

2025

Operational Plan Business Improvement District Downtown Portage

Introduction

The following is the operating plan for the Business Improvement District in downtown Portage, Wisconsin. This operating plan has been prepared as a general guide to the purpose, goals, projects and activities of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the area delineated on the attached map. This operating plan was developed based on the needs identified in numerous meetings by downtown property owners, merchants, and other benefactors that are interested in the revitalization and preservation of downtown Portage. This operating plan complies with the requirements of Wis. Stats. Sec. 66.1109 which enables the creation of Business Improvement Districts.

Purpose of the Portage Downtown Business Improvement District

The purpose of this Business Improvement District is to provide an organizational and funding mechanism to support the development, improvement and promotion of the downtown area for the economic benefit of all businesses within the District. In doing so, it is believed that there will also be an added benefit to the general social and economic benefit of the people of the City of Portage and its visitors.

Goals

These goals will be accomplished through the FUNDING of projects that the BID board of directors approves to support. This funding may be through projects directly overseen by the BID board or by the funding of other entities, such as, the Canal Society, the Historic Society, or other contributory organizations. The requests for the funding of projects must be presented to the BID board for approval. The BID board will require accountability and supporting documentation of the expenditure of all funds that they allocate.

1. Fund the marketing and promotional strategies that present a unified image of the diverse offerings of goods and services available in the BID
2. Upgrade and maintain the physical appearance and neatness of the public areas of the BID to make it a more attractive and appealing place to engage in commerce.
3. Co-Fund Efforts in Coordination with the City of Portage, downtown merchants and landowners, Chamber of Commerce and other public and private entities for the development, promotion and maintenance of the BID.
4. Assist individual businesses/property owners in renovation and beautification.

Rev. 02/19/2025

BID Approval – 2/19/2025

5. Fund programs for education and technical assistance for upgrading marketing and retail strategies of individual businesses in the BID area that provide accountability and documentation of their efforts.
6. Fund the planning and development efforts to retain the current business base and bring new businesses and projects into the BID.
7. Educate and inform the public of the advantages of engaging in commerce within the BID.

Creation of Board of Directors

The Portage Downtown Business Improvement District will establish a Board of Directors consistent with Wisconsin Act 184. This board will be responsible for the management of the Business Improvement District. Responsibilities of the board include implementing the operating plans and preparing the annual reports on the district. The board will also annually consider and make changes to the operating plan and submit the operating plan to the City Council for approval.

The board will consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Mayor. The Downtown Revitalization Committee will make annual Board member recommendations to the Mayor and the members shall be as follows:

- No less than four (4) owner/occupants, non-owner/occupants, or combination thereof;
- No more than two (3) at large representatives

The board will conduct its affairs consistent with the Open Meeting law and keep minutes for public record.

Projects and Activities of the Business Improvement District

1. Create a BID Board, representative of all interests within the District, to implement and update the operating Plan for the District.
2. Create special assessment procedures and maintain records of any expenditure within the District as required by Wisconsin Statutes.
3. Impose a special assessment on all benefiting properties within the District to fund the maintenance, beautification and promotional/advertising projects indicated in the proposed budget
4. Coordinate ongoing evaluation and planning for further improvements in the downtown and prepare the annual Portage BID Operating Plan and Budget.

5. Fund the projects and activities deemed worthwhile by the BID board of directors including those formerly administered and funded by Downtown Portage, Inc.
6. Appendix A of this Operational Plan summarizes the planned projects and activities that BID intends to fund and administer.

Description of Business Improvement District

All properties shown within the boundary of the attached map shall be within the Portage Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) with the exception of the following:

1. Properties that are exempt from paying property taxes, such as public utilities and religious buildings.
2. Real property used exclusively for residential purposes (this exemption is required by Wis. Stats. 66.1109).

Method of Special Assessment

The projects proposed in the initial operating plan will be funded through a special assessment. This special assessment will be levied by the City pursuant to Wis. Stats. 66.60.

Assessment shall be pro-rated share of the annual B.I.D. budget based on the assessed value of each property and approved by the BID board of directors.

Description of the Method of Financing

The details of the method of financing will be determined by the City Council and the Finance Committee at the time the project is to be implemented.

Description of How Creation of the District Promotes Orderly Development of the Municipality

The Business Improvement District is being created as a private sector initiative to further the aims of the City's Downtown Revitalization Plan and Master Plan.

APPENDIX A

2025 Planned Projects and Activities

June 7, 2025: Canal Days

November 28, 2025 Holiday Parade & Tree Lighting (Yuletide)