

Request for Support of Expanding Exposition Districts for Small Market Communities

The Citizens of Northwest Wisconsin Request

Northwestern Wisconsin requests that the legislature redraft or modify Exposition District legislation to benefit small market communities in their effort to develop modern quality of life, attract and retain Millennial's, and maintain and grow a workforce for current business needs.

Issue Summary:

Request to expand Exposition District enabling legislation allowing for small market communities.

Would allow for a food & beverage, hotel sales tax, and project tax increment to help defray development costs and establish infrastructure for a mixed use development.

Proposed Development in Superior, WI would support local and regional citizens, and increase the appeal of desire as a tourism destination. The proposed mixed use development includes \$125 million in private and public investment, and estimates that it will attract 400,000 outside visitors annually.

A Competitive Disadvantage

Currently Exposition District legislation as written is 20 years old in Wisconsin, and has been used to fund successful projects, which are projected to be economically successful. These projects have and will contribute to attracting visitors, enhancing quality of life within their project communities, and will add vibrant activities in a concentrated format.



A Competitive Disadvantage (Continued)

Communities like Superior, Wisconsin compete against communities like Duluth, MN that have a variety of economic development tools, which includes tools like Exposition Districts. This places Wisconsin communities at a competitive disadvantage as they attempt to modernize and provide modern amenities that citizens and visitors alike expect in a community.

Potential Impact

By expanding Exposition District funding opportunities for small and mid-markets, the legislature will create a locally funded economic development engine that will create exponential growth. Better City Superior has been meeting for two years to propose a mixed use development within the City of Superior. The cornerstone of this proposed development requires an infrastructure investment that can only be funded locally through a funding source such as an Exposition District.

Better City Superior is proposing a development that amounts to a \$125 million public/private sector investment that is leveraged through a 0.5% Exposition District/County Wide food and beverage tax, and 3.5% hotel/motel room tax plus other consumption tax and tax increment tools dedicated back to the District Bonding Repayment for the life of the bonds. This legislation would enable a community to leverage optional expenditures, many of which are made from visitors to the community to provide foundational for funding for a significant economic development project that would benefit local citizens as well as tourists. Superior is across the bridge from Duluth MN, a very powerful tourist destination draw from the MNPLS/ST. Paul MN MSA and stands to gain greatly from creating complementary and dynamic venues within the region.

Further, mixed use proposals such as this often include a variety of projects that meet the needs and desires of various age groups. Both the State of Wisconsin and the NW region of Wisconsin are concerned about brain drain caused by relation of Millennial's, person in their early to mid-20's to areas that are considered to be more desirable to live. Development such as these will help to create what researchers such as Richard Florida have coined as "cool cities."

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Learn more at: www.bettercitysuperior.org

Photos: Conceptual photos for potential Exhibition District projects in Superior, WI