



2025 Contract Proposal

The Watertown Main Street Program is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, beautification and economic vitality of downtown Watertown.

We work in partnership with downtown building and business owners, the City of Watertown, and the greater Watertown community to inspire reinvestment and renewal in the city's historic business district.

WATERTOWN MAIN STREET PROGRAM
Funding Proposal to the City of Watertown
Submitted: August, 2025

Proposal Title:

Sustaining and Advancing Downtown Watertown: A 25-Year Legacy of Economic Growth, Beautification, and Historic Preservation

Prepared By:

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Executive Summary

Since its establishment in 2000, the **Watertown Main Street Program** has worked diligently to revitalize, support, and promote the economic, cultural, and historic vitality of downtown Watertown. Over the past 25 years, we've transformed our central business district into a more vibrant, walkable, and economically viable place for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

To continue this progress and meet the growing needs of our community, we respectfully request **increased financial support from the City of Watertown**. With your investment, we will expand our capacity to serve as an economic driver and community convener while preserving our city's unique character and heritage.

Program Overview

The Watertown Main Street Program is a volunteer-driven, nonprofit initiative that operates under the framework of the **Wisconsin Main Street Program** and the **National Main Street Center**. Watertown Main Street Program partners with the City of Watertown and with our Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce. Our work is focused around four key pillars:

1. **Economic Vitality**
2. **Design & Beautification**

3. Promotion & Community Engagement

4. Historic Preservation

Each of these pillars supports a thriving, inclusive, and economically stable downtown district that reflects Watertown's values and vision

Program Achievements in the Past Five Years Alone

1. Economic Vitality

- Assisted in the **recruitment and retention of more than 43 downtown businesses.**
- Help secure **over \$11.1 million in private investment** into downtown storefronts and properties.
- Provided **technical assistance, training, and promotion** for entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- Organized economic-driving events such as the **Craft Beer & Seltzer Walk, Sidewalk Sales, Women Only Weekend (WOW), Bingo, and Jingle Bell on the Square**, which collectively attracted 87,315 visitors each year and generated substantial revenue for local merchants.

2. Beautification & Design

- Installed and maintained **decorative planters, benches, seasonal banners, and public art.**
- Coordinated **community clean-up and planting days**, engaging hundreds of volunteers.
- Supported streetscape enhancements that improve **walkability, safety, and visitor experience.**
- Planning and working with the City of Watertown to prepare for the 2028 Main Street Reconstruction Project

3. Historic Preservation

- Facilitated façade improvement projects on more than **113 historic buildings** using matching grants and expert design assistance.

- Advocated for the **adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings**, leading to revitalized commercial and mixed-use spaces.
- Provided public education through walking tours, interpretive signage, and digital storytelling about the city's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

4. Farmers' Market

- **Expanded Vendor Participation:** The market now hosts nearly 50 vendors each season, including farms, seafood, specialty foods, ready-to-eat options, and artisans.
- **Increased Community Engagement:** Weekly events such as live music, artisan booths, and health workshops have been introduced, fostering a vibrant community atmosphere. The market supports our downtown by cross-promotions.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** The Market partners with Bread Basket & Jefferson County Foodwise Gleaning program & The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Dodge County Aging & Disability Resource Center and the Dodge County Foster Care come to provide information and awareness to these important programs.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** The market implemented a new layout to accommodate more vendors. The market maintains a thorough vetting process for vendors. This allows the market to keep its authenticity and its mission to promote local and variety.

The Need for Increased Funding

While the program has seen tremendous success, **demand for services, events, and revitalization efforts continue to grow**, outpacing our current budget and resources. City funding is critical to ensure:

- **Expansion of Business Support Services**
→ One-on-one coaching, grant guidance, marketing support, and recruitment efforts.
- **Enhanced Beautification Projects**
→ New planters, lighting, public art installations, and wayfinding signage.
- **Greater Preservation Efforts**
→ Tools and incentives to help more property owners restore and maintain historic properties.

- **Larger Community Events & Marketing Campaigns**
→ These directly boost local sales tax revenue and create economic ripple effects citywide.
 - **Preparing for Future Challenges**
→ 2028 Main Street Reconstruction Project, alleyway beautification projects, temporary signage
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Funding Request

We respectfully request an increase in annual municipal support to **\$50,000.00** beginning with the **2026 fiscal year**. This funding would be allocated as follows:

Category	Proposed Allocation
Business Development & Support	25%
Beautification & Placemaking	25%
Historic Preservation Grants	25%
Marketing & Events	25%
Administrative Support	0% (funding comes from fundraising)

The Return on Investment

Investing in the Watertown Main Street Program benefits the **entire city**. A stronger, more vibrant downtown:

- Increases **property values** and commercial occupancy rates.
- Drives **local tax revenue** through increased sales and tourism.
- Enhances **community pride** and quality of life for residents.
- Attracts **new talent and investment** to Watertown.

For every dollar invested in the Main Street approach, communities across the U.S. have seen an **average return of \$26 in reinvestment** — and Watertown is no exception.

Conclusion

The Watertown Main Street Program is more than an organization — it is a **long-term partner** in building a better future for our city. With continued and increased support from the City of Watertown, we can expand on a 25-year track record of success and ensure downtown remains a source of economic strength, cultural pride, and historic beauty for generations to come.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this proposal in more detail and answer any questions you may have.

2025 Main Street Board Members

Ron Counsell, President
Edward Jones Investments

Nicole Smith
Uptown Bar & Grill

Kevin Clifford, Vice-President
Wepco Printing

David Paape

Brian Konz, Treasurer
Oswald-Konz Financial Group

Annie Wedl
Draeger's Floral

Sandra Budewitz
Sandra D's Bridal

Isabelle Eller
Literatus & Co.

Peg Checkai
Watertown Public Library

Steven Board
Maranatha Baptist University

Brooke Hoida
Salon Anvi

Ryan Beyer
Keck Furniture

Fred Smith
Dist. 1 Alderperson

Submitted by:

Stefanie Broere
Executive Director

Watertown Main Street Program

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Sheet1

INCOME	2024	2025
City Contribution	30000	30000
Donations		
Events	80985	78824
 TOTAL INCOME	 110985	 108824
EXPENSES		
Event Expenses	25648	29397
Clock Repair	103	180
Municipal Signage	1621	0
Facade/Sign Grants	9710	11000
Payroll	52672	59297
Misc. Office	210	200
Website	0	400
Phone	650	700
Postage	75	100
Printing/copies	388	400
Google Web Storage	70	75
MS Office Subscription	87	100
Social Media	50	650
Rent	6000	6000
Travel/Mileage	310	300
Conference/Meeting	1236	700
Workmans Comp Ins.	320	325
Insurance-Non-Employee	1699	1700
Membership Dues	40	0
Staff Development(Leadersh	575	0
Hired Professional		1600
Lindborg Awards	96	0
Licenses	144	150
 TOTAL EXPENSES	 	 113274

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
INCOME					
City Contribution	50000	50000	50000	50000	50000
Events	87550	90177	92882	95668	98540
 TOTAL INCOME	 137,550	 140,177	 142,822	 145,668	 148,540
EXPENSES					
Street Clock Repair	100	103	104	107	110
General Office Expenses	10,175	10480	10794	11118	11452
Salary	59740	61532	61532	63378	65279
Watertown Farmers' Market	4635	4774	4917	5065	5217
Façade/Sign Grants	15450	16000		18000	18500
Event Expenses	36000	37000	38110	39253	40430
Relocation Grants			5000		
Clean Up Grants			5000	5000	
Up Grade Grants	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Temporary Signage			5000		
Marketing	1000	3000	5000	2500	1000
 TOTAL EXPENSES	 132100	 137889	 140457	 149421	 146988

Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum of understanding made this ____ day of _____ 2025, between the City of Watertown (City) and the Watertown Main Street Program (WMSP).

Witnesseth: A vibrant and economically prosperous downtown is key to attracting new residential growth and commercial development in Watertown. The WMSP was created in April 2000 and subscribes to the Main Street four-point approach (design, promotion, organization, and economic vitality) for downtown revitalization. Following these guidelines, the City and WMSP work collaboratively to inspire reinvestment and renewal in the city's historic business district. To maintain clear and open communication with the City, a member of the Watertown Common Council has held a seat on the WMSP Board of Directors since the organization's founding.

The City and WMSP desire to continue the excellent progress that has been made toward downtown revitalization and beautification, and to expand upon its positive, collaborative working relationship. To further this endeavor, the City and WMSP hereby agree:

1. The WMSP shall provide the following downtown management services:
 - a) Administer façade grant fund and provide free technical design assistance to downtown merchants and building owners
 - b) Serve a point-of-contact for new downtown building and business owners
 - c) Support the Building, Safety & Zoning Department in efforts to identify, enforce and mitigate building code violations downtown
 - d) Assist property owners with permitting and approvals process for building renovation projects
 - e) Recruit new businesses to the downtown area where applicable, provide marketing assistance and technical support for existing businesses
 - f) Provide connection between merchants/building owners and City Hall
 - g) Maintain email communication list of downtown merchants and building owners
 - h) Purchase, plant and care for Main Street flowers
 - i) Provide funding for streetscape furnishings and lamppost banners
 - j) Publish a downtown newsletter and handbook for care and restoration of downtown buildings
 - k) Support and advocate for small business growth and success
 - l) Ensure merchants feel included as part of the downtown family
 - m) Promote downtown accomplishments through website and social media channels
 - n) Host annual events and activities that draw critical mass to the downtown that include, but are not limited to, Luck of the Irish Bingo, Art on Main, Sidewalk Sales, Downtown

Watertown Craft Beer Walk, Pumpkin Palooza, Women's Only Weekend, and the programming of Santa House

2. The WMSP also administers the Tuesday Watertown Farmers' Market at Riverside Park (May-October). The market provides essential fresh fruits and vegetables to seniors and low-income residents of the community at an affordable cost.
3. Under this contract, the City shall contribute \$50,000 annually to WMSP for a duration of five consecutive years starting Jan. 1, 2026 (payable in four installments of \$12,500 paid by the end of the first month of each quarter). The WMSP shall fundraise the remaining 60% of its annual operating costs.
4. The WMSP Executive Board shall provide quarterly oral reports to the Watertown Common Council. The reports will highlight the accomplishments of WMSP during the previous quarter (including but not limited to private/public monetary investment downtown, building vacancies, façade improvements made and promotion efforts) as well as progress made in achieving WMSP's annual work plan objectives.
5. The WMSP will provide the City with a copy of its annual financial report, identifying all sources of income and expenses. The WMSP will also maintain a database of statistics related to downtown public and private building improvement projects, jobs created/retained, businesses that have opened or closed, the creation of upper-level residences, volunteer hours contributed, and more. The WMSP will present these statistics to the Common Council in March on an annual basis.
6. Since WMSP is partially supported with public funds, the minutes of its Board of Directors meeting will be filed with the City Clerk for review by the Common Council.

This agreement will remain in full force for a period of **five** years beginning on Jan. 1, 2026.

Signed and approved this _____ day of _____, 2025.

City of Watertown

Watertown Main Street Program

Robert Stocks, Mayor

Ron Counsell, WMSP Board President

Megan Dunneisen, City Clerk

Brian Konz, WMSP Treasurer