

# 05hr\_SC-JCEDCA\_sb0379\_pt01



(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

### 2005-06

(session year)

### Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

### Committee on ... Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs (SC-JCEDCA)

### COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

### INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)  
(**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)  
(**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

\* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (August/2012)

## Senate

### Record of Committee Proceedings

#### **Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs**

##### **Senate Bill 379**

Relating to: the regulation, preservation, and restoration of historic buildings, the supplement to the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit and the state historic rehabilitation tax credit, requiring the certification of downtowns, promoting certain downtown areas in this state, highway projects involving business and downtown areas, the construction of major highway projects involving a bypass, granting rule-making authority, and making appropriations.

By Senators Lassa, Harsdorf, Erpenbach, Leibham, Miller, Plale and Roessler; cosponsored by Representatives Shilling, Vruwink, Seidel, Berceau, Boyle, Fields, Freese, Gronemus, Krawczyk, Kreibich, Lehman, McCormick, Molepske, Moulton, Pettis, Richards, Sheridan, Turner and Zepnick.

October 12, 2005      Referred to Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs.

February 9, 2006      **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present:    (4)      Senators Kanavas, Zien, Reynolds and Lassa.  
Absent:    (1)      Senator Decker.

##### Appearances For

- Julie Lassa, Madison — State Senator, Wisconsin State Senate
- Jennifer Schilling, Madison — Representative, Wisconsin State Assembly
- Jim Schuh, Chippewa Falls — Chippewa Falls Main Streets Committee
- Bud Miyamoto, La Crosse — Downtown Mainstreet, Inc
- Larry Kirch, La Crosse — City of La Crosse
- Mike Schatz, Eau Claire — Downtown Eau Claire Inc.
- Kim James, Marshfield — Main Street Marshfield

##### Appearances Against

- Tim Krause, Marshfield — Main Street Marshfield

##### Appearances for Information Only

- None.

##### Registrations For

- Warren Barberg — Healthy XChange LLC
- Allyson Gommer, Chippewa Falls — Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bryan Brooks, Madison — Wisconsin Builders Association

Registrations Against

- None.

March 1, 2006

**EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD**

Present: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

Moved by Senator Zien, seconded by Senator Decker that **Senate Amendment 1** be recommended for adoption.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Noes: (0) None.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 1 RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 0

Moved by Senator Lassa, seconded by Senator Decker that **Senate Amendment 2** be recommended for adoption.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Noes: (0) None.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 2 RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 0

Moved by Senator Zien, seconded by Senator Decker that **Senate Amendment 3** be recommended for adoption.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Noes: (0) None.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 3 RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 0

Moved by Senator Zien, seconded by Senator Decker that **Senate Amendment 4** be recommended for adoption.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Noes: (0) None.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 4 RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 0

Moved by Senator Zien, seconded by Senator Decker that **Senate Bill 379** be recommended for passage as amended.

Ayes: (4) Senators Kanavas, Zien, Lassa and Decker.  
Noes: (0) None.  
Absent: (1) Senator Reynolds.

PASSAGE AS AMENDED RECOMMENDED, Ayes 4, Noes 0

James Michel  
Committee Clerk

**SENATE BILL 379 (LRB -3558)**

An Act to renumber 44.02 (24) and 101.121 (4) (a); to renumber and amend 71.07 (9m) (a), 71.07 (9r) (a), 71.28 (6) (a) and 71.47 (6) (a); to amend 13.48 (7), 13.48 (15), 59.69 (4m), 60.64, 62.23 (7) (em), 71.07 (9m) (c), 71.28 (6) (c), 71.47 (6) (c), 101.121 (4) (b), 101.19 (1) (intro.), 254.61 (1) (f) 2. and 823.21; and to create 13.48 (10) (c), 20.143 (1) (gb), 41.11 (1) (bm), 44.02 (24) (b), 44.02 (24d), 71.07 (9m) (a) 2., 71.07 (9m) (g), 71.07 (9m) (h), 71.07 (9r) (a) 2., 71.28 (6) (a) 2., 71.28 (6) (g), 71.28 (6) (h), 71.47 (6) (a) 2., 71.47 (6) (g), 71.47 (6) (h), 84.013 (3g), 86.36, 86.37, 101.121 (3) (c), 101.121 (4) (a) 2., 101.121 (5), 101.121 (6), 101.975 (4), 560.03 (21m) and 560.083 of the statutes; relating to: the regulation, preservation, and restoration of historic buildings, the supplement to the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit and the state historic rehabilitation tax credit, requiring the certification of downtowns, promoting certain downtown areas in this state, highway projects involving business and downtown areas, the construction of major highway projects involving a bypass, granting rule-making authority, and making appropriations. (FE)

**2005**

- 10-12. S. Introduced by Senators **Lassa, Harsdorf, Erpenbach, Leibham, Miller, Plale and Roessler**; cosponsored by Representatives **Shilling, Vruwink, Seidel, Berceau, Boyle, Fields, Freese, Gronemus, Krawczyk, Kreibich, Lehman, McCormick, Molepske, Moulton, Pettis, Richards, Sheridan, Turner and Zepnick**.
- 10-12. S. Read first time and referred to committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs ..... 391
- 11-01. S. Fiscal estimate received.
- 11-02. S. Fiscal estimate received.
- 11-08. S. Fiscal estimate received.
- 11-17. S. Fiscal estimate received.

**2006**

- 02-09. S. Public hearing held.
- 02-28. S. Senate amendment 1 offered by Senator Lassa (**LRB a2280**) ..... 647
- 02-28. S. Senate amendment 2 offered by Senator Lassa (**LRB a2265**) ..... 647
- 02-28. S. Senate amendment 3 offered by Senator Lassa (**LRB a2262**) ..... 647
- 02-28. S. Senate amendment 4 offered by Senator Lassa (**LRB a2469**) ..... 647
- 03-01. S. Executive action taken.
- 03-03. S. Fiscal estimate received.
- 03-04. S. Report adoption of Senate Amendment 1 recommended by committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs, Ayes 4, Noes 0 ..... 684
- 03-04. S. Report adoption of Senate Amendment 2 recommended by committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs, Ayes 4, Noes 0 ..... 684
- 03-04. S. Report adoption of Senate Amendment 3 recommended by committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs, Ayes 4, Noes 0 ..... 684
- 03-04. S. Report adoption of Senate Amendment 4 recommended by committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs, Ayes 4, Noes 0 ..... 684
- 03-04. S. Report passage as amended recommended by committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs, Ayes 4, Noes 0 ..... 684
- 03-04. S. Available for scheduling.
- 05-11. S. Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1 ..... 853









**Vote Record**  
**Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs**

Date: 3/1/2006

Moved by: Lassa

Seconded by: Decker

AB \_\_\_\_\_ SB 379 Clearinghouse Rule \_\_\_\_\_  
 AJR \_\_\_\_\_ SJR \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment \_\_\_\_\_  
 AR \_\_\_\_\_ SR \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

A/S Amdt 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_

Be recommended for:  
 Passage     Adoption     Confirmation     Concurrence     Indefinite Postponement  
 Introduction     Rejection     Tabling     Nonconcurrence

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
<b>Senator Ted Kanavas, Chair</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator David Zien</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Thomas Reynolds</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Julie Lassa</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Russell Decker</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____

Motion Carried       Motion Failed

**Vote Record**  
**Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs**

Date: 3/1/2006

Moved by: Zien

Seconded by: Deck

AB \_\_\_\_\_ SB 379 Clearinghouse Rule \_\_\_\_\_  
 AJR \_\_\_\_\_ SJR \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment \_\_\_\_\_  
 AR \_\_\_\_\_ SR \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Amdt 3  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_

Be recommended for:  
 Passage     Adoption     Confirmation     Concurrence     Indefinite Postponement  
 Introduction     Rejection     Tabling     Nonconcurrency

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
<b>Senator Ted Kanavas, Chair</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator David Zien</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Thomas Reynolds</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Julie Lassa</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Russell Decker</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____

Motion Carried       Motion Failed





January 7, 2006

Rep. Jennifer Shilling  
State Capitol, Room 120N  
Madison, WI 53703

SB 379  
?

Dear Rep. Shilling:

I am writing to demonstrate my support for the Downtown Wisconsin Act.

I have traveled, lived and conducted business all across North America. I have always felt that it was the unique downtowns that help you differentiate one town from the next. The health of these downtown business districts is what helps to define the health of the community. In today's economy people can conduct business and purchase products from all across the country. So how can communities continue to attract new businesses and visitors if there is nothing that differentiates it from all the others?

I believe that communities have to highlight their "natural resources". For most communities, especially here in Wisconsin, this means highlighting the community's uniqueness through its historical buildings. This bill strives to tear down obstacles and encourages business owners to restore this evidence of the past.

The proposed legislation of the Downtown Wisconsin Act is a well-rounded approach to revitalization of our downtowns and central business districts.

In addition to making it easier to restore historical buildings the Downtown Wisconsin Act would provide other incentives for businesses to invest in downtown. The Downtown Wisconsin Act would help to ensure that the DOT wouldn't someday reroute traffic away from their business. This Downtown Wisconsin Act would help to preserve the on-street parking conveniently located in front of their business. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will make it easier to for these businesses to create visible signs for their businesses. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will bring more potential customers to downtowns by adding an incentive to State Government offices to locate their offices in downtowns. This Downtown Wisconsin Act would require that the Department of Tourism develop a marketing focus on downtowns. This mandate could only help to create a complete picture of all of the tourism opportunities available. And the Downtown Wisconsin Act would require the development of emergency response plans for rebuilding central business districts faced with major damages.

The Downtown Wisconsin Act would help to bring businesses to downtown, will help them to thrive and will put in safe guards in the event of a disaster. The Downtown Wisconsin Act would help to create a downtown revitalization plan that would enhance the state's economy, nurture small business development, and promotes smart growth.

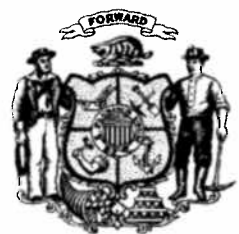
I firmly support all aspects of the Downtown Wisconsin Act. I say this even with the understanding that it is possible that my own community may not meet the criteria to become a Certified Downtown. I believe the betterment of surrounding communities will have a positive ripple effect for all Wisconsin Communities.

Sincerely,

Peggy Collinsmith  
Owner of Cerebral Systems, Inc. (located in Denmark, WI)  
President of the Denmark Community Business Association  
Board Member of the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



CHRIS LASHORNE  
.....  
ARCHITECTURE  
123 N 7<sup>th</sup> Street La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601  
608-785-2626

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January 7, 2006

**Committee for Urban and Local Affairs**  
Madison WI 54650  
Attn: Rep. Dan Le Mahieu

**Re: Downtown Wisconsin Act**  
**AB 793/SB 379**

Dear Rep. Le Mahieu,

We are writing you to express our support for the Downtown Wisconsin Act. All of the aspects of this legislation are very important to the survival of all cities of moderate size, particularly La Crosse. La Crosse is positioned to become the center of Western Wisconsin in business, retail, and tourism. All it needs is a push from this legislation.

La Crosse has a wonderful collection of historic buildings. Most of the owners are barely able to cash flow from one month to the next. Specifically most of the upper floors of these buildings have been rendered unusable over the last 50 years because tough financial times, the opening of a mall on the outskirts of town, stricter building codes, and the advent of Federal ADA requirements. Several aspects of the downtown Act will help relieve the financial burden to convert and make the upper floors once again useable and financially viable. This will in turn add to the tax base not only for the city but, county and state. It will help to assure the successful completion of our downtown TIFF district, thus setting the stage for a prosperous next generation that is seeing their education and community support systems deteriorate due to a lack of funding.

We would also urge the addition of an amendment to allow local control of business signage along designated state roads within historic districts. This fact has come to light recently due to a question of local authority regarding the right a business/building owner to remove and replace signs and canopies along our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets that are a state highway. The absolute most important thing for business/building owner to be successful is their signage. The design, character, and location of signage should be controlled by the local historic district not the DOT. La Crosse is in the process of setting up a design control overlay district for the historic district that would administrate and preserve all aspects of design for buildings and signage for this district. The needs of the local business/buildings should come first before the needs of the DOT, that does little to encourage cars to shop and buy services in our downtown.

In conclusion, we fully support and urge the passage of the Wisconsin Downtown Act for these reasons.

Sincerely,



Chris La Shorne, A.I.A.  
Chair of DMI Design Committee

Committee Members:

Barb Kooiman-Mississippi Valley Archeological Center, Audrey Kader-City and County Rep, Tim Kabat-City Planning Dept., Tony Asher-Dir. Regional Center for Arts, and business/building owners Carla Callies, John Satory, Todd Ondell, Mike Kiel, , T.J. Peterslie, Mark Fortney, and Paul Kwiecinski,







*Mark Johnsrud*

*Mayor*

*City of La Crosse*

January 9, 2006

SB 379  
?

Rep. Jennifer Shilling  
State Capital Bldg Rm. 120N  
P. O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Jennifer,

I understand that there will be a committee hearing regarding the Wisconsin Downtown Act. Regrettably, I cannot attend, but the City will be represented at the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting in Eau Claire. Thank you for your efforts in following up on this important legislation for all of Wisconsin downtowns. The City of La Crosse supported this bill the last time it was introduced and whole-heartedly supports it again.

Of particular note is an amendment that the City requests, which would allow businesses in commercial areas along State highways to have projecting signs over the sidewalks, as well as awning signs over the sidewalks. Cities such as La Crosse, that have an historic downtown which is traversed by State highways, are unable to accommodate businesses whose signage projects into those highways. The City is seeking an amendment to allow signs and awning signs to project over a sidewalk as long as there is no projection into the actual traveled portion of the roadway.

There are numerous positive attributes to this legislation, but first and foremost this legislation will enhance all commercial downtowns within the State. Thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

*Mark Johnsrud*  
Mayor Mark Johnsrud  
City of La Crosse

jrb

**GRAND RIVER • GREAT CITY**





*Our Mission: To enhance community identity, heritage and pride through the revitalization, restoration and business development of downtown.*

January 9, 2006

Rep. Jennifer Shilling  
120 North, State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

SB 379

Dear Representative Shilling,

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the Downtown Wisconsin Act, AB 793 and commend you for seeing the need for such legislation in our state, particularly in smaller rural communities.

As a Main Street community, Platteville is blessed to receive the technical assistance which is available through the Wisconsin Department of Commerce Bureau of Business Development staff. However, due to the number of communities in the program, a reduction of both staff and budget, and constraints placed on staff travel, services are limited. As a matter of fact, the number of support staff has not increased since the inception of the program in 1987, yet the number of communities has increased eightfold.

The Main Street Program has an excellent history of success in communities that employ the Four Point Approach to economic development: based on job creation, new businesses, storefront rehabilitations to name a few, the program has provided an excellent Return on Investment to the communities in which they are located. And, programs provide excellent guidance to communities concerning such things as upper floor housing, TIF funding, use of Redevelopment Authorities as funding sources, and historic preservation of downtown properties. In many instances, programs are able to implement loan pools to fund downtown projects, thus providing incentives to building and business owners to restore storefronts and ultimately raising the taxes returned to their city. Increasing the number of staff at the state level from 4.5 to 6.5 is an excellent way to ensure the continued success of downtowns throughout the state.

Being from a community that has just experienced a major highway by-pass, I can say that the issue of signage on the state right-of-way has created a number of issues for businesses, both near the by-pass and in the downtown. We asked to put a roof sign directing traffic to our historic downtown on a building near an exit and were told that it was not acceptable to the DOT. It is very necessary to bring people off the highway and into the community in order for our small businesses to survive and grow. And, since Platteville is slated for a major highway project in our downtown in 2006, the issue of paying for parking lanes will directly affect our community, as well. Finally, the education of local building inspectors, thus encouraging a more consistent application of the Historic Building Code, is an excellent idea. Since the Main Street Program is based on historic preservation as a means of economic development, encouraging the use of the Historic Building Code would go a long way toward increasing restoration of historic buildings, thus assisting programs with meeting their goals of economic development.

Thank you for your persistence with this bill. It is, indeed, a way to revitalize our communities, restrict sprawl and keep Wisconsin on the true path of the Wisconsin Idea.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Zmina, Program Manager





10 South Bridge Street, Suite 1 • Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-2812

January 31, 2006

Representative Mary Williams  
87th Assembly District  
Room 18 West State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8953  
Madison 53708

RE: AB-794

Dear Representative Williams:

I am writing as a member of the Alliance of Wisconsin Main Street Communities to express my opposition to AB-794. The proposed legislation raises several concerns that are outlined in the attached letter from the National Main Street Center Executive Director.

The mandate to select Clark County through legislative authorization is a key concern. There is a lack of clarity about the selection process at the county level. This legislation would override Wisconsin Main Street's existing and essential competitive selection process.

Currently the existing Wisconsin Main Street program is under staffed and basic services to participating communities may be in jeopardy. I do not believe that there are insufficient resources to support a new county-wide program.

According to the attached letter the proposed legislation likely would exclude Wisconsin Main Street from meeting the national accreditation standards. The proposed program does not meet the National Main Street Center's standards for use of the Main Street name.

I have been in the position of Main Street Executive Director and affiliated with the Wisconsin Main Street program for nearly 14 years. I have witnessed wonderful accomplishments brought about by Main Street first hand. There has recently been a gradual erosion of Wisconsin Main Street program funding and staff. Thank you for your consideration of the above concerns. I am hopeful that my input is helpful.

Sincerely,

Jim Schuh  
Executive Director

Cc: Committee on Rural Development & Sponsors of AB-794

found  
in the  
SB 379 file



10 South Bridge Street, Suite 1 • Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-2812

## CHIPPEWA FALLS MAIN STREET, INC.

### RESOLUTION SUPPORTING

#### The Downtown Wisconsin Act

*The Downtown Wisconsin Act* is a comprehensive economic development package that has been created to revitalize central business districts across the state. It will augment the state's economy at the local level, foster small business development, and prevent urban sprawl. This 2005 Act includes proposals aimed at supplementing programs that are already effectively assisting in central business district growth and combating many of the barriers affecting current downtown development and rejuvenation.

This proposed legislation will improve the environment for downtown revitalization by:

- Expediting certification of downtowns to be eligible for the WI Main Street program
- Adding staff to the Wisconsin Main Street program to assist newly certified downtowns
- Requiring WI Dept. of Tourism to assist certified downtowns in their tourism marketing
- Improving WI Dept. of Transportation policies regarding downtown development
- Facilitating the preservation and restoration of historic buildings through a more liberal interpretation of the State Historic Building Code
- Requiring State office buildings to locate in central business districts unless the cost is 10 percent greater than what it would be in an outlying area

Chippewa Falls Main Street has been supportive of the *Downtown Wisconsin Act* since it was first introduced in 2003. This legislation will increase access to the Department of Commerce Bureau of Downtown Development and other state resources.

This resolution was adopted by the Chippewa Falls Main Street Board of Directors January 17, 2006.

Donald W. Baker      Teri Stahl      Carved  
Made the Motion      Offered a Second      Action



## MAIN STREET



NATIONAL TRUST  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Found in  
the SB 379  
file

January 31, 2006

Jim Schuh, Secretary  
Alliance of Wisconsin Main Street Communities  
Via email  
Re: AB 794

Dear Jim:

As director of the National Trust Main Street Center®, I am writing to express several concerns about the proposed legislation AB 794. As you know, this bill would amend the Wisconsin Main Street Program's enabling legislation to a) require Wisconsin Main Street to work with political subdivisions (counties) and b) specifically to accept Clark County as a program participant without regard to merit. While we applaud the sponsors of this bill for their intent to bring Wisconsin Main Street services to additional communities, we believe that the proposed program modifications would actually reduce the program's ability to serve communities in a quality fashion. I strongly encourage you and the Alliance to oppose this amendment to Wisconsin Main Street's enabling legislation.

Our concerns about the proposed county-wide Main Street program legislation center on the following key areas:

- Insufficient resources to successfully launch a county-wide Main Street program at this time. A county-wide program initiative would require a significant amount of staff time to design and launch appropriately. Wisconsin Main Street staff capacity currently is maximized with its obligations to existing Main Street programs. While Wisconsin Main Street staff is highly talented, we do not believe the program can or should take an initiative of this magnitude without additional staff to adequately design and support such a program. To do otherwise would significantly reduce existing Main Street programs' access to state staff time and would result in a sub-standard county-wide program.
- The provision that prohibits political subdivisions that might be served by a county program from participating in Wisconsin Main Street. This provision precludes communities from starting their own Main Street programs – even if their issues and needs are complex enough to warrant a Main Street program focused exclusively on their own downtown district. In effect, a county-wide program would prohibit municipalities from receiving the full benefit of affiliation with Wisconsin Main Street.
- The mandate to select Clark County through legislative authorization. The legislation overrides Wisconsin Main Street's essential competitive selection process and allocates state resources to a site which may or may not be prepared to use those resources well.
- The lack of clarity about the selection process at the county level to determine which communities would be served. The legislation suggests the elimination of a competitive selection process, which is an essential element to ensure success and preparedness for Main Street organizations at the local and state level;
- The Main Street brand and trademark. The National Trust for Historic Preservation holds the trademark for the name "Main Street" as it relates to historic commercial district revitalization and we carefully control the use of the Main Street brand. Simply put, the proposed program does not meet our standards for use of the Main Street name.
- The legislation's threat to pending accreditation for Wisconsin Main Street. The National Trust recently adopted accreditation standards for state Main Street programs, including a requirement

### *Protecting the Irreplaceable*

1785 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W. • WASHINGTON DC 20036-2117  
202/588-6219 • FAX 202/588-6050 • [HTTP://WWW.MAINSTREET.ORG](http://www.mainstreet.org) • EMAIL: [MAINST@NTHP.ORG](mailto:MAINST@NTHP.ORG)



for a competitive selection process of local programs. Unfortunately, the proposed legislation likely would *disqualify* Wisconsin Main Street from meeting the national accreditation standards.

To expand on the subject of resources:

As written, AB 794 would allow up to five "political subdivisions" which could include counties. Wisconsin Main Street is not adequately staffed at the present time to enable it to redesign and adapt its highly specialized program of services to individual downtowns to a county client, or to provide the level of services necessary to ensure that countywide program participants get off to a good start. Wisconsin Main Street has provided a consistently high quality level of services to local Main Street organizations, ensuring that they have the technical assistance needed to develop local organizational capacity and strategies for success. The state has wisely limited the number of towns that are selected each year for the past few years due to strains on staffing and budget levels. The legislation does not limit the number of communities within a county that would be served, nor does it define the process for selecting communities within the counties. The broad nature of the amendment could easily over-burden staff and create a situation in which county-wide participant communities and all existing Wisconsin Main Street programs needs are under-served.

To expand on the importance of competitive selection:

Wisconsin Main Street's success is a direct result of the fact that it has a rigorous application and selection process that ensures that those communities that are selected to participate in the state program are ready to implement a comprehensive Main Street revitalization strategy and that the State of Wisconsin is making the best use of its limited dollars and staff resources. Applicant communities must demonstrate that they have broad-based support to implement the Main Street Four-Point Approach™, adequate funding, need, commitment to historic preservation and to hiring staff, and a pedestrian-oriented commercial district (among other factors). These standards are almost universally used by other coordinating programs, as is the competitive selection model. Unfortunately, the proposed legislation short-cuts that process for at least one county (Clark County), effectively undermining the importance of a competitive selection process and eliminating parity among other participating Main Street districts who have successfully competed for designation and Main Street services. Further, the legislation establishes a dangerous precedent against competitive selection which, in the short and long term, could greatly diminish the success of Wisconsin Main Street overall.

The National Trust greatly values the partnership we have with the Wisconsin Main Street program. Wisconsin Main Street is a model program, due in large part to its ability to maintain high standards of participation and to ensure that it has appropriate resources before taking on additional communities or initiatives. The program has been extremely effective to date, and we strongly hope that this legislation is defeated so as to maintain the program's integrity, effectiveness, and strength.

Sincerely,



Doug Loescher, Director  
National Trust Main Street Center





February 6, 2006

Senator Ted Kanavas, Chair  
Committee Members  
Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs

RE: Support for approval of Senate Bill 379.

Dear Chairman Kanavas and Committee Members,

I am the Executive Director of Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. (DMI) and represent the board of directors of our non-profit, private business organization who have been implementing our Master Plan for the economic redevelopment and revitalization of our Central Business District – Historic Downtown La Crosse and riverfront. We began the implementation process in 1993 and have had phenomenal successes since. A few examples of those successes, since 1993, are:

- \$160 + million dollars have been made in public and private reinvestments.
- 270 downtown residential units in restored upper floors and freestanding units constructed. We are projecting that this number will double in the next 2-3 years.
- Downtown employment of 8900 now surpasses previous 1994 DOT projections (20 years ahead of their projection) and is the highest in our cities 150 year history.
- Major high-tech corporations have built multi-million dollar buildings, bringing high paying jobs into the downtown and national recognition to our city and state.
- We have created one of the largest Historic Commercial Districts in the state, with 96 buildings contributing to that national/state designation.
- Multi-million dollar redevelopment of our historic Riverside Park levee and the creation of a beautiful riverwalk...both have become tourist signature projects for our city.
- A new \$42 million state bridge just opened next to our original historic Mississippi River bridge bringing new access into our downtown for continued future development.
- Currently, an additional \$40 + million dollars of new projects have begun in 2005. We are projecting another \$100 million dollars of new development projects over the next 6 years.
- In 2002, downtown La Crosse received the prestigious and highly coveted "Great American Main Street Award" for the work of historic preservation and economic renewal.

The list of successes is huge and continues to grow daily. Historic Downtown La Crosse is now mentioned as a "model for successful redevelopment of a downtown" throughout the tri-state area.

The successes we have achieved could have happen in a speedier fashion if we would have had the opportunities and development tools that are listed in AB 793 and SB 379. I believe any Wisconsin downtown community interested in saving its Central Business District (CBD) will have a much more greater opportunity to do so with the legislative approval of these bills. If these bills are approved by the legislature, we in Historic Downtown La Crosse, will have a renewed opportunity to continue our work and build upon the successes we have already achieved...in a much more faster and positive development mode.

Senate Bill 379 support letter,  
Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs  
2-6-06

All of us at DMI, and our downtown retail/service businesses, our new corporations, and our new residential community residents ask for your unanimous support to the approval of these bills. We, and all downtown communities, big or small, will be able to renew, redevelop, revitalize their deteriorated and blighted CBDs that exist and bring tremendous economic growth successes to the entire State of Wisconsin. Redevelopment successes have been proven by La Crosse and a number of other state downtowns already...it does work and we need continued support from the state to assist the economic revitalization of our towns and cities. What is accomplished will benefit all the citizenry of Wisconsin.

Our organization is not a state sponsored organization, but rather an independent Main Street organization that follows many of the guidelines from the National Main Street organization.

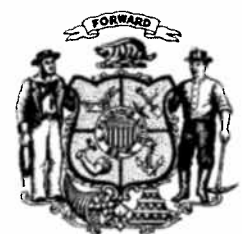
Thank you for your support. "On Wisconsin"!

Most Sincerely,

Bud Miyamoto  
Executive Director



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Marshfield Area  
Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
PO Box 868  
700 South Central Avenue  
Marshfield, WI 54449

Barb Fleisner  
Executive Director  
715-384-3454  
Fax: 715-387-8925  
E-mail: barbfleisner@marshfieldchamber.com  
Web: www.marshfieldchamber.com



February 6, 2006

Senator Julie Lassa  
State Capitol  
Room 109 South  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

SB 379

Dear Senator Lassa,

I will be attending the Governor's Conference on Economic Development this Thursday, thus unable to supply oral testimony to LRB 3348 and 3558: The Downtown Wisconsin Act. Please feel free to forward this letter to members of the Senate Job Creation, Economic Development, and Consumer Affairs Committee.

On behalf of the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry whose mission is to encourage economic development community-wide, we understand the importance of maintaining a healthy and vibrant downtown to fulfill our plan of work. We also applaud the efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce for their assistance with our community's Main Street Program.

Having said this we strongly support the following provisions of the act:

1. Increase the Department of Commerce Staff by two new positions to be funded by fees collected by the Wisconsin Historical Society for administration of the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, thus being able to provide additional assistance for rebuilding a central business district for Main Street communities and to those communities who may not have been able to qualify for the "Main Street Program".
2. In order to facilitate an orderly process to prioritize Commerce assistance, we support the need to have communities become certified. We would encourage the Department of Commerce Bureau of Downtown Development to lead these certification efforts.
3. Our recent experience with the Department of Transportation has been very collegial, thus we do not see the necessity for new state mandates for highway widening, parking lane construction, or bypass construction. However, there must be continued strong discussion with local partners to ensure that the public roadway is not only easily accessible by motorists, but also aesthetically pleasing, well signed, and commerce encouraging. We think this can occur through the public hearing process currently in place and an increased awareness of the importance of these attributes of local downtowns with state agencies.
4. We support the increase in state historic rehabilitation tax credits from 5 percent to 20 percent of qualified expenses to be consistent with federal law.

Senator Julie Lassa

Page 2

LRB 3348 & 3558: The Downtown Wisconsin Act

5. We encourage attempts to educate local inspectors and encourage a more liberal application of the codes in order to increase the restoration of historic buildings.
6. We also feel that the Department of Tourism does support local Convention & Visitors Bureaus. It should be up to individual communities to place emphasis and related resources into marketing their respective downtowns. This goal we feel can be accomplished not by a mandate but by increased awareness of visitor importance to historic places.

I thank you for your efforts in being part of this act's authorship. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

*Barb Fleisner*

Barb Fleisner  
Executive Director







*Mark Johnsrud*  
*Mayor*  
*City of La Crosse*

February 8, 2006

Senator Kanaavas, Chair  
Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs

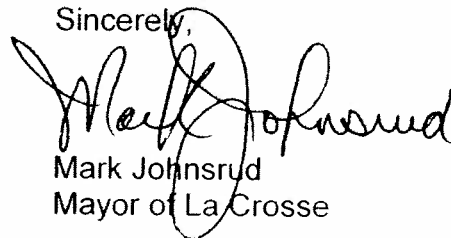
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 379, Wisconsin Downtown Act

Dear Senator Kanavas and Committee Members:

Business growth is a top priority here in La Crosse. With budget shortfalls, growth should be a top priority throughout the State. It has come to our attention that current law is restricting business growth in our State Highway Corridors. Business signage is not allowed within State right-of-way. Most historic business districts have structures built to the edge of the sidewalk. Business signage in these corridors typically is attached to the side of the building which overhangs the sidewalk. This signage does not obstruct but does infringe on the right-of-way. State statute does not allow any signage to infringe on the State right-of-way. Business requests to place new signage in the right-of-way have been denied by the City of La Crosse to the dismay of the business community.

I need your help. We have an opportunity to promote business growth and revenue for the State of Wisconsin through the support of Senate Bill 379. Please support Senate Bill 379, the Wisconsin Downtown Act. This bill would allow municipalities to grant requests for signage which hangs over State right-of-way within our historic business districts.

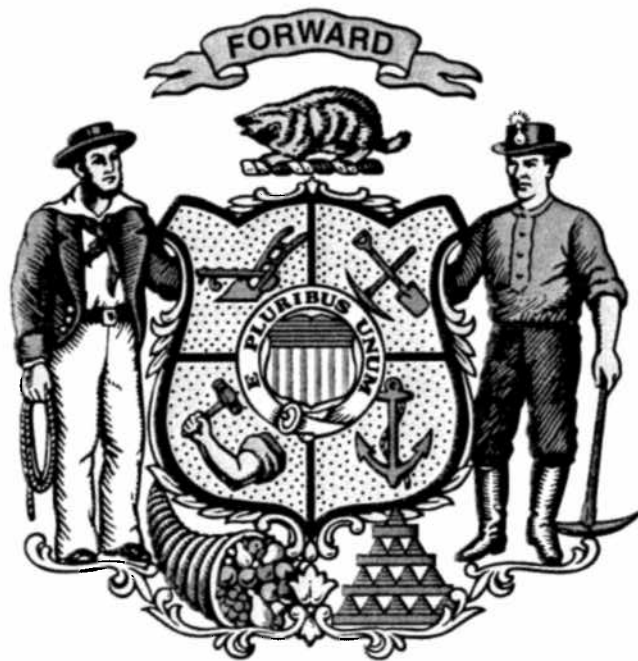
Sincerely,

  
Mark Johnsrud  
Mayor of La Crosse

MJ:jo

**GRAND RIVER • GREAT CITY**

400 La Crosse St • La Crosse, WI 54601 • Phone (608) 789-7500 • Fax (608) 789-8261 •  
johnsrudm@cityoflacrosse.org





# CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

February 9, 2006

Senator Kanavas  
Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs

RE: The Wisconsin Downtown Act

Dear Senator Kanava,

The City of La Crosse supports the Wisconsin Downtown Act because it will help strengthen and preserve historic Downtowns by encouraging development and job creation. It also helps to ensure that future transportation projects do not have an adverse impact on existing Downtown business communities.

Furthermore, La Crosse supports this Bill for the following reasons:

### Historic Benefits

- The Bill will empower the State Historical Society to act as a mediator between a property owner and the local government or Wisconsin Department of Commerce. We feel that the State Historic Building Code is not utilized as much as it could be in La Crosse because it is difficult to understand and viewed as not worth the trouble or effort. Under this Bill, the State Historical Society would serve as an educational resource in developing an informational pamphlet and increasing public awareness on the use of State Historic Building Code.
- The Bill will increase the percentage of State tax credits made available to property owners who want to rehabilitate their building. La Crosse has seen many projects emerge in its Downtown with the help of Low Income Housing Tax Credits through WHEDA and Federal New Market Tax Credits. Very few, if any, are a result of Historic Tax Credits because the process is viewed as too much of a hassle for only 5%. By increasing the percentage, we are increasing the incentive to preserve our historic buildings.

### Transportation

- This Bill takes away the fiscal incentive for communities to eliminate on-street parking when doing Highway projects with the Department of Transportation. (DOT) It will help ensure that Central Business Districts and Downtown merchants can provide on-street parking for their customers and maintain their existence. La Crosse, like many other towns and cities in Wisconsin, have State Highways that travel through their Downtowns

SB 379  
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and want to ensure that any future transportation projects adversely affect our Downtown merchants.

- Signs, Bypasses

The adoption of this bill would provide La Crosse with additional tools that can be used to enhance the revitalization efforts already occurring in our Downtown. This Bill is not only important for urban cities such as La Crosse, it is also important for smaller cities and rural communities like Viola, Westby, and Coon Valley. Cities and communities that need the resources and incentives to revitalize their Downtowns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lawrence Kirch".

Lawrence Kirch  
Director of City Planning





# **JULIE LASSA**

## **STATE SENATOR**

**SENATOR JULIE LASSA'S SENATE BILL 379 TESTIMONY**  
**The Downtown Wisconsin Act**  
**Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development, and Consumer Affairs**  
**Thursday, February 9, 2006**  
**1:30 pm**  
**Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce Building**

Chairperson Kanavas and committee members - thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you today on Senate Bill 379, the "Downtown Wisconsin Act."

The 2005 Downtown Wisconsin Act is a culmination of a four-year effort coordinated by downtown planners, business owners, historic preservationists and developers across the state. Former Representative Dan Schooff, Representative Jennifer Shilling and I have spent a great deal of time working to develop this piece of legislation and address concerns raised by all groups that came to the table. We feel that Senate Bill 379 is a culmination of this work and are hopeful that the Committee will agree.

There are several legislative proposals included in the 2005 Downtown Wisconsin Act that will grow the state's economy at the local level, foster small business development, and prevent urban sprawl. These proposals are:

- Create a definition and certification process for downtowns interested in economic development efforts.
- Establish guidelines to assist communities in reconstructing central business districts that pursue revitalization efforts.
- Require the Department of Transportation to consult with Commerce and local downtown planning boards when considering construction projects that impact central business districts.
- Direct the Department of Tourism to promote travel to certified downtowns and Main Street program areas.
- Facilitate the preservation and restoration of historic buildings through a more flexible interpretation of the State Historic Building Code.
- Request the Joint Legislative Council study methods of promoting rural historic preservation efforts.

During discussions with the mayors, Chambers of Commerce, and other economic development groups in my district, they all echoed the necessity of legislation that would allow them to restore older downtown buildings and increase traffic to their Main Streets. Newer buildings and businesses have met some success in building efforts, but it is often

the historic buildings that go un-renovated due to the challenging building codes and costs.

This legislation will promote downtowns and Main Streets throughout Wisconsin and bring much needed tourism dollars to areas that are the heart and soul of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 379, the Downtown Wisconsin Act. At present, Wisconsin is struggling through a time of economic downturn. Governor Doyle and the State Legislature have both made a commitment to introduce an economic development package that will truly improve Wisconsin's economy. We are pleased to present the Downtown Wisconsin Act at a time when bipartisan cooperation is essential to the economic health of our state.

It is clear that by working to revitalize and rehabilitate our local communities, our State as a whole will prosper. By creating practical solutions to many of the barriers to revitalization efforts while expanding programs that are key to successful redevelopment, this bill will make a positive imprint on the future of Wisconsin's Downtowns. We ask for your support of the Downtown Wisconsin Act, so that the expanded economic opportunities outlined in this package may become a reality. Thank you.







Senate Public Hearing  
Committee on Job Creation, Economic Development and Consumer Affairs  
February 9, 2006  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

RE: Senate Bill 379

Downtown Eau Claire, Incorporated (DECI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the development of business, residential, and cultural resources and activities within Downtown Eau Claire, Wisconsin. DECI is represented by 19 people serving on the Board of Directors, 51 members, and over 75 volunteers. On behalf of the 150 DECI Board of Directors, volunteers, and members, this letter of testimony is in support of Senate Bill 379, which provides for certain activities that would be beneficial to communities that are working to revive their downtowns. DECI supports the regulation, preservation, and restoration of historic buildings, supplement of federal and state historical tax credits, requiring the certification of downtowns, promoting downtowns in the state, the issue and role of downtowns in state highway projects and bypasses, and granting rule-making authority and appropriations.

A list of the Board of Directors and membership is attached.

Thank you for your consideration and this opportunity to provide you feedback on Senate Bill 379.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Schatz", is written over a white background.

Michael R. Schatz  
Executive Director  
Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated

A thick, black, wavy horizontal line that spans across the width of the page, positioned above the contact information.

**Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated**

203 South Farwell Street PO Box 5148 Eau Claire, WI 54702-5148  
(715) 839-4914 (715) 839-4939 FAX [www.downtown-eau Claire.com](http://www.downtown-eau Claire.com)

Last Name	First Name	Representing	Address	Zip	Phone	Fax	E-Mail	Term Expires
Adler	David	Eau Claire City Council	401 Monte Carlo Drive	54701	834-7145		david.adler@charter.net	NA
Arntson	Marlene	Historic Randall Park Neighborhood	607 W Grand Ave	54703	832-3000			January-07
Aspenson	Lisa	North Barstow/Medical BID	301 Water St #3	54703	832-0022		ohmona@sbcglobal.net	NA
Biegel	Toby	Eau Claire City Council	1609 Valmont Ave	54701	836-7426			NA
Carpenter	Stan	Third Ward Neighborhood	409 Summit Avenue	54701	839-0373		slcarpen@charter.net	January-06
Dickey	John	Luther/Midelfort Mayo Health System	PO Box 1510	54702	838-6447	838-6732	dickey.john@mayo.edu	January-07
Fisher-Blakeley	Marty	West Grand Avenue BID	115 W Grand Ave	54703	834-7851		momfb@aol.com	NA
Foster	Deb	Downtown BID	4124 Lark Ave	54703	835-1300		debfofster@charter.net	NA
Grossklaus	Charlie	Royal Credit Union	PO Box 970	54702	833-8105 (W) 834-0068 (H)	833-8178	charlesg@rcu.org	January-07
Huggins	Mike	City of Eau Claire	City Hall 203 S. Farwell St	54702	839-4902	839-6177	mhuggins@ci.eau-claire.wi.us	NA
Jenson	Dennis	Eau Claire County	2921 Mountaray Dr.	54703	834-7699		denjen@wwt.net	NA
Kimblin	Paula	Third Ward Neighborhood	PO Box 8	54702	839-2508 832-4910	839-2567	paula.s.kimblin@xcelenergy.com	January-06
Krause	Robert	Corporate Technologies & BIS	6 S Barstow St	54701	x203	835-1844	rkrause@invisibleinc.com	January-06
Larson	Tom	Past President	3502 Oakwood Mall Dr-A	54701	834-2449 x217 832-6439 (H)	834-8099	tlarson@larsonmanagement.com	January-06
Meyer	Nick	Volume One Magazine	17 S Barstow St	54701	552-0457		mail@volumeeone.org	January-07
O'Halloran	Teresa	Ruder Ware	PO Box 187	54702	834-3425	834-9240	toholloran@garveylawfirm.com	January-06
Roth	Jen	Eau Claire Regional Arts Council	316 Eau Claire St	54701	832-2787		iroth@cv-arts.com	NA
Trettin	Bernie	North River Fronts Neighborhood	428 N Farwell St	54703	832-1542		nrfnapres@charter.net	January-07
Van Es	Ken	Eau Claire YMCA	700 Graham Ave	54701	836-8460 832-8176 (H)	836-8467	ken@eauclaireymca.org	January-06
Wildenberg	Janine	Redevelopment Authority	131 S Barstow St	54701	839-6347 (W)		janine.wildenberg@usbank.com	NA

2006 Officers	
President	Charlie Grossklaus
Vice President	John Dickey
Secretary	Paula Kimblin
Treasurer	Teresa O'Halloran
Presidential Appointee	Ken Van Es

# **DECI Members**

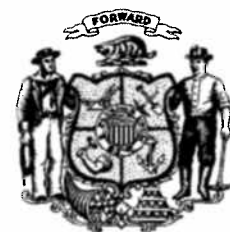
DECI was able to continue its mission of downtown revitalization in 2005 because of the generous support of the following organizations and individuals:

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<b>Baird &amp; Co</b>	<b>M&amp;I Bank</b>
<b>Banbury Place</b>	<b>Marlene &amp; Dave Arntson</b>
<b>Benjamin Haas (Benny Ha Ha)</b>	<b>Marty Fisher-Blakeley</b>
<b>B-Framed Galleries</b>	<b>McKinley Companies</b>
<b>Business Internet Services</b>	<b>Michele Mueller (Imagination Station)</b>
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>Luther/Midelfort</b>
<b>Charlson's Manufacturing</b>	<b>Nelson Properties</b>
<b>Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild</b>	<b>Northwestern Bank</b>
<b>Cigan Properties</b>	<b>One Source Imaging</b>
<b>City of Eau Claire</b>	<b>RCU</b>
<b>DiscoverNet</b>	<b>Reach, Inc.</b>
<b>Downtown BID</b>	<b>RiverLooks Family Hair Care</b>
<b>Eau Claire Regional Arts Center</b>	<b>Ruder Ware (Garvey Anderson)</b>
<b>Family Resource Center of EC</b>	<b>SBC</b>
<b>Flaten Retirement &amp; Investment</b>	<b>SDS Architects</b>
<b>General Growth Properties</b>	<b>Sikers Furniture</b>
<b>Harmon Solutions Group</b>	<b>Stan &amp; Linda Carpenter</b>
<b>Health Education Network</b>	<b>Steve and Lorrie Anderson</b>
<b>Hillside Dental</b>	<b>The Hair Den</b>
<b>Houligans</b>	<b>The Jackson Agency</b>
<b>Jim Massey</b>	<b>The Mousetrap</b>
<b>John Torgerson</b>	<b>Unitarian Universalist Fellowship</b>
<b>John's Sewing Center</b>	<b>US Bank</b>
<b>Just Local Food Co-op</b>	<b>Wells Fargo Bank</b>
<b>Lenmark-Gomsrud-Linn</b>	<b>Yellow Dog Knitting</b>
<b>LJM Properties</b>	



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Downtown Wisconsin Act**

SB 379  
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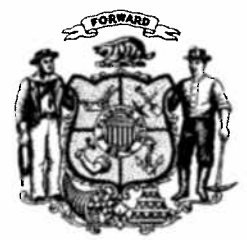
Dear Rep. Schilling:

As the Viroqua Main Street Program's executive director, and on behalf of the Viroqua Main Street Program's Board of Directors, I sincerely and wholeheartedly support the Downtown Wisconsin Act. Our small city faces many challenges including a bypass scheduled for 2012. In fact,

Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton initiated a "pilot" project using Viroqua's story. The WI Main Street Program is a valuable tool used by many cities. The Bureau staff provides expertise and technical support to 34 WI Main Street Programs that have expressed a grass roots commitment to revitalize their central business districts using a comprehensive strategy based on historic preservation, economic restructuring, and promotions. Collectively we have created over 14,000 new jobs, attracted almost 2,900 new businesses, and generated over \$675,000,000 in public and private investment since the program began in 1988. Estimated real estate taxes generated by building rehabs and new construction is \$60,5123,300. Estimated state sales tax generated by new businesses is \$193,070,00. Estimated state income taxes generated by new jobs is \$90,475,632. "Main Street" downtowns play a vital role in our state's economy and quality of life. The Downtown Wisconsin Act would protect and enhance all that we've worked for!

Respectfully,  
Ingrid Mahan,  
Viroqua Main Street Program's Executive Director

Ingrid Mahan  
Executive Director  
Viroqua Partners  
220 South Main  
Viroqua, WI  
54665  
(608)637-2575



**WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR  
JULIE LASSA  
24<sup>th</sup> Senate District**

SB 379  
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Along with Representative Jennifer Shilling, I have put together a legislative package aimed at rejuvenating Wisconsin's downtowns. Together, our focus has been to create a downtown revitalization package that will augment the state's economy at the local level, foster small business development, and prevent urban sprawl.

The finalized Downtown Wisconsin Act is a synthesis of proposals aimed at combating many of the barriers affecting current downtown development, and augmenting programs that already serve as a beacon for effective central business district growth. The following legislative proposals were determined through ongoing discussions with local downtown developers, the Wisconsin Downtowns Action Council, city planners and state agency representatives.

**I. Main Street**

Currently the Main Street Program has 4.5 staff. These positions include a director, assistant director, design coordinator and business coordinator and a half time clerical position.

1. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will add 2 new positions in the Department of Commerce for the Bureau of Downtown Development. These positions will be funded through the fees collected by the Wisconsin Historical Society for administration of the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.
2. While the Main Street program will continue to assist two to three new traditional communities a year, they will also be able to provide assistance to non-Main Street Communities with differing needs on a less frequent basis.
3. Additionally, the Main Street program will be required to develop emergency response plans for rebuilding central business districts faced with major damages. Cases such as Ladysmith have shown us that the state lacks the guidance needed to ensure a coordinated effort to rebuild a downtown business district.

**II. Certified Downtowns**

The Department of Commerce Bureau of Downtown Development will be required to create a definition and a certification process for downtowns. By becoming a certified downtown, communities will be able to qualify for a variety of assistance in their revitalization efforts discussed below.

**III. Department of Transportation Policies Toward Downtown Development**

Current DOT policies towards highway bypasses and highway widening frequently lead to reduced traffic through central business districts and decreased ease of access

to area businesses. In many cases there is a lack of communication between local planners and the Department of Transportation during these construction projects.

1. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will require that for all highway projects in Certified Downtowns and Main Street Program sites the DOT will consult with the Department of Commerce and the local board or downtown planning organization on the best course of action. For highway widening projects the DOT will make the retention of on street parking through central business districts a priority in Certified Downtown Areas.
2. **Parking Lanes:** Often, the DOT will only pay for the construction on live lanes on state highways going through a community, and not parking lanes. State highway grants may seem to be a lucrative way for a community to receive funding.

The DOT will be required to provide matching funds for parking lanes as well as live lanes in Certified Downtowns and Main Street communities, so that communities are not discouraged from keeping their on street parking for short term economic reasons.

3. **Bypasses:** Highway bypasses rerouting auto traffic away from central business districts are a major impediment to successful downtown revitalization projects.

The DOT will be required to offer all Wisconsin communities the option of constructing an active bypass rather than a passive one, when the DOT deems that a bypass is necessary.

An active bypass is one where drivers have to make an active decision to exit and bypass a business district. Truck traffic and autos wishing to avoid the central business district would be rerouted around the town while the bulk of auto traffic would still pass through it. If a community chooses an active bypass, then the DOT must comply with this decision.

4. **Signage:** Many downtown businesses are located on state highways and face serious advertising challenges that other businesses are not subject to. This places our central business districts at a significant competitive disadvantage and discourages redevelopment initiatives.

The DOT will be required to allow downtown businesses across the state to construct reasonable awning signs or other advertisements even if they enter the right-of-way of a state highway.

#### IV. Historic Buildings



1. **Historic Building Tax Credits:** Currently, developers and small business owners often feel discouraged from redeveloping historic downtown properties due to the increased costs of such buildings. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will increase the state historic rehabilitation tax credit from 5 percent to 20 percent of qualified expenses for rehabilitation of historic buildings in Main Street Communities and Certified Downtowns.
2. **Historic Buildings Codes:** In 1986, Wisconsin created the State Historic Building Code. Almost 20 years later, there are still questions as to whether these codes are being used and whether the hindrances to using them are too great. Local communities especially struggle with the rehabilitation of upper floors.

Currently the implementation by local inspectors of the Historic Building Code varies from community to community. Under the original Historic Building Code bill there was a plan for education of local inspectors to provide for consistent application of the codes, but these provisions did not make it into the final version of the bill.

The Downtown Wisconsin Act includes provisions to educate local inspectors and encourage a more consistent and liberal application of the codes in order to increase restoration of historic buildings.

## V. Department of Tourism

1. Currently, the Department of Tourism does not market downtowns. The Downtown Wisconsin Act will require the Department of Tourism to market Wisconsin downtowns, focusing on Main Street Communities and Certified Downtowns. The Department of Tourism will work on a marketing strategy to brand Wisconsin downtowns as tourist destinations, and on the implementation of that strategy.

## VI. State Government Office Location

1. Currently, federal government offices give priority to downtowns when scouting locations for their local offices. They are allotted a 10 percent preferential cost difference in order to locate their offices there. This serves to attract businesses and customers to the central business district. State government offices give no such priority to Wisconsin downtowns. However, such a priority is not only good for the central business districts of Wisconsin municipalities, but it is a Smart Growth decision that avoids urban sprawl.

The Downtown Wisconsin Act will echo federal regulations on government offices by requiring State office buildings to locate in central business districts unless the cost is 10 percent greater than what it would be in an outlying area.



# The Selection Process

Communities are selected for participation in the Wisconsin Main Street Program after going through a rigorous review process. Following are the areas that are considered:

1. **Need.** The need for the Main Street Program in the community and its expected impact on the community.
2. **Organizational Capability** The capability of the applicant to successfully implement the Main Street program.
3. **Public Sector Commitment.** The level of public sector interest in and commitment to a local Main Street program.
4. **Private Sector Commitment.** The level of private sector interest in and commitment to a local Main Street program.
5. **Financial Capacity.** The financial capability to employ a full-time manager (or a half-time manager if the population of the community is 5,000 or less), fund a local Main Street program, and support area business projects. A variety of funding sources should be utilized. A minimum budget of \$60,000 annually (including in-kind donations) is expected for communities hiring a full-time manager, while a minimum budget of \$40,000 annually is expected for communities hiring a part-time manager.
6. **Physical Capacity.** The cohesiveness, distinctiveness, and variety of business activity conducted in the proposed Main Street Program area.
7. **Historical Identity.** The historic significance of the proposed Main Street Program area and the interest in and commitment to historic preservation.

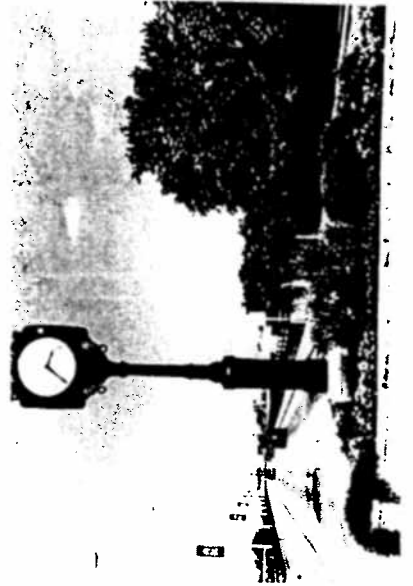


*Viroqua: Downtown streetscape amenities*

In the event that the Department of Commerce must choose between two highly rated municipalities, it will base the selection on which adds more to the geographical and population diversity of Wisconsin's Main Street Communities.

SB 379  
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*De Pere: Downtown*



## What is Main Street?

The Bureau of Downtown Development administers an economic development program targeting Wisconsin's historic commercial districts. Bureau staff provides technical support and training to Wisconsin communities that have expressed a grass roots commitment to revitalizing their traditional business districts using a comprehensive strategy based on historic preservation.

The Wisconsin Main Street Program was established in 1987 to encourage and support the revitalization of downtowns in Wisconsin. Each year, the Department of Commerce selects communities to join the program through a competitive process. These communities receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Streets to centers of community activity and commerce.

The results have been impressive. Wisconsin Main Street Programs have generated new businesses and new jobs for their respective downtowns; façade improvements and building rehabilitation projects have upgraded the image of Wisconsin downtowns; and promotional activities have encouraged community cohesion.

## Map of Wisconsin Main Street Communities *as of December, 2005*

