

Organizing Developer Tours

A TOOL FOR RURAL REAL ESTATE SUCCESS



What are developer tours?

Developer tours are organized events that guide developers through a series of potential development sites in a given community. These tours are designed to showcase the community's potential for development and, at the same time, enable communities to demonstrate their readiness for new investment and create relationships for future development within the region.

Centergy Wisconsin Developer Tour 6/13/24

Why are developer tours beneficial?

These tours connect investors, developers, stakeholders, and economic development partners to explore local development opportunities. The tours build networks and offer insight into available opportunities for commercial and residential development projects. The tours allow developers and investors to see for themselves—and develop a deeper understanding of—potential development sites that can create economic and community benefits.

Key Tips for Effective Developer Tours

Goal-setting: Set clear goals and define your focus (housing, business, or mixed-use) to identify and target the right developers based on interest in a specific sector.

Preparation: Ensure that each site visit is well-coordinated; offer detailed information, such as brochures, maps, and zoning details. Visual aids like renderings, development plans, or drone footage can help developers visualize each potential site. This information will help them understand the potential and specifics of each site.

Keep it organized, short, and focused: Limit the number of stops, and make sure each site visit is well-timed to allow developers to ask questions and explore. Arrange group transportation, such as a bus, to keep everyone together and ensure smooth transitions between sites.

Engage local experts: Invite city planners, real estate agents, or economic development staff to join your tour. These local experts can contribute knowledge and expertise about the market and development within the community.

Showcase potential: Highlight success stories of development within the community to help developers see the potential for what can be achieved.

Facilitate interaction: Design the tour to allow time for questions, discussions, and networking. Encouraging developers to interact with local leaders, stakeholders, and one another can lead to valuable connections and collaboration that can benefit future projects. Include testimonials from businesses and residents sharing why they love the community.

Fun incentives: Include a unique experience that is unrelated to the tour, such as a visit to an appealing local attraction. Work with businesses or the chamber of commerce to create swag bags that will help the developer get a feel for your community.

Follow-ups: After the tour, send a recap including property details, contact information, and next steps. This ensures that attendees have all the information necessary to move forward with potential projects.

Timing: Length and choice of days the tours are held can make all the difference. Consider hosting the tour during a community event—like a weekday farmers market, a music series, or a neighborhood festival—that can demonstrate the vibrancy of the community.

Development spec sheets: Include a specification sheet for each development site that includes property/building information, images, maps, and relevant supplemental information such as building improvements, notes, and documents from community engagement conversations and meetings.

Creating a Community Highlights Sheet

This sheet should offer an overview of your community that makes a compelling case for why developers should consider it. Think about what your community and region have to offer for youth, families, individuals, and seniors—including what the different seasons can offer for each of those groups. List gathering places, festivals, weekly events, and places for physical activities. Include testimonials from the community about how they spend their evenings and weekends.

Although you should mainly focus on your community, if you can, include regional events that are within 60 miles or so. Consider including maps, images, or a timeline to help present a complete picture for developers.

Community assets and features you might consider listing include:

- Bicycle or walking trails or proximity to regional paths
- Number of parks in town and nearby state or county parks
- Outdoor recreation opportunities (cross-country skiing, hiking, boating, etc.)
- Museums, theaters, and galleries
- Annual festivals
- Ongoing weekly events
- Community groups
- Farmers markets
- Proximity to metro areas

Resources to Help Connect with Developers

[Commercial Association of Realtors Wisconsin](#)

[Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority](#)

[Housing Assistance Council Training and Technical Assistance](#)

[Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago Community First Developer Program](#)

[Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago Affordable Housing Program](#)

Community Developer Tour Packet Resources

Inside this packet you will find everything you need to host developers in your community. It includes:

- Sample email invitation
- Sample agenda
- Five development site examples (idle site development, multi-family housing development, mixed use development, Main Street development, industrial development)
- [Template](#) (Word document) for your community to use for development specs, maps, history and other information

Each development example includes potential funding programs from state and federal agencies. Not every development will be eligible for all programs.

As you create your own developer tour site examples and community highlights sheet, don't forget to brand it with your organization's logo.

This Developer Tour Kit was developed with the help of Centergy and Door County Economic Development Corporation, who provided support, resources, and guidance.

Developer Tour Email Template

Subject: Invitation: 2025 [Your community] Developer Tour

Dear [Developer's Name],

On behalf of _____ we are excited to invite you to the 2025 [your community] Developer Tour, an exclusive opportunity to explore high-potential development sites, engage with key stakeholders, and gain insights into the economic future of our region.

This year's tour will take place on [date] in [your community], Wisconsin. The event will feature a combination of site visits, networking opportunities, and discussions with local leaders on investment and growth prospects.

Agenda Highlights:

- **Bus Tour:** Key development sites
- **Walking Tour:** Downtown business and cultural district
- **Networking:** Lunch and business showcase
- **Dinner and Speaking Program**

Date: _____

Location: _____

RSVP by [date] to secure your spot.

This event is an opportunity to connect with fellow developers, explore investment-ready sites, and learn about incentives available for development in [community name].

Please feel free to reach out with any questions. We look forward to welcoming you!

Best regards,

[Tour coordinator]

2025 [Community] Developer Tour

[MONTH DAY, YEAR]

10-10:15

Arrive and park at [gathering location]

10:30 a.m.

Meet in [location] for pick-up

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Welcome lunch and networking

12:30–2:30 p.m.

Bus tour of key development sites and growth areas

Site 1 (add name), Site 2 (add name) Site 3 (add name), Site 4 (add name), Site 5 (add name)

3-5 p.m.

Walking tour of downtown business and cultural district

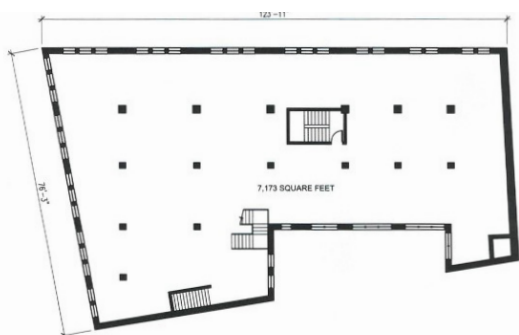
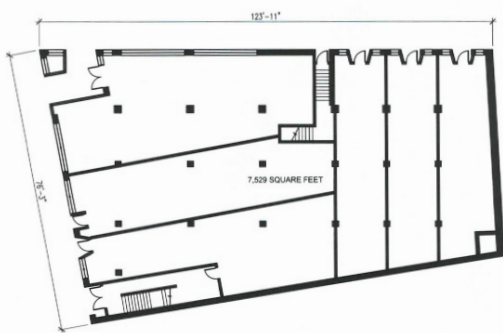
Historical Main Street, creative arts, and mixed-use development sites

5:15 p.m.

Program concludes

Main Street Property Example

170-178 SUMMER STREET, RIPON, WI



Property Information

Owner: City of Black River Falls

Current use: Office

Potential use: apartments, café, retail

Asking Price: \$495,000 (\$10.31per SF)

Appraised Value: \$845,000

Year Built: 1902

Gross Building: 48,700 SF

Net leasable area: 38,280 SF

Lot Size: Building 1.23 acres, parking .47 acres
(striped for 77 vehicles)

Zoning: C Retail, R1 Residential

Electric Utility: Falls Electric

Gas Utility: National Fuel Gas

Water and Wastewater: BRF Water Department

Data/Communication: KNTech

Foundation: Poured concrete

Roof: Concrete deck with rubber membrane 20+ years old

Electric Service: 3-phase, 2,000 amp

Plumbing: Copper

Heating: 2 gas-fired water boilers, both 6 years old

Exterior: Brick

Interior: Plaster

Windows: Sash, insulated glass 16 years old

Building Improvements: Asphalt paving, lawn area

Community Engagement: links to discussion/notes

Notes:

Potential WEDC Funding Resources

[Community Development Investment Grant](#)

[Main Street Program](#)

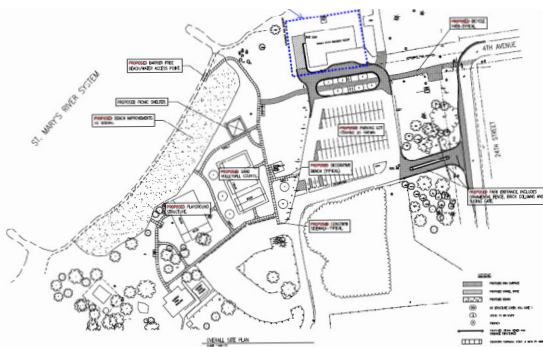
[USDA Rural Business Development Grants](#)

[Restore Main Street Competitive Loan - WHEDA](#)

[Seller's contact information: name, phone number, email]

Mixed Use Site Property Example

OLD PUMPING STATION



Property Information

Owner: City of Black River Falls

Current use: Office

Potential use: apartments, café, retail

Asking Price: \$495,000 (\$10.31per SF)

Appraised Value: \$845,000

Year Built: 1902

Gross Building: 48,700 SF

Net leasable area: 38,280 SF

Lot Size: Building 1.23 acres, parking .47 acres
(striped for 77 vehicles)

Zoning: C Retail, R1 Residential

Electric Utility: Falls Electric

Gas Utility: National Fuel Gas

Water and Wastewater: BRF Water Department

Data/Communication: KNTech

Foundation: Poured concrete

Roof: Concrete deck with rubber membrane 20+ years old

Electric Service: 3-phase, 2,000 amp

Plumbing: Copper

Heating: 2 gas-fired water boilers, both 6 years old

Exterior: Brick

Interior: Plaster

Windows: Sash, insulated glass 16 years old

Building Improvements: Asphalt paving, lawn area

Community Engagement: links to discussion/notes

Notes:

Potential WEDC Funding and Other Resources

[Idle Sites Redevelopment Grant Program](#)

[Community Development Investment Grant](#)

[Brownfields Grant Program](#)

[Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program](#)

[Restore Main Street Competitive Loan - WHEDA](#)

[Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program - USDA](#)

[Seller's contact information: name, phone number, email]

Multifamily Site Property Example



Renderings from community input meeting discussions as suggested development style

Potential WEDC Funding Resources

[Brownfields Grant Program](#)
[Idle Sites Redevelopment Grant Program](#)
[Housing Grant Program - WHEDA](#)
[Housing Tax Credit - WHEDA](#)

Zoning	Description	Quantity	Cost Per Unit
Owner	K.N LLC		
Type	Residential		
Lot Sizes	0.21 to 0.31 acres		
Zoning	R2 Multifamily		
Site Prep	Clearing/grading	1	
Roads	25' paved	2,175 L.F	\$120.00
	14' paved alley	270 L.F	\$100.00
Curb/Gutter		5,804 L.F	\$20.00
Stormwater management	Bioswales/piping	12,000 Sq.Ft	\$24.00
Trails	Crushed limestone	1,565 LF	\$20.00
Sidewalks (5')		14,510 Sq. Ft.	\$6.00
Street Lighting		12	\$3,000.00
Street Trees		60	\$700.00
Sanitary Sewer (8")		1,950 L.F	\$90.00
Manholes		9	\$7,500.00
Sanitary Sewer Laterals (4")	48 connections @ 33'	1,584 L.F	\$75.00
Water main (6")		1,700 L.F	\$80.00
Hydrants		6	\$7,500.00
Distribution Boxes	Shutoffs, etc.	48	\$1,000.00
Water Services (1")	48 connections @ 33'	1584 L.F	\$70.00
Restoration	Terraces	890 Sq. Ft.	\$3.00
Landscaping		1	\$60,000.00
Subtotal			
Contingency			10%
Engineering			15%
Total			

[Seller's contact information: name, phone number, email]

Idle Site Property Example

ST. JAMES SOCIAL



Property Information

Address: 200 Rittenhouse Avenue, Bayfield, WI
Owner: Betty Nelson
Type: Vacant (3 Years), historical
Built: 1884
Asking Price: \$705,000
Appraised Value: \$987,000
Lot Size: 1.23 acres, 7,144 SF
Parking: street and private lot (4 spaces)
Zoning: C2 General Commercial
Electric Utility: South Shore Electric
Gas Utility: Fuel
Water & Wastewater: Municipal
Data/Communication: Northern Communications
Electric: 3-phase, 2,000 amp
Plumbing: Copper
Heating: 2 boilers (1998)
Exterior: Wood siding, plaster interior
Windows: Original pane, sash
Building Improvements: N/A
Community Engagement: Community meeting notes: 2021, 2024

Program Information

The Idle Sites Redevelopment Program provides grants (up to \$250,000) to help communities revitalize large, underused industrial, commercial or institutional sites that have been vacant for at least two years. Minimum acreage sizes are 4+ acres (industrial), 10+ acres (commercial), or 2+ acres (distressed areas).

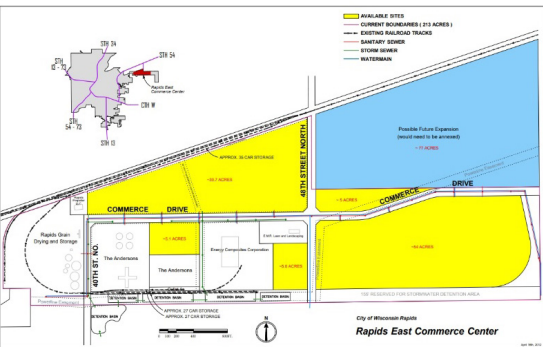
Potential WEDC Funding and Other Resources

[Historic Preservation Tax Credit](#)
[Idle Sites Redevelopment Program](#)
[Community Development Investment Grant](#)
[Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program - USDA](#)

[Seller's contact information: name, phone number, email]

Industrial Site Property Example

WISCONSIN RAPIDS EAST COMMERCE CENTER



Property Information

Address: Southeast corner of the Rapids East Commerce Center

Owner: City of Wisconsin Rapids

Type: Industrial

TIF District: 6

Asking Price: \$256,600

Lot Size: 51.32 acres

Zoning: M3, Industrial Park District

Electric: Two distribution feeders, underground distribution line adjacent to the site boundary is a 13.2 kV line

Gas: Natural Gas (We Energies), 12Mbtu at a pressure of 60 psi

Water and Wastewater: Water main and sewer gravity main
(Wisconsin Rapids Water Works & Lighting Commission)

Data/Communication: 2013, 2020, 2022

Community Engagement: Idea to expand operations in Wisconsin to serve North American aluminum markets

Program Information

The Certified in Wisconsin Program helps communities prepare properties for industrial development by establishing site certification standards. This program ensures sites are ready for development through reviews and assessments. Applicants submit a Letter of Interest and undergo evaluations, with WEDC providing resources and guidance. Sites must meet requirements within 18 months.

Potential WEDC Funding Resources

Certified Sites Program

Business Development Tax Credit Program