

# CITY OF WISCONSIN DELLS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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This summer our downtown will add new café zones, an expanded river walk, and quite possibly a long-awaited entertainment plaza. The task at hand is to create a more vibrant and entertaining downtown, one that both our visitors and our area residents want to spend time in. As our city government takes efforts to accomplish this, so must the private businesses. No amount of new color schemes, plazas, or banners will do the trick without local property owners and managers doing their part. Substantial policy and structural changes to the downtown are on the horizon. These changes will be aimed at reducing the number of cluttering signs, removal of blighted facades and canopies, and finding means to convert empty storefronts and vacant areas into contributing properties to our economy.

These changes may be resistive by some, but let's remember these changes are driven by the demands and expectations of our tourists and tax payers. It is not the city's goal to force people into compliance, rather to incentivize properties to improve. To do this, we have already developed a matching grant program for downtown businesses to improve their looks. We are working with state and national programs to look for even more funding to help our private businesses transform and improve. And we have been very successful in using economic development dollars from PRT funds to rely on outside, objective consultants to steer our city's growth and make structural improvements without burdening our taxpayers.

However these city resources can only reach so far. It shall not be the policy of our city to pay for projects because property owners refuse to make improvements. We shall work with those property owners who are committed to making calculated and smart improvements, but we will not bank roll complacency or stubborn blight. We must not allow a culture of entitlement to flourish in our local government similar to the one that exists in our federal government today. As we quickly approach our busy 2016 season I encourage all downtown property owners to start planning for the changes that will be expected of them. Our city had to make very difficult financial decisions over the past five years that has finally put us in the position to start investing in our future and our downtown. If we can do it, so can you....and I look forward to what it will bring.

Respectfully,



Mayor Brian Landers  
City of Wisconsin Dells

