

Bill Ryan, (0:05) : Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being up this morning with us and appreciate your time. I'm Bill Ryan with the University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension in economic development. And this meeting is really your meeting – it was put together by a number of communities that wanted to learn more about BIDs. And what can BIDs do for you? How do you set them up? And more importantly, what is the long-term gain from having a BID in your community? So we thought about this, how we're going to put this together because we lost our BID expert, Chuck Law who retired about a year ago, and kept all kinds of data and research on BIDS. So instead of focusing on a topic that I am not qualified to speak on, I said, let's bring experts including yourselves to discuss this opportunity for communities. So we're not coming into this with any kind of bias, pro or con for BIDs in a community. But we want to hear from you as well and listen to your questions and your comments, your observation, so we learn from each other. To help us get this going, we're going to have two great speakers from Ithaca, New York, who have created a BID and have done some tremendous things in orchestrating a plan for the downtown area in a community. And we'll talk about that in a second. But before we get going, I just want to make sure that we're all awake, and we know each other a little bit. This year, we started with six people and it's grown to over 22 people today now. So the topic is important. But if we can just kind of go around the table here in alphabetical order...

Let's begin the discussion of does it make sense to have a BID? And secondly, what are the outcomes, we're going to break those into two parts. One will be a more formal presentation by Mack and Gary, to set the stage from their experience of 32,000 people that really helped lift this community from a sad situation 30 years ago to where it is today. And in that we'll then spring off into a discussion with all of us here asking our questions regarding our own communities. So it's kind of an open conversation, two parts, Part A about whether or not we start a BID, and B, how do we make that BID do a good job for us. And we hope for a rich combination of a presentation followed by a robust conversation of developers. That makes sense. If it doesn't, it'll make sense once we get into it.

So our guests are Mack Travis and Gary Ferguson. The first speaker is the author of the book "Shaping a City, Ithaca NY, A Developers Perspective". This book highlights two major themes we're trying to cover today, starting a BID and operating a BID for success. The speaker was a developer who sought to improve the community over 50 years ago to quality housing and willingness to embrace new ideas, knowing other people's individual interests. Basically, Mack was a catalyst in transforming the city by introducing quality housing, quality relationships with other people in the community that can make things happen. And it shows today with us, he also is the executive director from Downtown Ithaca Alliance for over 22 years especially strong in strategic planning, economic development, business attraction, retention, his ability to assemble the right people at the right time to overcome roadblocks. The skills and planning leading to strategic plans are 100% complete when done after 10 years, makes him a real star in this discussion. He works in both Economic Development and Placemaking, which is kind of a difficult combination to balance sometimes, but we'll see in the examples that he really made things happen and helped orchestrate this plan. So without any more rambling here,

I want to open up the mic to Mack and Gary and let's talk about Ithaca and a creation of a BID.

Mack Travis, (10:23) Welcome everybody and thank you for including us on this. I'm Mack Travis. I'm going to open up my PowerPoint. I have my computer guru Tony Sorento who didn't get to tell the temperature where he is. Tony, why don't you do that

Tony, (10:43) Mack, I'm in Dominica in the Caribbean and it's now 75 degrees Fahrenheit, sunny, and no windchill factor

Mack, (10:56) Tony worked for us and helped us in our business for quite some time and he's a dear friend and we've been to visit.

Mack, (12:20) Okay, so Bill sent us your questions, a list of them about forming a BID. And we're going to try to answer them, who's involved and why we do it, what we've done and how we did it. And the results we've had in Ithaca, which are little short of spectacular.

Many of you probably know Ithaca, we have a beautiful University, Cornell overlooking Cayuga Lake. We have a very natural, lovely environment. And this was our downtown until urban renewal got a hold of it. And most of this block was demolished. And what happened? The city formed a public private partnership with business owners, property owners and built a pedestrian mall. We had intense competition back in the 70s from malls that will be informed out in the outskirts, and the city created a special assessment district to turn State Street into this mall. In 1980, another public private partnership began downtown. This lot had been vacant on the Commons for 15 years. And they join with an ambitious developer and banks and a Farm Home Loan Guarantee with 85%. The project opened in 1982 or so and it was a disaster from the start. 144,000 square feet. Mixed use building offices food court retail, it was ahead of its time and it went into foreclosure. My partners and I actually bought it when it was foreclosed. But we'll get to that in a bit.

In 1982, there was a third public private endeavor. The city collaborated with Cornell to revitalize a college town. This was to be the window box for college town that figuring that if somebody would build a building up there that was significant, other people would follow and indeed that is what has taken place. But they put out an RFP for a private developer to build the first building. In five decades, they offered the site itself and 1% loan and second position. I won the competition is preferred developer and it took three years of negotiation and two years of construction to build 64 units of apartments and stores. We call it Eddie gate. It was fully rented before it opened in 87. And while these public private partnership projects were effective as far as they went, they were all one-off collaboration. There was no immediate continuity of development. In 1991 the city planning and downtown vision Task Force hired Halcyon consultants to recommend how Ithaca might revitalize its downtown.

Halcyon recommended we do these things: strengthen specialty retail, concentrate government offices downtown, make downtown a center for the arts, adequate transportation and parking. Focus the county's tourism effort. Make an arts and conference center, housing abundant for all income levels, and linkages, an innovative way to increase connections to the broader community.

(16:34)

In 1994 with the recommendation from this Downtown Vision Task Force, things do move slowly, but the mayor charged the deputy director of City Planning to investigate what it would take to form a business improvement district. This is what we did. We gathered 15 members into a steering committee, property owners, business owners, tenant, and city council members. We formulated the boundaries for the BID. We were ambitious. We chose 144 blocks of downtown. All public meetings. What did people want? Well it was pretty simple, safety, fill the potholes and fill the vacancies.

You write a district BID plan and all this is specified by the legislation for BIDS. It took several drafts by the Deputy Director circulated to the stakeholders for discussion; vote for approval or disapproval. And our first vote was too slim a margin we felt to proceed with a BID. Why should people pay an assessment they said, of 20% of the city tax rate to support just the downtown. It was disappointing. We spent the better part of a year going through this process. But we disbanded the committee and dropped the idea of forming a BID. This is the central part of our downtown. We later met and two years later, the mayor had us reconvened. And we took about 22 blocks of just the central core of downtown. This is the loop that was one way through our city. We focused on the 22 blocks that could become our BID district. So the second attempt, again, volunteers, same people, same steering committee, revise the boundaries. We chose these 22 blocks in the very core of downtown. We held public meetings same concerns. We rewrote the district plan. We circulate it to the stakeholders for discussion. And very few residents or attorneys were in this 22 block area to object to the assessment which was up to 20% of the city tax rate. We held a vote and this time our vote was positive enough that we proceeded. We began a nationwide search and hired a young law student we didn't have a lot of money for a budget, but he stayed two years. And another nationwide search after he left, we found Gary.

This is the map of our BID boundaries. Again, this is the two blocks around the Commons. This is the central core State Street that is now the pedestrian mall. This was the loop and we added this section here to accommodate what you will see as our Gateway project. There's a four acre site here. We held this nation-wide search, we had nine candidates. We settled on three. We wrote a contract and hired Gary with 15 years of experience running BIDs in Lewiston, Maine. Haverhill, Massachusetts, Grand Junction, Colorado. And then currently when we hired him, he was Assistant Director in Dayton, Ohio. His first task he told us, would be to interview the downtown business owners. He interviewed the major ones and he found a downtown architectural firm of 180 employees who needed to expand. They weren't sure if downtown, which was over 20% vacant at the time, was headed up or down. Gary came back to our board and said what we needed to do was a feasibility study. Not only what did Ithaca want, but what was Ithaca capable of supporting. The Board approved hiring a company Gary had worked with when he was in Dayton as a Data Corp from Columbus, Ohio. And they performed a feasibility study that the cost of this was \$15,000. And the city pledged five, the BID pledged five. Remember, they have a budget of 20% of the city tax rate. And property owners pledged another \$5,000. Canada's staff came to town and they spent over a week interviewing business owners, property owners, city officials, tenants and Cornell officials. And they came back with their recommendations in the BID board with a great deal of community input with Gary's guidance developed the downtown strategic plan. Here were his recommendations. I couldn't believe it. I knew this market I'd worked in it for at that time, 30 years. And 50,000 square feet are new retail we couldn't even fill what we had 150,000 square feet of new office. It was impossible. 500 housing units. Sorry, I felt they were crazy. I talked to Gary -- he suggested I call Ken and I did,, and he had spent time looking at the Ithaca absorption rates, employment rates, the overall health of the economy. And he said they had done 1500 of these feasibility studies around the country. And extrapolating from their experience, Ithaca could do it. So I absorbed that they were lofty goals but with Gary's guidance, We incorporated these goals and wrote a 10-year strategic plan that 2010 to 2020. He recommended \$100 million of investment in our little town.

Part of what Gary did as well as invite speakers to town to orient us to a different vision. He invited James Howard Kunstler to town he was author of a book called "Home From Nowhere" about how every town looks the same sprawled across the landscape. And they said, he said they can't make you happy

with a sprawled look, so they put up a happy face in the strip mall mess that we have become as a nation. Consular suggested figure out your resources, what makes you different. Downtown is a great place to start. There's still some history in a downtown.

It took a while for us as a community to assimilate all this, but somebody had to start. My wife and I negotiated a deal with an 80-year-old owner of this poured-in-place concrete warehouse. Two gas stations and four acres at the end of the BID boundary, that loop that surrounds towns right here. And it was a long Six Mile Creek which was Ithaca's pristine water supply. We turned this, into this, (24:43) a 50,000 square foot Class A office building. It was rented within six months to 16 local office tenants attorneys, accountants. Even the County took a large space for their planning department and Dander was right.

Mack, (25:03) We next built this, which was the first luxury apartment in Ithaca ever, and it was 26 units, they were constructed and leased within three months of opening. BID had accurately predicted the market. Looking back 22 years later, and that was just the beginning. We have more than double the size of our downtown. Not outside the 22 blocks, mind you, but by going up, we changed the zoning, which in the end, we established a tax abatement for new projects that met the zoning height. We've had \$600 million of new investment. And that is really just the beginning. There's much more on the way under construction right now. We've added three new hotels, we've increased housing units from 300 to over 1100. We've constructed well over 150,000 square feet of new office space at this point. And we have saved key amenities the things that consular said makes your downtown precious and different. The State Theater built in 1928, the Clinton house, an 1828 project, and the historic character what was left of it after urban renewal, is assured. Center Ithaca was restored from bankruptcy and became 100% leased. We added 750 spaces parking, we moved a community college downtown and we've rebuilt the Commons. And Gary has orchestrated now that 2030 strategic plan.

But let's at this point, open it up to questions. That's sort of what we've done in a nutshell. We've got some exciting projects. But Bill, you want to take over in terms of questions, and we'll resume as soon as you're ready.

Bill Ryan, (27:26) Sure, I think we'd still be open time now for us to kind of go through some of the questions that we had voiced earlier. First question might be, what is a BID? What is the definition of a BID? And maybe Gary, if I could pick that up a second, to give us a structure upon which to build upon, and how it applies to small towns in bigger towns?

Gary, (27:49) Yeah, this is a relatively new tool in the world of say municipal, you know, in municipalities. It really came into existence in the 1980s. It essentially it is an extended form of a special assessment district. Every community in some way, shape or form works with special assessment districts, whether you have a lighting district or a sewer district or a district for parks. They tend to be single purpose oriented. What BIDs are able to do is to make a special improvement, make a special district, but have it have not just a single purpose, but a broad purpose, in this case, the revitalization of an area, in this case downtown. And so you're allowed to do not only hard services like capital improvements, like you were in a specialist, like in a sewer district or a lighting district. But you can do soft services, you can do marketing, you can do events, you can do facilitation of development and things like that. So it's an opportunity to really focus on a particular area and bring a lot of different resources to bear on it in a way that you could never otherwise do. The other thing about BIDs, BIDs are, by definition supplemental, they are over and above what the general municipality would typically do. So when you

want, an area wants to create a BID or thinking about it, one of the first things to think about is the provision of services that you're getting now. What you need to move this area forward in the way that you'd like to. And oftentimes the answer is no. There's a limited amount of resources that a government can put toward any given area. And so I think the general idea is that property owners, taxpayers ratepayers, are getting together and saying, if we take some extra money of our own, if we assess ourselves more, we then can dedicate and control how that money is spent, put it on top of what the municipality is already doing. And we can move ourselves forward in a way we couldn't otherwise do. We could achieve success that we otherwise couldn't, you know, couldn't do and couldn't have succeeded. You know, and we can make progress in areas that might have otherwise been not open to us. So that's the whole concept behind a BID, that you're providing supplemental services, whether they, whether they are simple services, like clean and safe, or whether they're more complicated services like, like enhanced economic development, or enhanced marketing and related project activities. Most BIDs working at downtowns tend to have, aren't just focused on one particular item, but try to cover sort of the general comprehensive area of downtown revitalization. So they have a lot of latitude and what they can do and how they can do it.

Bill Ryan, (31:12) Thank you, Gary. So let's open up to some questions and discussion here. We have a list of questions. But Nathan, you're also got categories?

Yeah. Nathan, (31:23) Well, there's one here, because if I understand correctly from Mack's book is Ithaca Downtown Partnership. And that word partnership, I think speaks to the first question that was submitted in advance which is, you know, who are downtown stakeholders? And how do you get them involved? Who are the players at the table that you want to get involved?

Mack, (31:49) I can tell you from a developer's point of view, it became a vehicle really for developing downtown in a more attractive way. Making it clean and safe, you know, improve police presence. The reason we were able to develop so heavily here is we changed the zoning. And that took the work of the BID orchestrating it because you know, City Hall done think about that. And just looking, is this hotel on the screen still or not? Yes. Okay. Well, an example of that is this was a one-story travel agency here, and the owner of it wanted to build a hotel, and he couldn't do it himself. He needed partners. When they got partners, he had a feasibility study done. Nobody would touch it with this inexperienced hotel owner. So Gary, the mayor, President of Cornell got together and they worked out a deal where Cornell would move 350 employees from their development office up near the airport, five miles out of town. To this, the first four floors of this building, you see Cornell University on the marquee. Above that would be 104 room Hilton Garden Inn. And by working with this young developer, we showed Gary and I frankly, sat right with him, showed him the plans that we had used and the incredible rental activity we'd had based on the feasibility study. And he was able to pull this project off. And he ended up owning only a small part of it. But it was just a really strong example of what the BID could make happen.

Gary, (34:08) Nathan, just to follow up on that, and just talk a little bit more about partners. I think, Yeah, I mean, any downtown revitalization efforts, almost by definition, need to be partnerships. Having worked in a number of cities over my career, when that happens, we usually get far better progress and far better results than if it's sort of unilaterally done by the community, by the city or unilaterally done by a private sector alone. So almost by definition, downtown revitalization is a partnership endeavor. BIDs almost have to be partnership by definition. They so you know, you need to sit at the table, and

you need private sector at the table. And then obviously, then you look for other stakeholders, who are, who are key parts of that downtown fabric. And in our case, it involved our universities. It involved, you know, other arts organizations and involved different groups who had sort of intersections in the downtown area. And so was really our effort to try to bring them all to the table. I know when I first came to town, one of my worries was that I didn't want this BID effort in Ithaca to be perceived simply as a merchant association. I think prior to the creation of the BID, there was a merchant, you know, there was not a downtown. It wasn't an organized downtown effort other than sort of a merchant association that existed and did a couple events every year. And, and I think our sense was that that wasn't enough. And that wasn't sufficient. And that wasn't going to move the needle forward. In fact, it was just going to buy time and as, as the suburbs continued to grow up around the city, and watch the downtown shrink. So we needed to make sure that our that our table, if you will, had not only had businesses involved with retail businesses, but had office businesses that had that had developers that had property owners that had institutions that had, you know, community interest from the city from the county. So that I think we tried to elevate the cause and the issue of downtown revitalization to something that became not just a downtown priority, but was a city priority, and really was a regional priority as well. So I mean, it took all of that, in order to do that. And I would say anywhere, anywhere one would go, you would need that type of partnership to be effective.

Mack, (37:10) There's a wonderful story here. There was a holdout on the first floor, a tenant who didn't want to move and we couldn't make him move to build this building. And here's an example of the networking that can take place. Gary found on location forum on the Commons, another building that he could actually buy. So he was willing to move from here to the Commons, and we filled a vacant building on the Commons. The contractor here, had to buy this bank building across the street from the hotel as part of the project. When they bought the site, M&T Bank made them buy this bank building because they didn't want to hold it anymore. Well, again, because of the BID, we were aware that our local community college wanted to expand, and they bought this building, but they did it in a way. Siminelli (sp?) the contractor, very wealthy, got an appraisal on this building, it was so high that they could donate the difference between the millions of dollars it was worth and the couple of million dollars they had in it. So they got a big write off. The community college got it for free, essentially. Because they have a mortgage on it. But they kept the bank on the ground floor. They kept some law offices and so forth, but they have the top two floors. And that's sort of an example of the networking that evolved from the BID.

How many members do we have in the BID, Gary, over 400?

Gary, (39:09) About 450 businesses. About 120 properties.

So, Nathan, (39:22) and one other another question that may relate is, you know, what is a good mix or a good ratio of arts and entertainment-type establishments, retail, government buildings, public services, offices, dining and restaurants? What's a good mix of the different kinds of uses that you want to see downtown and how do you get every everyone to see sort of the value of a healthy mix there?

Gary, (39:52) I think mix is the key operative word. I think that depends on your community and, you know, I suspect every consultant will have a slightly different answer for that. But I think the key is, is that you don't want a mono-culture, whatever you do. I mean, downtowns seem to work at their best when users are freely mixed. And that's sometimes easier said than done. You know, as over the last 50 years, we've tended to push users apart, you know, we put government buildings over here, we put our

office buildings over here, we put our retail over here and we put our parking here, and, you know, that hasn't been a recipe for success. And I think one of the things we tried to do from the get go, was to, as one of our guiding principles, made sure that we were dealing with mixed use projects, and try to as much as we possibly could mix, stir that pot so that we had uses spread throughout. We don't want, you know, we've seen too many examples of this is where poor people live. And this is where we put our low-income housing. This is where we put our people, you know, this is where we put our city buildings, or put them on a campus somewhere on the edge of town. And again, not a recipe for revitalization. It may be cheap. It may be, you know, maybe affordable. But in terms of a recipe for revitalization success, it's not a great one. So I know that was something we tried very much to do. It comes at a cost. It is not cheaper. It's much more expensive to mix those uses. But I'm not sure there's a good answer as to say, well, you need to have at least you know, X number of arts business and this number of retail. I think it depends the answer is it really will depend community by community and whatever your goals are, particularly.

One thing I know I did in 2005, I did a national study, I actually got a fellowship from Cornell to study cities around the United States, a small cities, looking for their attributes of success. What were some of the things that made these great small cities great? And one of the big findings that I had was all I think we probably did, I think the subset of some 30 that I looked at was that they had a really disproportionate number of foot traffic generators in their downtown clustered very close together. The average number in a typical community might be, you know, eight to 10. These best cases these great small cities had anywhere from 25 to 35. In some cases, more foot traffic generators right next to each other. So it's even less a case of do I need arts businesses or do I need specific types, but the more foot traffic generators, you put in close proximity to each other. And it seems to make some sense, the more the more commercial viability you're going to have for your community and the more vibrancy you're going to end up getting. So I would answer it probably that way.

Mack, (43:38) Well, there are a number that, speaking of foot traffic generators. This was again a networking effort with the BID when our local bank sold their building here to the county or they built a new building sold their building to the county, 12 not for profits went into it. Plus this local history museum. And all of this frankly, wouldn't have happened without the BID. Gary, members of our BID, myself, would you know, we met with the bank. They could have gone out of town and built, but they built right downtown. Moved 350 employees next to the Hilton Garden Inn, which was here this is their new building and when they could have just let this go. First of all, they could have moved out into the outskirts, free parking, everything, but they saw the dynamic of downtown and how important it was. And constantly in front of us was this arts/dining and entertainment as the real drivers for downtown and as Gary said, the pedestrian walkability.

Bill Ryan, (44:59) Just an observation here. One of the questions that came in is from Mazomanie, a small town of 1800 people. And we're looking at Ithaca, and the skyline and multistory buildings. And we're saying this is a different type of city. But I just want to share with everyone, this is a city of 32,000 people with six square miles of land, which makes it as far as the most towns around the table we're talking to. So, though it has Cornell University, every other town has its own assets. Whether it be to the trading company, or a building that has a huge office park next door. So you think example, can be transferable to other places as well. So don't get lost for the big buildings.

Nathan, (45:48) we've got quite a few questions left to address. And we've also got sort of another segment of the program that we want to turn to soon. But with less with a few minutes left to focus on what it takes to start and get a new business improvement district off the ground. We've got time for maybe, one question kind of related to that, before we pivot here. And in a nutshell, that question is: What are some impediments to establishing a business improvement district? And how do you overcome those initial objections? So for those who want an answer to that question, pay attention for the next few minutes.

Mack, (46:29) Well, I can talk about that, from the very beginnings as we didn't only set it up, it took a huge amount of volunteer time with a group of people, business owners, property owners, city officials, driven by the mayor's unending push to get this thing started. Somebody saw the advantage of a BID and the fact that we dropped it because it was too big and too diverse and focused it right on the core of downtown was I think, key to our success and making it happen. And when you look at what we've done in this very small area, it's a go back to the fact that it was inconceivable to me from Dander study, but project by project. And then the other thing that's so amazing, is we're just the central poor, this has mushroom throughout the community, Cornell's adding 2000 students, there's probably maybe two or three dozen more projects going on, on the outskirts around the BID. So I guess point being it's possible, and it can, if you if you have a group of people, it's sort of I guess, like a big corporation, you have a few major leaders and the rest of the group falls in line.

Gary, (48:06) Just a couple other thoughts on your question, Nathan. The boundaries are always a big issue. And obviously, they were a big issue and Ithaca when they reached for bigger boundaries, and determined that that was not going to be a problem. Usually one around the country, when you look at if there are BID that are struggling or having trouble, it's oftentimes people and entities and owners, right around the edges on those boundaries, that are the problems. You know, because on one side of a boundary, people are paying an additional assessment on the other side, they're not. So one begs the question about why is that? Help me justify why I pay and they don't. And so one has to be very, I think, smart about how one, you know, builds boundaries for BID, using natural boundaries whenever possible, using ones that sort of well-conceived and well appreciated by the community. You know, something that's sort of artificially just drawn on a map right down the middle of a block, oftentimes, you know, lends itself to problems like that. I think beyond that, I think you're looking at issues to have of their BID. I know of BID at the smallest BID, I know have budgets of about \$50,000. I think the largest BID I'm aware of probably in New York City have budgets of \$50 million. But you know where we're a medium size BID our budgets a little bit about 1,000,002 right now But when we started our BID what our budget was about \$150,000. But it, you know, has grown over time. And I think that, you just got to make sure that your budget is in line with your with your goals and your expectations. We've seen cases, I know of a couple BIDs, where, you know, they're collecting \$100,000, and they don't have money to do what they really want to get done. And so that's a little bit frustrating on their part. On the other hand, I know some BIDs that, you know, they collect \$100,000. And they say, Well, this is what we want to do. And they've done it and done it well. So I think lining up expectations is really, really important.

The other key thing is, you really want to engage your property owners, the people who would be paying these additional assessments. They have to personally answer that question, why should I pull in my pocket and pay more? What is the benefit to me? And you've got to be able to answer that question. And you can certainly look to places like Ithaca and say, Well, yeah, how would you like to accomplish all that? And I would think most people would say, sure, but I mean, you have to be able to talk about the

idea of the extra services, the extra support, the extra help that's going to come through this, and be able to validate and justify that in terms of the additional expenditure. And I think most places can do that and have had a good track record doing that. But when you're getting started, that's going to be one of the key questions is why in area where people are wanting less taxes and less government, why would I? Why would I consent to more taxes? And part of the answer is, is A) you're getting, you know, oftentimes, when government, you don't get a lot of say as to how those taxes get spent. Sure, you can elect people, but you're a lot in a BID, I mean, you get to make you as the property owners get to make those decisions. And you get to, you're very much closer to how that's being put together. And I think the plan that you're putting in place is one that you agreed to. And so if you say you know what, this place would be a whole lot better if we didn't have 20% vacancy, or this place could be a whole lot better if we had if we doubled down and invested in arts and entertainment or something in the core of our community. And I'm prepared to help make that happen. Because I know it will that improve the value of my property or make this a place where people are more likely to want to be. So I mean, those are part of the I think the discussions that go into putting a BID together.

Nathan, (53:07) Yeah, thank you. Well, and that's actually a nice, I think that's probably a nice segue to sort of the second segment of this session, which is really more about business improvement district planning operations and how they operate, meet goals once they are up and running. How do you follow through on that those prospects that you outlined when forming a BID?

And I'm going to maybe turn it to Sharon and Bill to sort out what we've got for any additional sort of prepared remarks. I recognize there are still some questions we've got to get to. And as Sharon mentioned in the chat, you're still welcome to add more questions into the chat box as they come up.

But I'd like to ask Sharon and Bill where we're at with this next segment, here.

Bill Ryan, (53:54) I just want to make sure that there's no more comments and questions from people out there listening right now, so that we can address your questions. Do you have any others?

Nathan, (54:08) There are several. One that was put in the chat, you know, it has to do with alternatives in general. What are some alternatives to achieving these goals outside of a business improvement district? And in particular, are there any sort of alternatives where you could do have similar authorities without having a special assessment so to speak? That was one question that's in the chat box right now. But as I said, there are others that were submitted earlier too.

Bill Ryan, (54:37) They don't have an urgent issue that they want to have to direct the conversation towards.

Gary, (54:49) You know, there certainly are alternatives to BIDs. I mean, like I say, BIDs are relatively new instruments or planning tools. Mack referenced in his discussion about the history of Ithaca in downtown efforts. There were private public partnerships that were started previous to this. And in fact, when we first built the pedestrian mall in downtown Ithaca, in the 1970s, it was done with a special assessment district. And, that's certainly, you know, so you can do a special purpose district, for downtown revitalization, you know, for a specific piece of downtown revitalization. You can do a sidewalk district to improve your sidewalks, and do a lighting district to improve your lights. So that sort of thing is always possible. And you can do that municipally. And you don't necessarily need, depending on your state laws. You know, you have different authorities for how you can get those done. You know,

prior to BIDs, most downtown programs were done, sort of as on membership base, and a membership base. And they tended to be one of two things: either, tended to be more merchant oriented driven businesses, you know, got putting money in a pot to help support efforts. They didn't tend to be economic development driven, because there wasn't enough money in that pot to do anything significant. So you could do things like events and promotions. Or sometimes they were done like major stakeholders or businesses in the community would get together like a CEO roundtable or something. And you would have groups of dollars on the table for planning, and sometimes for major projects. And that's how a lot of communities actually move themselves forward. Throughout the years, I can think of a number of Midwestern cities that actually did that. So those are a couple models that are still out there. One of the things I think we generally like about BIDs is that it's egalitarian. You know, everybody plays, everybody supports. You're not relying on the largesse of a couple people or the folks who say, Yeah, I'll stand up for the community, where my neighbors may not. So you know, that's a nice thing about a business improvement district is that kind of equality that goes along with their

Bill Ryan, (57:36) Do you mind if I ask you to kind of expand upon some of your initiatives, some of your projects that you talked about a number of different situations that they came in, and to help resolve roadblocks? What are you some of your favorite stories about it?

Mack, (58:03) This right across from our Gateway project was a one-story building. That couldn't make it anymore as a sheltered workshop, they wanted to sell, and they couldn't buy it because the neighbors were just going nuts about having a big building by them. Next to them. And the BID orchestrated a public relations campaign. And this building on the right, right across from Gateway got built. We won that at city planning by one vote. That was after months of lobbying. So that's one of the things that the BID has done and all this didn't just happen. And another example of what the BID has jumped through all this. This building here, started out as a one-story building. Gary has led the charge on changing the zoning in our downtown so that every project, the Marriot hotel, the sheltered workshop didn't have to go for a variance and they increased the zoning heights from 65 feet to 140 feet. And what happened is this project that had been part of urban renewal, torn down all the stores that were on that site became and get ready for this, that 192 units. Right gateways here, this is right here in the central block that Marriott's here, and that happened in large part because of the zoning changes orchestrated by the BID. Just made such a difference in our downtown. And there's a chapter in the book called Club, the community land use game, in which we talk about how everything in the community is interrelated, you got to have jobs to support your infrastructure. You've got to have infrastructure to support the industries that build the jobs. You've got to have places for the workers to live that are gonna work in the factories and things that are built and so on. And what we've identified in Ithaca, having lost most of our heavy industry, National Cash Register, and BorgWarner still here, but Emerson Electronics and so forth is that we have education is our major industry and the fact that we're in many ways, such a pretty little town, I think is, is made for a soft environment in which people want to live here.

And again, we've doubled more than double the size. We've, I think the census we've increased like 2500 people, and just the central core of our downtown. Another big thing that the BID brought was Gary's arts, dining and entertainment was a huge part of making downtown a wonderful place to live.

We saved this 200 year old hotel. We saved this 100 year old theater and turned it into something that is active. It does 70 events a year. It brings in 1000s of people to downtown. And it was so successful. This was our next strategic plan, which went on to be what we needed and additionally. Arts downtown

has a huge ice sculpture competition. And then again, the hotels, new 200 rooms, practically 150 rooms. And this was a project that Cornell came to us as property owners, and we went up seven stories, and in this building, they got to put their Rev space.

Mack, (1:02:55) A Cornell startup with some 35 businesses there on two floors of this 22-unit building that used to be this. Another example of how the BID had impact was this was our garage, parking garage here, center Ithaca here, the Commons here. Somebody had the vision, city planners, to tear down this helix. And we'd have another acre of buildable space here. And indeed, there's Gary standing there next to the sign from the group from Cincinnati that came in. Turned this entire site into like 70 apartments and another 48 apartments and over 100 apartments and offices. And this is one of their buildings, but that's sort of the heart of why there's money there. It's why it's grown so much as there's so much more tax base. It's been an investment. That seed money we put in the first \$100,000 of money generated by the original BID has just grown with every project. And another huge incentive is the tax abatement. The city planner, Tace Vancourt (sp?) and Gary orchestrated this through the industrial development authority through city hall, through the school district, where in the new zoning that can go up 160 feet 140 feet I guess it is in the very heart of downtown. If you build well if you build to the full zoning height of the area where you are, you get 100% tax abatement, the first year, 90 the second, 80 the third, and so on. And just an example of what that means is if we went back to, to the Gateway site, that project paid \$30,000 a year in taxes, when we started it, it now pays well over a quarter of a million dollars a year in taxes. So we don't make a lot of money yet. But the city or the BID gets a huge chunk of the budget. Their budget comes from this type of project where somebody takes what was a one-story building, and turns it into that, you know, and that, I think they just sold that for like \$67 million. The taxes on that are going to be huge. So anyway, that's enough for me on it. But that's as a businessman and developer. That's what I see is the real driver. Having identified education as our prime industry, people, a lot of people of course, work from home now they can do it from right here anywhere in the world.

Sharon, (1:06:26) I want to bring up a question that came up in the chat. Mr. Travis, you just mentioned a lot of people working from home. And with a bit, it's clear that a great goal of it was to bring people downtown to have that focal place where people gather where people work where people live. Can you talk about what's happening now? With so many people working from home do you have a problem with office space being a key part of downtown development?

Gary, (1:06:58) Yes, good question. Um, the answer, the short answer is yes. I think in our district, one of the things that the BID does right now is we've maintained an inventory of not just available space, but we also do, we monitor all space. So we can we do our own sort of vacancy rate estimates on a running basis. We've got about our vacancy rate now for office space is close to, was about 18%. We got about 120,000 square feet of vacant space in our downtown right now is an all-time high. And part of that is due to the pandemic, most of it actually is due to two new buildings coming online in the middle of the pandemic, and not having any capability of leasing up yet during that point in time. One of the things BID is doing in response to that right now is we are mounting an office attraction program. We are signing on with some national folks who are helping us to do some attraction work. And we will be doing our own office attraction efforts in in partnership with the city and with our regional economic development group as well. So, you know, it's one of the things I think it's important to remember and note is that downtown, once you sign on to downtown revitalization, at least most people do so for the long haul. You don't do it for three years and say I did it, its done, let's move on. Because the world

changes and it continually changes. And this is a great example of where, you know, prior to the pandemic, our office vacancy rate was about 3%. So yes, it has changed, and yet it's an issue we're working on now. It's gone to the top of our list. And it's you know, what we see is a tremendous asset that needs to be worked so that it can benefit the community in better ways. So we're working with the businesses, in building owners, to where find ways that some of that office space can be retooled. So it can be more appropriate for maybe creative and tech type businesses. We're talking about people about how they might have to renew their leases, so that it can be a little more creative. And we're looking in some cases about maybe converting some more of it to residential and in cases where that might make some sense as well. So it is a major problem, but it is one that we are at the forefront of trying to address.

Nathan, (1:09:52) Gary, one question that may be an opportunity for you to expand a bit on your role. You know, what are the most important responsibilities as a business improvement executive?

Gary, (1:10:05) Yeah, I'm curious what other people would think of that. From my own personal perspective, I mean, I really think you want to have, you really want your executive and your BID in general, to not just be a management organization that can technically help you, quote, unquote, fill the potholes, fill the empty buildings, and, you know, do the day to day work, but help provide vision and leadership for where you want to go and how you want to get there. And I think that's critically important. And that sort of setting. And that's sometimes a hard thing to do. Because I know in many organizations, whether it's a municipality, or whether it's a downtown organization, or anybody else, you know, a lot of times you're governed by what do I have to do quickly? What I have to do to, you know, get people happy today or tomorrow? I don't have five years to germinate this. So I mean, the answer, the best answer is, I think you're looking for someone who has the capability of thinking both short term and long term. Because you have to do both things at once. You got to buy yourself time to do some of these bigger projects, and then to put this longer-term vision together. But if that's all you're doing, and you're not showing any small successes along the way, you're going to be tripped up, you're going to have trouble. So you kind of have to have a little bit of both, you have to be able to put those banners up and have those people on at events and have things that happen in the short term. But then also be able to define, articulate and pull people together to have a long-term vision. So to me, that visioning is really, really important. And I think the other thing that a downtown executive really needs to be able to do and should be doing is, and I spend most of my time trying to build trying to improve relationships, trying to keep people at the table at the same time, that talking to each other, and working together, or getting them together. When that said that sort of relationship building and management is crucial, I think, anything relating to any of the types of success that we're talking.

Mack, (1:12:37) To me, watching Gary work and having worked with him for over 20-some years, I'm out of it now, but his vision for planning, creating a vision with not just himself, but in going into the community, what do we want? What do we want and a lot of work goes into the strategic plans that he develops, like shadow studies are what can be built on a particular site, as you see on this image. So he's got a real gift of bringing people together, creating the vision, knowing what the drivers are, and pulling it off.

Bill Ryan, (1:13:24) I've got the secret in front of me here. This is something that Gary sent me. It's a paper on his 40 years of experiences having been in the BID industry, the Downtown Executive industry. Just a gem of a document full of tips and lessons learned and trends. And, Gary, if it's okay with you, I'll

be available to send this out to people by PDF if that works for you. But it's Cliff Notes of a tremendous career in downtown management.

Gary, (1:13:58) That's fine.

Sharon, (1:14:02) At this point, I want to ask the participants who are here to share what they're thinking for their own communities, and some of the questions they have with regard to their own communities. And how they're trying to work on downtown improvement in their own community. And Andrea, since you just put a comment in the chat box, a question there. Can we have you open it up with both your question and a few comments about your own community and how you might use this tool or other tools?

Andrea, (1:14:39) That was a timely question I asked I guess. My name is Andrea Van Ness from Middleton. I'm the president of the Downtown Middleton Business Association. I own a restaurant, Long Table Beer Cafe, which opened four years ago. Was part of the early new growth that we have with Middleton Center of Downtown Middleton. I took over as the DMBA, just as the pandemic was hitting in early 2020. And you know, as a restaurant owner in particular, we just see well, as the DMBA, not only a restaurant owner, I just love this idea of BID. Because as we've worked on our own strategy for the DMBA, it's clear that for downtown Middleton, this idea of partnership is really important. We have one downtown we're trying to bring people to, and if they don't care, they don't they people coming to dine, shop, live, eat, explore, they don't care who the entity is, they just love this downtown. And so we need to partner to bring it together. I was the question that I asked was, how does the residential development tell you to work? On labor shortages right now, and not only you know, especially in the service industry, where these beautiful apartments are going up, rents are high, the labor pool available to us and the restaurants. project in particular is just really scarce right now and

Sharon, 1:16:25 Andrea, you've cut out a little bit, but I think that the comment that you were making is about labor, and staffing, everything. You're back on so go ahead and ask that question.

Andrea, (1:16:39) sorry about that. I have blips with my Zoom. I'm sorry.

Yeah, it's how does the residential development strategy tie in with workforce development strategy, particularly in things like the service industry, restaurant workers, etc, separate from the tech, you know, tech industry in those kinds of jobs?

Gary, (1:16:59) I mean, well, first of all, just the effort to tie in such a thing is a great idea. Because it's not always thought of in those terms. I know when we first got started with residential development in downtown, remember, I think back in 2000, when we really got started in this initiative, there were people we did have people who live downtown, they were primarily students, and there hadn't been any real substantial development of housing units, in maybe generations so. We were interested in getting non-student housing in general to come into the community, in particular, to come into downtown. One of the things that we were seeing was that when houses were being built in our community, they were being built, you know, on Greenfield's on the edges of our communities. Not in the not in downtown. And that was sort of, again, just concerning, you see that happening a lot around the country where the wealth of a community a lot of times the residential base moving out, and people with money moved out to the edge of town. Why would I live in the center of town? And I think one of the things we really wanted to do, and this took a little doing was, well, first of all, I think when we got

started, no one in our community believed it would happen. So the first couple projects, we got a pass on to be done, right, one. But once people started seeing development happening, they quickly said, Well, wait a minute, wait a minute, you're just building housing for rich people? And the answer was, yeah, we pretty much are at the moment developers are really building to the high end. And part of that was, well, yeah, I mean, the central city wants to have its share of, of people who not just, you know, we just don't want low-income people living in our community, we want people of all swipes of all income brackets living in our community. But it became pretty clear as we continue down this path, and we saw, I think the great success that's eventually happened. We now are at a point where we need to have I mean, people who work in our restaurants, sometimes drive a half an hour to an hour come into these jobs. That's not sustainable. And when you in some of the problems that we're seeing, we have the same problems everybody else has in terms of labor shortages of labor, in all of our industries, particularly in these essential businesses like restaurants. You got to give them, people need a better opportunity than to get in their car and drive an hour to come in for to do a waitressing job. So a lot of our effort now has been going into trying to In our in our tax abatement program that we have, we now have a 20% requirement for low and moderate income housing. So any of these housing projects that you see being developed now have a component of low income housing built right into them. And we're also focusing on trying to put some diverse housing in from a wage standpoint or a rental standpoint into our community. One of our new projects that's under construction right now is a 238-unit affordable housing project. It is going to be built right on top of our new conference center that we're building. So again, we're mixing uses very, very a lot. And lots of people ask the question about, are you guys absolutely crazy? Why would you put low-income housing next to your Conference Center? That doesn't make any sense. We said yes it does. We want, you know, the people who are actually going to be working in that conference center could be living right upstairs. So I think there's some real opportunity for that. So I think you have to consciously think about it. And you can't be afraid of it. And I think the idea of mixing it so that you really want all incomes in and around your downtown area. And that means in some cases, trying to, you know, make sure you can get high end housing. It also makes sure you can get, you know, low end housing and you want but again, you want to do it in a way that it's all sort of mixed together as but as best it possibly can, because you get the best possible outcome.

Sharon, (1:21:44) Thank you. We, you've talked about partnerships, and about developing all different kinds of housing, along with the business development in entertainment. So I'm going to share a slide that came from Kristin and Dana, and ask them to explain this because it speaks exactly to the topic that you're talking about. So Nathan, or Bill, can you give me a thumbs up? If you see this slide with the circles? Thank you. And let me hand this over to Kristin and Dana.

Kristin, (1:22:19) Thank you, Sharon. When we've been working in communities in Wisconsin, often the question has come up who's responsible for redevelopment? And in small communities, if you don't have staff that's dedicated to economic and community development, the answer I came up with right away was whoever's the most passionate about it. And you can see that in even in Ithaca, where they did what they had to do to enact redevelopment in the community. But this slide to me, in Wisconsin represents some of the duties and tasks that each entity listed on the screen could be responsible for, but also shows that it takes everybody to participate in this kind of activity. In Wisconsin, the amount of tax that we can generate from a BID is significantly less than I think, was able to be generated in Ithaca. So you have to have the willing businesses and property owners that are interested in contributing to this BID. And one exercise that Dana and I have done is would a community be able to generate enough

revenue to do anything with a BID district because it is a small amount. And what I love about Ithaca story is that that grew as they developed the community that that grew exponentially with each new development. And that's, that's fabulous, because it does do that. But what's the appropriate role, and this is just one model, because sometimes the Economic Development Office is housed in the Chamber of Commerce. Sometimes the city takes the lead role in economic development. Sometimes a housing authority or a redevelopment authority ends up taking a lead role. But it does take leadership and a vision. And it's it's that I think, is the first thing that has to be there, the leadership and the vision. And then you build your team around that. I'm thinking about the communities on this, on this call right now in the session, Mazomanie, Beaver Dam, Mount Horeb, you have all have different structures that you can put together. It does take the one piece that's missing from this that I realized after listening to Mack and Gary is the private sector because there's always private money. There's always a foundation or investor or a group of investors or developers that have even that contractor in in Ithaca who ended up writing off a portion of his building to contribute to the to the project was key. So creativity But but there's always money too. And I found that especially with our work in Watertown, where when we went into Watertown, we were told there's no money in this community. And there's definitely money, it's just finding the right leadership to drive the right vision, to pull it all together, I think is key. So this slide just talks a little bit about the basic roles that each entity could have in a community and should be responsible for. So just offer that up as added. Thought.

Yeah, one thing I would add to, which I appreciate that Mac touched on in his presentation, is the kind of grassroots efforts that BID creation really needs to be. So in your different communities. I think one of the things that needs to be gauged is what the relationship is between the city and the business community or the property owners in your community. So when we created a BID in the City of Janesville for the downtown, the property owners had a lot of distrust of the city. And so the while I provided them with services for like mapping and giving them the tools that they needed to be able to create a BID themselves, the city really had us take a step back in order for it to be successful. And it really had to be championed by the property owners, and them sorting out what it is that they want, not the city coming in and saying this is what you need. So I just wanted to add that. So it depends on the relationship and the trust that's there and who all the players are at the table. But something to consider.

This chart just shows different resources that are tools for each different entity that they can leverage. For example, what a city can leverage what a housing authority and RDA and some communities they don't have the housing a separate Housing Authority and an RDA, but they have a Community Development Authority, which is a more efficient way to do this.

And Wisconsin law statutes have been created to make the CDA an opportunity for that. Chambers BIDs and even I don't have the county EDL on this. But there these are just some options for funding or resources.

Sharon, (1:27:44) And I'd put the last slide up so that everybody has the contact information for Kristin and Dana at Redevelopment Resources.

Bill Ryan, (1:27:56) Just to kind of get things wrapped up here pretty soon. I have another few slides to share with you after 9:30 If anyone wants to stay around. It's regarding the history of BIDs in Wisconsin and some statistics about Wisconsin's BID from Chuck Law. Very interesting to see what places have currently and some of their statistics.

But I really want to give a special thanks right now to our presenters, Mack Travis and Gary Ferguson. We're dividing this time for no charge to us to help our communities in the State of Wisconsin. And they've been developing a following here in Wisconsin. And I really appreciate your help with us today and in their availability for questions down the road. But I also want to thank my colleagues, Sharon Lezberg, and Nathan Sandwick and Laurie Lindquist for helping out with today's program. And of course, Tony, and Mack and Gary, for their help in keeping the lights on here. So with that, it's 9:29. And I said I'd let you out early. So, but we'll be around here for a few minutes where additional questions and to share with you some of the materials that Chuck put together. Any final questions or comments?

Mack, (1:29:13) Thank you, Bill for the opportunity. Thank you.

Gary, (1:29:19) It's a pleasure talking to you all. Okay, I hope I hope it warms up soon.

Bill Ryan, (1:29:26) Let's go ahead. Sharon, can you help me put on the Chuck's presentation?

Sharon, (1:29:29) Sure. I do want before folks leave. I noticed a comment in the chat that we might want to touch on which is for those who are staying here. Scott asked can we discuss the powers governance of a BID in comparison to local government? What additional powers do traditional BIDs have in filling vacancies, building upkeep, etc. And so just a minute of clarification about BIDs versus other local government entities?

Gary, (1:30:06) Well, BIDs have limited power. I tried to write that a little bit as a response. We can borrow, we have we can bond. But typically, you would need some sort of backstopping support, since we aren't was a limit to how much we can you know, what, what our stream of income really is. We needed to partner with the city, for example, one of the first projects we did, we talked about eminent domain, when we don't have that authority, the city had that authority. And the city was willing to go to bat for that. We didn't have to, ultimately, but the threat was actually the threat of eminent domain was actually exercised to help make one of those projects move forward. But that's, that's not a Power Pitch. BIDs don't have those types of powers. In I mean, it's always one of the things that I know, we get beat up on sometimes in the public about, well, can't you make that landlord do this? Or do that? Or? The answer is no, no, this is this is America. I mean, we these people have private rights. And they can do what they do with their buildings as they see fit. Our role is to facilitate, our role is to cajole, we've had many, many discussions with people. And, frankly, you know, certainly my work with the BID was, particularly in the early years was so much enhanced by having Mack at my side. Because it was one thing for me to go visit with people, it was another thing for other private entities, and other private business leaders to go and visit with them, you know,. And so, having peers talk to peers sometimes brings much more results much more quickly, than then having, you know, a hard gun do that. And certainly alot more problem with and having some of the city show up and say, Hey, I'm from the city. Let me tell you what I want you to do. Oh, I don't have the power to tell you that. But you know, that's. So I mean, those are those are issues we wrestle with. We wrestle with it right now. I mean, that as cannabis becomes legal in New York, you know, the question about alright, and how are we going to regulate that. I mean, at one time in Ithaca, we had, we had eight bond shops, on our pedestrian mall, it was not a pretty sight for a while. And we looked at trying to regulate that. And we couldn't, the city could, in a limited degree the city chose not to, eventually the market regulated, it is fun. But you know, we're going through that same issue now with the cannabis and we're coming up with some preemptive regulations to try to help. But we do it in partnership, we do it in collaboration, with others, we don't have the powers to do it ourselves.

Nathan, (1:33:04) In a nutshell, in Wisconsin, unless something's changed in the last 20 years, I think there's a minimum of five board members on your business improvement district board. Average is more than that, probably closer to nine, again, unless something's changed recently. But there's advantages to having more than the minimum on your board because you have a broader cross section and basic powers are spending and having a, you're required to have an operating plan that kind of details what your spending plan is. But yeah, with that, it looks like the slides are ready for

Bill Ryan, (1:33:38) These are from Chuck Law, who's our former BID Expert, where he retired at the University of Wisconsin Extension. And just a few quick slides to show you. The first one shows the different BID like entities in the country, and I call different things in different places. So here in Wisconsin, its business improvement districts will have gone by different names elsewhere in the country. Next slide. shows the location of where the BIDs are in Wisconsin, Chuck makes a point here that many of these locations also overlap with communities that have been a main street designation or are affiliated with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's Connect Communities program. is on here. The various BIDs there.

Dana, (1:34:29) Hey, Bill. Yeah. Can I chime in a second on that last slide with BIDs across Wisconsin? Awesome. So one thing we did when we created the or we're interested in figuring out what a BID would look like for Janesville was we invited some similar communities in Wisconsin that had BID and their BID managers to come and do a presentation to kind of like a town hall meeting and stakeholders for downtown to hear how their BID were structured, and finance. And what their process was like, the pros and cons and the relationships that had to be in place. And that was instrumental to getting it passed because Janesville had had a BID in the 80s, closed it, and had two other attempts that failed. And so this was like the last attempt to create one. And so it was it was vital to have those folks from Racine, Kenosha. I got some input from Appleton and it was just it was, it was really impactful. People that came opposing it left, if not on board, at least like okay, I'm gonna think about it.

Bill Ryan, (1:35:57) That sharing with the community where they're doing their successes. In the next slide. This is from Chuck again -- just a few stats here. The average BID in Wisconsin is made up of 158 tax parcels. They're assessed at an average of \$3.23 per \$100,000 of value. In the average operating BID in Wisconsin is \$300,000. In that always going to be to hire a manager. We have a diverse mix of it's in. Chuck also indicated he has a site set up on Facebook called Wisconsin business improvement districts, page and BID. And you have access to this if you'd like.

Kristin, (1:36:47) Bill can I ask you to go back one slide, please. When it says the operating budget is the average operating budget is \$300,000. That's not all just from tax, BID tax revenue? Is it? That might be from municipal contributions as well, because I think that's, I don't know if that's what do you think, Dana?

Dana, Um, that's a really good question. I think the BIDs in like Milwaukee Downtown are probably skewing that. Yeah. Yeah. Good point, like, a lot. But for communities that are, you know, upwards of 60,000 That's what I kind of found, just because of the value of properties tend to be there denser. Downtown, so.

Bill Ryan, (1:37:43) Okay, thank you. Chuck's contact info, if you want to get his response to a question, is on the bottom of the screen, BIDhelp@gmail.com. No, actually, I think it's a different email that he various that was on the site updated yesterday. It's good. So again, like Wisconsin, Davidson, Wi Fi ID si

n Wi fi@gmail.com. So to reach Chuck, where you can reach me, I can reach out to you. So it's 939 minutes past. Any closing thoughts remarks?

Unknown Speaker, (1:38:37) Can I ask one more question on Wisconsin law. Does it have to be 50% or 50.1? Whatever, approving the creation of a BID, is that a different percentage of the of the base that approves? Anybody know?

Dana, (1:39:02) So? To create it, it has to it has to be 50%. It's it's kind of like Mack said it you get to that. If you're splitting hairs. Is it in the best interest of the community to move forward with creating it if it's like that narrow of a margin? So yes, but -- take a temperature reading. How successful and how much of an opposition is there going to be? And I think so, even before you get to where you can get it approved by city council. I believe it's 40% of the property owners can sign a petition to stop it from even getting that far. They have 30 days from the time that you say you're going to present it to the city council, from public hearing notice to city council meeting, to sign a petition.

Nathan, (1:40:17) I'm glancing, it looks like you're right. 40%, I think based on valuation of the property, yeah.

Anyone else?

Dana, Thanks Nathan.

Nathan, Well I'm looking at the statutes right now. But you know, they don't make sense to me without someone with experience.

Dana, (1:40:49) Yeah, that's the other thing about the law, it gives a lot of kind of bound, like, the boundaries are pretty big, about, like, how to create it, the finessing of what it looks like for your community. So here's another example. Similar to Mack, the original Ithaca BID plan was enormous. The Janesville downtown is very linear, and it's divided by a river. So one of the things that the property owner said, we'll have that we're on the outskirts, or we're like, Well, why should we be taxed higher for services, we're not going to even be able to enjoy it like snow removal, snow removal doesn't come to our area. So they figured out a way to create tiers within the downtown for the services that they wanted. So the core of the downtown was taxed at a higher rate than, like, tier two. And then the third tier basically gets services like beautification, and banners and so forth. So that was like the, the less expensive tier and then to like full service, security cameras and whatever else the downtown would want for that kind of part of the downtown. But that wasn't, that's not in the law. There's no There's it's just lots of meetings, and lots of what do we really want and what is it going to cost and who is going to benefit? And where do you draw the lines, and it's intense?

Mack, (1:42:37) Well said.

Bill Ryan, (1:42:40) Well, I can get all this information and summarize it and wrap it up and post the archive of the discussion on our website so that we have a reference to this. With any other closing thoughts, otherwise, stay warm. It's probably 10 degrees warmer now than it was when we started. So thanks, everyone. And I'll be back with an email summarizing how to get more information and how to access this session. Thanks, everyone. Thanks,

Kristin, (1:43:16) Gary and Mack. Thank you.