

Madison Night Market

A Celebration of Madison's Unique Creative Class



DESCRIPTION

Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID) celebrates the Downtown Madison, WI retail, dining and entertainment district with 5 areas of focus, including "Marketing the Downtown as a Whole" and "Creating a Welcoming Environment". A late 2016/early 2017 study of downtown retail, conducted by the City of Madison, in partnership with the BID, and entitled "Ensuring a Vibrant Downtown Retail Destination" encouraged retail pop-ups, shop-around promotions and specialty markets as strategies to support a healthy retail district.

As a direct and immediate effort to undertake strategies recommended from the study, the BID hosted the 1st ever Madison Night Markets. The Madison Night Market was invented as a celebration of Madison's unique and inspiring creative culture.

The Madison Night Market was a series of 3 special evening street markets that showcased retailers and specialty pop-up restaurants from in-district businesses. Artists, makers, craftspeople, musicians and food cart operators were also invited to apply to join the market. A selection committee from the BID Board of Directors reviewed applications to select vendors. More than 50 vendors participated in each market. This event was designed to draw more retail interest to the shopping district. Vendor pricing favored businesses already in the district. Food carts and trucks were added but limited as to compliment not take away from restaurant business in the district.

The main retail shopping center in Madison, WI is in the heart of the city - State Street. This six-block corridor has some of the most unique and interesting shops in the community but like many shopping districts is looking for unique ways to draw in shoppers. This street crosses an under-utilized yet important secondary retail street - Gilman Street. This was a perfect location for the Madison Night Market; it took place with little interruption to public transportation, limited reduction in parking spaces and almost no disruption to regular business operations. Those businesses directly on Gilman street participated and greatly benefited from the market with specials and promotions.

All of the the other in-district businesses were encouraged to participate in the market or in their own place of business with a special event or attraction that evening like a trunk show, sample sale, visiting artist, etc. More than 30 businesses participated in this additional effort.

The Market, located along Gilman Street in the heart of downtown Madison was held the second Thursday of the months of May, June and July in 2017. From 6pm – 11pm visitors and downtown residents flocked downtown to celebrate all things Madison.

INNOVATION

While each community is different, a market could work in most. The Madison Night Market found innovation in creating an event that brought Brick & Mortar businesses out into the spotlight and brought together a variety of different retail and food businesses. The vendor fee structure varied greatly and in-district businesses paid significantly less than those from out of district. This helped both fund the project as well as add another "in-district" benefit to constituents.

EXECUTION

Set plan and budget with BID Board
Present idea to city planning office
Present idea Mayor's office
Apply for street use permission
Receive approval from City Council
Solicit in-bid participation
Solicit out-of district participation
Secure Community partnerships
Hold public meeting for citizen, BID businesses and community feedback
Register health department permissions and permits
Line up volunteers
Schedule musicians and performers
Schedule security, operations, etc.
Detail and execute a media campaign
Conduct public relations
Hold press conference to kick-off the event
Hold event
Clean up
(Repeat x 3)

REPRESENTATION

The Madison Night Market was organized by BID staff, overseen by the BID board and completed with the input and support of many partners including: Mayor's Office, City of Madison • B-Cycle • Dane Arts • Dane County Farmers Market • Downtown Coordinating Committee, City of Madison • Downtown Madison, Inc. • Entercom Radio • Greater State Street Business Association • Intellectual Ratchet • Overture Center for the Arts • L.O.U.D. • Madison Museum of Contemporary Art • Madison Parks

REPLICATION

Many communities across the country hold late night markets. Researching and attending several of these markets offered ideas, suggestions and best practices for the new Madison Night Market. To keep set up easy, the market was designed from the very beginning to match and be modeled after the City of Madison's current vending program. That meant the rules for defining vending categories and food cart operations were already set. The City Vending Coordinator, the Planning Division, the Parks Department and the Office of Business Resources were important partners in establishing the first

market. The key to successfully completing this project together came down to having smart partnerships and setting expectations at achievable and manageable levels.

SUSTAINABLE

With a budget of approximately \$10,000 - 14,000 per market this event was almost self-sufficient in its first year and is planned to be 100% self sufficient for 2018. Future goals include increasing the number of in-district participants and expanding the event to incorporate other, nearby, underutilized public spaces.

OUTCOME

The City of Madison Mayor and the BID Chair spoke at the opening of the 1st market and held a ribbon cutting ceremony while the University of Wisconsin Marching Band excited the crowd. Regional favorite The Cash Box Kings kicked off the night with music and dancing.

The goals of these markets were to welcome more people downtown, highlight downtown businesses and to continue to enhance the economic vitality of the district.

When planning the market the team hoped to secure 40-60 participating vendors and have 1500 - 2000 people attend. Interest was incredibly high and these numbers were easily achieved.

1 - Vendor Participation & Sales

The first market featured 50 vendors and each market after had a similar number of participants.

- 52% of Vendors sold MORE than they had anticipated
- 89% of Vendors want to return for another year!

2 - Public & Media & Press Coverage

To design a logo for the market, the BID hosted a design contest in February. This contest offered an early PR opportunity and an intro to the creative community as well as a wide variety of creative options for the logo. The winning design combines a firefly, the WI Capitol building and a very "hip" Edison-style lightbulb. It was well received and t-shirt with glow-in-the-dark ink and special canvas bags for decorating were a hit at pre-event promotions and as giveaways.

A Facebook page for the event launched in early March of 2017. The page features vendors and profiles of musicians. Fans flocked to the page with more than 1,000 likes in 2 weeks, 5,000 by the first market and now has over 7,500.

Media coverage was exceptional. All three of the major TV news outlets attended the opening ceremony and coverage on all media was tracked for the events.

3 - Attendance

The event easily reached the goal of 1,500 - 2,000 attendees. *At 9pm at the first market, with two hours left to go, ambassadors had clicker-counted 5,500 attendees!*

IDA Achievement Awards Nomination

REGISTRANT: Madison's Central Business Improvement District Award Submission

CATEGORY: Events and Programming - Programs and events that improved the image and vitality of downtown

- 42% of attendees responded that the event was BETTER than expected!
- 94% of attendees responded they would attend again!

I am so glad that madison has started this. It's such a cool idea and I'm so glad it has worked out so great! Fantastic job!! Can't wait for more!!

Thanks for all the hard work put forward in planning this event! Madison needs more things like this, so keep up the great work!

This program has had an exceptionally-positive reception. It has helped improve the image of downtown, added vitality to the retail district and started a new tradition in this creative community.

Digital & Social Media:

www.madisonnightmarket.com

www.facebook.com/madisonnightmarket

Please see the following video:

<https://vimeo.com/storybridge/review/228415907/c6689abbe0>