees on how to connect neighborhoods to Milwaukee's downtown.

WELCOME & OPENING FRAMEWORK

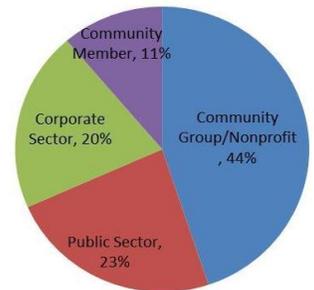
Kristi Luzar, UEDA Executive Director, welcomed attendees and provided a brief description of this year's Summit and intended outcomes, which included:

- Define what "civic engagement" should look like in the context of the MKE United Action Agenda effort.
- Identify specific ways in which individuals and organizations can strengthen and develop connections between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, encouraging economic growth.
- Identify best practices and/or success stories of personal, neighborhood, civic or community engagement practices that could be implemented moving forward.
- Develop consensus on the resources needed to create new capacities that build effective relationships and partnerships across neighborhoods, sectors and organizations.

Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development, provided an overview of current development projects underway in Milwaukee's Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. He covered projects such as the Lakefront Gateway, Northwestern Mutual headquarters, Beerline, Milwaukee Bucks arena, Pabst Brewery complex, Intermodal station, Menomonee Valley, Century City 30th Street Industrial Corridor among others, giving a sense of the scope of the unprecedented level of development we are seeing in the City. [View Rocky Marcoux's presentation slides here](#)

Then **Greg Wesley** from the MKE United Steering Committee spoke about the initiative and its effort to develop a strategic action agenda, and a shared and inclusive vision for "Greater Downtown." MKE United see the once-in-a-generation development activity in Downtown as an opportunity to leverage this growth to benefit Milwaukee's neighborhoods, particularly those immediately surrounding Downtown, i.e. the "Greater Downtown."

2016 Summit Attendees



Where We Live:

Milwaukee Neighborhoods

Arlington Heights
Bay View
Borchert Field
Brewers Hill
Capitol Highlands
Clarke Square
Downtown
East Side
Enderis Park
Grasslyn Manor
Harambee
Hawthorne Glen
Historic Concordia
Kops Park
Lincoln Creek
Lower East Side
Menomonee River Hills
Merrill Park
Metcalf Park
Midtown
Northwest Side
Old North Milwaukee
Riverwest
Rufus King
Sherman Park
South Side
Southwest
Southgate
Upper East Side
Walker's Point
Washington Heights
Washington Park
Wick Park

Other Communities

Brown Deer
Chicago
Fox Point
Glendale
Madison
Mukwonago
Racine
Shorewood
Suburban Milwaukee
Sussex
Waukesha
West Allis
Whitefish Bay

Where We Work:

Milwaukee Neighborhoods

- Amani
- Borchert Field
- Brewers Hill
- Bronzeville
- Citywide
- Clarke Square
- Fifth Ward
- Historic Concordia
- Downtown
- East Town
- Harambee
- Halyard Park
- Harbor District
- Haymarket
- Kops Park
- Lindsay Heights
- Near West Side
- Northwest Side
- Reed Street Yards
- Sherman Park
- Third Ward
- Walkers Square
- Walker's Point
- Westown

Other Communities

- Chicago
- Glendale
- Seven-county region
- Suburban Milwaukee
- Waukesha
- Wauwatosa

The action agenda will include specific assignments that government, business, community, philanthropic and institutional sectors can commit to over a span of ten years. Goals include:

- Build trust among different community sectors;
- Increase enthusiasm about the Greater Downtown Milwaukee neighborhoods;
- Ensure information about MKE United is accessible and transparent;
- Work collectively across neighborhood boundaries; and
- Create new cross-sector constituencies and partnerships.

MKE United is also committed to a comprehensive and intentional civic engagement process to help shape the vision, priorities and strategies of the Action Agenda. Wesley concluded by sharing that its success will require engagement from all aspects of the community, and encouraged attendees to stay involved as MKE United moves forward. Learn more and sign up to get updates at www.mkeunited.com.

The next section of the Summit focused on an **exploration of what civic engagement means**. It began with a video put together by UEDA's Summit Planning Committee, *United We Stand*, that shared perspectives on civic engagement by different people from the community. ([Watch the video here](#)) Attendees then participated in table discussion sharing what stood out for them so far, and how they personally define civic engagement.

DIALOGUE PANEL

Adam Carr, Community Storyteller, moderated a dialogue among a group of people from diverse backgrounds and sectors that included resident engagement, commercial development, community organizing, safety, youth and faith leadership. They took a "deeper dive" into what engagement looks like at an interpersonal level, discussing what they have found to be effective and shared their thoughts on how neighborhood residents can be more involved in what happens in the city. The following themes and comments emerged:

- **Civic engagement is about relationships** – we continually need to find new and different ways to relate to each other. Relationship-building takes time and trust.
- There are many levels of engagement, ranging from informal to formal communications and tools like meetings, events, email, mentorship, etc.
- Need to spend time getting out in the community and talking to people, especially when it relates to economic development. **Project processes can seem complicated and not very transparent.**
- How to **create a culture of respect with neighborhood residents that is also authentic**. Many residents don't feel included and think those that are included are privileged.
- We **need people who look like residents** and have had the same experiences involved in community engagement activities involved in this effort.
- Bring together diverse groups of leaders and residents across neighborhoods and institutions.
- **Meet people where their concerns are**; the community has a lot of needs that go unaddressed.
- **Institutions and businesses can be important partners in addressing community needs**. For example, resident hiring practices demonstrates local commitment and can bring additional resources an area.
- Community engagement activities **should not be an afterthought or an unfunded mandate**.
- **How to develop a sense of ownership** about the neighborhood, downtown, City? Civic engagement means taking responsibility for the places that we live.

Panel Participants

- Rabbi Tiferet Berenbau,
Congregation Shir Hadash
- Sandy Botcher, Northwestern
Mutual
- Alicia Dupies, Milwaukee Bucks
- Captain Timothy Heier, Milwaukee
Police Department District 5
- Andre Lee Ellis, We Got This
- Vanessa Llanas, Community
Engagement Specialist

INTERACTIVE TABLE DISCUSSION

Attendees then participated in structured discussions that explored the connections between Downtown and Neighborhoods from three different perspectives. Each table was assigned one theme, and asked to record their discussion. Attendees also had the opportunity to switch to another theme. The following summarizes the major ideas that emerged through this process.

Theme 1: Downtown Supporting Neighborhoods

1. *What needs to happen to ensure that the economic growth and opportunity we are witnessing in Milwaukee's downtown extends into our neighborhoods? Who needs to be at the table?*
2. *Are there projects, initiatives, resources, or events downtown (current or proposed) that surrounding Milwaukee neighborhoods can be included in and benefit from? Who is responsible for ensuring neighborhoods are invited to participate? How might they benefit?*

Attendees focused on **the need to address poverty and employment**, ensuring that there are opportunities for workers in the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as supporting local small businesses so they can participate successfully in the development activity. Comments on segregation and the need to ensure that housing remains affordable with mixed income neighborhoods were also shared. Related to this was the need for the business community to continue to assist with strengthening Milwaukee Public Schools and supporting efforts to invest in public transportation that connects people to jobs.

Another significant theme was **inclusiveness and authentic engagement** of residents and neighborhoods. People felt it would be helpful to hold “structural conversations” – demonstrate and teach residents the ways they can influence decision-making by government and business in their neighborhood. Transparency in terms of sharing potential development projects or plans with neighborhood residents and holding meetings in community institutions such as churches or schools were also mentioned.

Lastly, activities currently taking place Downtown that were mentioned as possibly benefiting surrounding neighborhoods included Downtown Dining Week, Transform Milwaukee, WHEDA Homeownership programs, and business recruitment (to locate or do business in surrounding neighborhoods like Northwestern Mutual in the 30th Street Corridor). Also, **the downtown business community could help support neighborhoods by promoting activities and events** such as neighborhood festivals, dining destinations, farmers markets, Garfield Jazz & Blues Fest, Phobruary in Silver City and Bronzeville Week etc. to their employees and peers.

Theme 2: Neighborhoods Supporting Downtown

1. *How can we foster stronger connections between neighborhoods and downtown? What would it take for neighborhood residents to feel a stronger connection to downtown?*
2. *What are the resources, spaces, or programs present in Milwaukee neighborhoods that downtown development could utilize?*

This theme drew out a number of ideas related **to leveraging current and/or regular events to connect people to what happens downtown** such as targeting youth or other demographics, what events draw people there and how to share information. Attendees discussed **celebrating neighborhood identity**, more opportunities for residents to participate in **providing input to the “big projects”** and **creating shared spaces** to explore and celebrate neighborhoods and culture.

Attendees also talked about **the need to acknowledge and discuss racial segregation, how to make downtown more welcoming** (affordability, exposure, etc.) and improve transportation and connectivity between neighborhoods and downtown.

Resources and programs listed by attendees that could be utilized to connect downtown to the neighborhoods include artists in Bronzeville, Employ Milwaukee, African-American Leadership Program, We Got This, Riverworks and various neighborhood festivals and promotional events.

Theme 3: Neighborhoods Supporting Neighborhoods

1. *How do we connect Milwaukee residents to a civic engagement effort? What does a citywide civic engagement effort look like? Are there tools, resources or approaches you have found effective at engaging neighborhoods and/or residents?*
2. *What are examples of economic development working successfully in a neighborhood? Why are these successful? Can they be replicated or adjusted to capitalize on other neighborhood strengths?*

Attendees shared strategies on **how to support residents when asking them to engage with their time and effort**. Comments included utilizing informal spaces, joining existing community meetings and offering assistance with transportation, child care, etc. Also using social media to share information, engaging small business owners and workers at the neighborhood level, and identifying and activating emerging leaders in neighborhoods were suggested.

Acknowledging and **supporting the role of community organizers is important as they can be trusted connection points** both within neighborhoods and across neighborhoods. However, it is also essential to go beyond recognized community leaders. **Inclusion in the development planning process** and increasing residents' understanding of political processes was discussed here as well. Specific resources mentioned included Milwaukee Mentors, "Gaining Clarity" curriculum and creating a "Milwaukee Call to Action/Talk Back" page on Facebook.

Concerns about gentrification, racial segregation and safety, and how they can impact successful (or not) civic engagement activities were stated. There is a perception that the development activity and resources that come with it are not directly impacting residents or the neighborhood. Successful neighborhood economic development efforts that were mentioned included Walkers Point, Near West Side Partners and Riverwest.

SUMMIT WRAP

The Summit concluded with lunch, which included remarks from **Pastor James Hein of St. Marcus and Mayor Tom Barrett**. Pastor Hein spoke about the commitment St. Marcus has to the neighborhood and how they engage with the community. The Mayor then shared his thoughts about how to move the entire city forward, saying *"The Mayor of this city wants to see the residents build the future of this city."* He also spoke about the close links that increased downtown development has to maintaining and increasing city resources, particularly those that can be leveraged to strengthen Milwaukee's neighborhoods.

Attendees were also asked *"What were the missing conversations that need to be had in order for MKE United to be effective in developing a constructive and inclusive action agenda?"* Many of the themes described earlier in this report were reiterated in this feedback, but at a deeper level that speaks to the difficulty of creating a culture of civic engagement that is active, transparent, trusted by residents and connects them to the benefits of development in tangible ways. In particular:

- The need for workforce training that connects the development opportunities to residents that need work and living wage jobs.
- Concerns about development threatening affordability and where the money/investment is coming from.
- Surprise at the speed at which development is occurring, and ensuring that neighborhoods gain too.
- There is a sense of distrust about the commitment to neighborhoods or that development is a zero-sum game. (Is the adjacent downtown focus a way to create a "buffer" for downtown?)
- Power dynamics – for example, how to ensure accountability from corporations and government, when residents have less power.
- Breaking down barriers/silos, ensuring that there is trust and transparency.
- Transportation as a critical connectivity piece – both to bring people to downtown and linking to other places and employment opportunities in the region.
- The recognition that some policies and programs maintain inequities, particularly for crime and safety.

Kristi Luzar, UEDA Executive Director, shared the following “final thought” with attendees and asked them to continue thinking about how to engage in fostering a civic culture that can better connect Milwaukee’s residents, neighborhoods and businesses:

“Maintaining and improving urban life is not a battle won with one big campaign. Its successes usually come one-on-one or in small groups, often from educators and others who work with youths, and often from the private sector, including religious institutions and nonprofits. It’s work that requires great determination, care and persistence.”

- Alan J. Borsuk, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel OpEd 8/27/16

NEXT STEPS

Looking back at the event outcomes we identified, this year’s Summit explored in greater complexity what civic engagement means, and collected a significant amount of feedback from attendees on how to strengthen the connections between Downtown and the neighborhoods. Also, frank discussion was had by attendees, who clearly stated their concerns and challenges with this effort. The discussion outcomes can be grouped in three ways:

1. **PROCESS:** We need to think carefully and intentionally about how residents and neighborhood-based organizations are invited and included in the process. The word “inclusive” was used often, and comments about recycling the same people and taking the community’s ideas first were all shared.
2. **CONCERNS:** Any civic engagement effort not only needs to be transparent, but also cannot shy away from issues like racism, segregation, employment opportunities, transportation, lack of connection to (or desire to be) Downtown and distrust of process and intention.
3. **TANGIBLE SUGGESTIONS:** Attendees were also focused on developing actionable ideas that could not only be integrated in large-scale efforts such as the MKE United Action Agenda, Healthy Neighborhoods, Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, Growing Prosperity, etc. *but also by neighborhoods groups and businesses themselves. See page 8 of this report for a list of “GREAT IDEAS” or click [HERE](#).*

As our Committee reviewed the feedback, a handful of quotes stood out for us as representative of the day, and perhaps as a guide of how to focus efforts moving forward:

“Grassroots efforts are important but need policy shifts at a city, county, etc. levels for structural change.”

“Activate emerging leadership within neighborhood organizations.”

“Explicit conversation about race + racism (racialization of policies).”

“No one at the table seemed to view downtown as a place which neighborhoods can/should/could connect to.”

“Mobilize people, build relationships, broader engagement.”

“Civic engagement—involves community and their input, trust and transparency, how do we break through our silos...surprised by speed or development happening.”

Along with this report, we have posted a number of documents that supplement and summarize the outcomes:

- An initial compilation of feedback, which includes original notes and quotes from attendees. Check it out [HERE](#).
- A set of **“word clouds” we created from the discussion/feedback notes** (click [HERE](#)). These illustrations can be useful tools to pull out concepts that occurred often, demonstrating consensus across groups or activities.
- The *Milwaukee Business Journal* recently featured a **snapshot of announced projects in Downtown Milwaukee**. Check them out [HERE](#).

A list of SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS, VOLUNTEERS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS that helped put together this Summit is included on the next page – we thank them for their support and involvement!

As we plan for 2017, UEDA’s Board, Staff and the Summit Planning Committee will be discussing what recommendations we are in the best position to carry forward, and which ideas could have a home with our partners or members. Your participation and involvement in this process is critical to ensure that we work on forming a civic culture that engages residents and connects people and place to economic opportunity.

Interested in getting connected to the initiatives that emerge out of the Summit?

We can help! Consider **JOINING UEDA** or contacting us at (414)562-9904 or info@uedawi.org for details.

UEDA is a 501(c)(3) membership organization dedicated to the professional development of individuals and groups working in economic and community development in Wisconsin. Incorporated in 1997, its mission is to enhance cities and their residents by focusing on housing, economic development and job creation, and emphasizing collaborative work in the areas of community investment, sustainable homeownership, financial capability, regional transportation, small business support and the local food economy.



Our annual Community Development Summit brings together stakeholders to explore relevant and emerging issues in the economic and community development sector, with specific objectives that support the development of collaborations and partnerships that will enhance economic growth in southeast Wisconsin. Learn more about UEDA and our work at www.uedawi.org.

2016 UEDA SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Deshea Agee, Historic King Drive BID
- Travis Evans, Riverworks Development Corp.
- Michael Hostad, Innovation in Milwaukee (MiKE)
- Julious Hulbert, Milwaukee Urban League
- Barbara Markoff, Advisor at KivaZip / Huntington Bank
- Amber Miller, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp. (WWBIC)
- Terry Murphy, ArtWorks for Milwaukee
- Greg Patin, City of Milwaukee Dept. of City Development
- Sharon Robinson, City of Milwaukee
- Marjorie Rucker, The Business Council
- Dominique Samari, P3 Development Group
- Fran Serlin, Community Volunteer
- Lee Valentyn, Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative
- Cristian Vega, Screaming Tuna / Walker's Point Association

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS

Who helped with event set-up & take-down

- Chris Boston, UEDA Board Member
- Marlene Castillo, UEDA Board Member
- Todd Clausen, UEDA Board Member
- Jonathan Engelken
- Trenice Ferguson, ArtWorks Milwaukee
- David Glenn
- Sylvester Hamilton
- Greg Lawless, UEDA Board Member
- Barbara Markoff, UEDA Board Member
- Terry Murphy, ArtWorks Milwaukee
- Andy Nelson
- Julia O'Connor
- Marjorie Rucker, The Business Council
- Fran Serlin, Summit Committee
- Cristian Vega, Screaming Tuna/Walker's Point Neighborhood Association

THANK YOU TO OUR 2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

SUMMIT SPONSORS



SUMMIT SUPPORTERS



2016 UEDA SUMMIT “GREAT IDEAS”



These ideas were generated by Summit attendees, committee members and other partners. These recommendations & ideas could be implemented by a number of groups identified at the Summit, contributing to Milwaukee’s civic culture, and connecting neighborhoods to Downtown.



Increase Opportunities to Connect & Explore:

- **Monthly neighborhood celebrations**
Develop a monthly calendar to highlight one neighborhood (including Downtown) at a time -- Promote these celebrations city-wide and encourage all residents to attend and learn more about each
- **Regular neighborhood tours/Downtown tours**
Must be intentional and provide opportunity for authentic connections -- maybe use different word than ‘tour’ -- Potentially cultivate and use Milwaukee neighborhood ambassadors as guides -- ‘Neighborhoods by Day/City by Night’ -- Look at ‘food tours’ already taking place -- Bike Tours -- Offer shuttles between Downtown and neighborhoods -- promote the feeling of safety and acceptance
- **Milwaukee ‘Call to Action’ social media page**
Space for individuals and organizations to share positive stories from their neighborhoods -- share opportunities in neighborhoods and Downtown -- moderated group -- Promote free or low-cost events happening Downtown
- **‘Downtown Dining Week’ into ‘Greater Downtown Dining Week’**
Work with BIDS and Alderpersons, neighborhoods, local restaurants
- **Develop a list of community meeting spaces in neighborhoods**
Share with businesses located downtown -- include amenities, associated cost, contact info, etc.
- **Develop a list neighborhood-based of contracted service providers**
Small businesses that provide catering, printing, design, cleaning, etc. -- host a fair

Grow Awareness & Engagement:

- **Alderpersons as stronger partners**
Connect with Alderpersons regarding their role in connecting residents to city-wide opportunities (i.e. development efforts, events, etc.) -- move beyond media opportunities and into regular resident-driven communication
- **Identify and brand a symbol for neighborhood development activities**
Similar to ‘cranes in the air’ Downtown, is there a symbol that could be used, promoted and shared to show development activity happening at the neighborhood level? Often we don’t know when projects are underway
- **Development of a multi-stakeholder fund**
Pool of funding created by City of Milwaukee corporations and businesses where neighborhoods could pitch projects and apply for small grants to help launch -- applications reviewed by resident-led team -- promote to businesses as an avenue to (1) meet WBE/MBE/DBE; (2) enhance corporate citizenship
- **Trust-building sessions**
Regular ‘meet-ups’ between residents, public officials, MKE United, and corporate partners to establish relationships and promote regular, two-way feedback
- **Community & professional education to promote transparency**
Host quarterly roundtables and community meetings that educate the general public on civic processes -- Initial meeting could focus on the relationship between the City of Milwaukee and the State (funding, resources -- Public Policy Forum could lead); others could focus on new and emerging development projects -- More accountability for community organizers and staff in aldermanic districts in terms of reaching residents with information
- **Explore & incorporate ‘Community Wealth Building’ approaches**
Develop as part of MKE United’s civic engagement effort -- can’t rely solely on corporate partners and large investments -- potential follow-up session could explore the model