

# Master plan to provide new look for downtown

## Planning, design consultant will assist city to form ideas

Neenah News

The city will develop a downtown master plan to better envision the central business and entertainment district's future with the help of a planning and design firm it approved at the most recent City Council meeting.

RDG Planning and Design, based in Des Moines, will lead the work for services related to the preparation of the master plan. Funded by the 2022 Industrial Development Fund in addition to \$5,000 from the Downtown Business Improvement District, the contract work is capped at \$60,000.

The master plan will cover the area bounded by Lake Street to the west, the river and Little Lake Butte des Morts to the north, Oak Street to the east and Winneconne Avenue to the south.

Brad Schmidt, deputy director of community development and assessment, said the city has worked with RDG in the past and its proposal from among the seven submitted provided the most creative plan approach. Senior team members from RDG are committing 80% of the project hours, which Schmidt said was much higher than other proposals.

"Downtown Neenah is vibrant and growing," Schmidt said. "As such, the growth of our downtown has presented many challenges, including providing adequate long-term parking options for our business community, developing Arrowhead Park, traffic circulation in and around downtown, bike and pedestrian safety, and ensuring new development is consistent with the character of downtown Neenah."

He said the plan also will help analyze retail and housing markets, how they compare to similar-sized downtowns, and assist in

creating concepts for several redevelopment sites.

A steering committee will be formed to present achievable and creative ideas.

A recent traffic study that included downtown area concerns will be used in any development plans, according to Schmidt.

Neighborhood Planners, a separate group involved with the South Commercial Street corridor project, also will work with RDG as an onsite consultant.

"In early spring there will be several opportunities for the public to provide input for what they'd like to see downtown Neenah become," Schmidt said, "including an online survey, public workshops, focus group meetings with businesses, and interactive mapping applications."

The process will be concluded by the end of 2022.

Mayor Dean Kaufert urged the inclusion of a pre-pandemic initiative looking into how Arrowhead Park could be better integrated into the downtown area.

In other action, the council:

- Approved a three-year contract with B&B Metals of Newton for collection of scrap metal and municipal cast materials at the city's drop-off center, and a separate three-year pact with Lakeshore Recycling Systems to service the drop-off center for recyclable and refuse disposal.

- Approved a resolution to endorse improving safety at the intersection of State 76 and Larsen Road in anticipation of the new Neenah High School being built west of there and set to open in fall 2023. Kaufert noted that neighboring communities have also passed this resolution as it is considered a dangerous intersection by highway standards. State 76 underwent a seven-month construction upgrade completed by the end of 2020.

- Approved the appointments of Christine Rondeau and Robert Wedge to three-year terms on the Business Improvement District Board through 2024, and Brian Eppley as the Neenah Joint School District representative to the Plan Commission for three years through 2024.

## Calendar of events

### Ongoing

Dine Out Neenah, at participating restaurants through Monday

SPARK – Stunning Stained Glass exhibit through March 8, Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, 165 N. Park Ave.

### Today

Starfire, 6 p.m., Winncrest Banquet Hall, 2788 Towne Court

### Tuesday, March 1

Scout Night, 5:30 p.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, 165 N. Park Ave.

### Friday, March 4

A Knight Out benefit for Neenah Lutheran School, 5 p.m., Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel

### Saturday, March 5

Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass.

Make-A-Wish Wisconsin skating, noon, The Plaza at Gateway Park, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

## Skills training signup deadline nears

New North Inc. along with partners Microsoft and gener8tor Skills Accelerator is offering a free skills training program for under- and unemployed residents of northeast Wisconsin.

The online curriculum focuses on project management skills and no prior experience or degrees are required. Those interested need to apply by Tuesday. The next round of the six-week, self-paced curriculum runs from March 7 through April 15.

New North region employers interested

in engagement with gener8tor Skills Accelerator can contact Rebecca Deschane at [rebecca.deschane@thenewnorth.com](mailto:rebecca.deschane@thenewnorth.com).

Participants in gener8tor Skills Accelerator will earn several LinkedIn Learning certifications. They will work with a career coach on deliverables, such as a resume and cover letter, creation of a LinkedIn profile, interview practice, and introductions to employers.

Further information is available at [gener8torupskilling.com/northeast-wisconsin](http://gener8torupskilling.com/northeast-wisconsin).





## UW OSHKOSH PUTS COMMUNITY FRONT AND CENTER

**Preview Days offer students the opportunity to explore whether a college education at one of UW Oshkosh's three vibrant campuses in the region is the right path for success for them.**

Learn more about upcoming Preview Days scheduled for March 1 (Fond du Lac campus), March 9 (Fox Cities campus) and April 8 (Oshkosh campus) at [uwo.sh/preview](http://uwo.sh/preview).





## Financial guidance from a team that gets you

**Please join us for one of our upcoming workshops hosted by Financial Advisor Mike Truymen and Financial Associate Ken Truymen.**

- College Planning 101 – March 9
- Economic Update – March 15
- An Inside Look at Qualifying for Financial Aid – April 12
- Will Your Taxes Affect Your Retirement? – April 19

**For more information on these and upcoming events or to RSVP:** Visit [connect.thrivent.com/heart-of-the-valley-wealth-advisors/events](http://connect.thrivent.com/heart-of-the-valley-wealth-advisors/events) or reach out to our office.

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