

G R E A T E R WAUSAU

2021-2022
RELOCATION
GUIDE



PUBLISHED
BY THE



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G R E A T E R WAUSAU

2021-2022 RELOCATION GUIDE

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Cover photo by Iris Otten

The Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce invites you to enjoy this publication, which uncovers why the Wausau area is a great place to work, play and live. Greater Wausau is about elevating your life, naturally. It's not just about living to work or working to live, but about living fully; about enjoying the kind of balance that allows you to approach every day with heightened anticipation.

You are close to the best of everything Wisconsin has to offer. But the Greater Wausau area isn't just about an abundance of exceptional experiences at your doorstep; you'll find an attitude here that elevates the richness of everyday moments.

This publication is brought to you by the



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Photos by Kelly Puntney

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DOWNTOWN REFRESH

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GREATER

WAUSAU

The demolition of the Wausau Center Mall began in May 2021 and the former downtown fixture has mostly been erased from its former urban landscape. The path to the Mall's removal, with plans for a vibrant redevelopment, began in 2020.

Wausau Opportunity Zone, Inc. (WOZ) is on a mission to revive the downtown area by working in collaboration with local governments, businesses and community organizations. Together, they are embarking upon a new journey to modernize and enhance the quality of life for everyone.

WOZ finalized the purchase of the Wausau Center Mall from Rialto Capital Management on February 4, 2020. The purchase was funded by a pair of local foundations, the Dwight and Linda Davis Foundation and the Judd S. Alexander Foundation, in partnership with the City of Wausau.

The philanthropies have a long, credible history of partnering with local government and community organizations to support projects that improve Wausau's quality of life and economic vitality. Projects include riverfront improvement and Riverfront Park, Arts Block/Grand Theater, The 400 Block, the world-class kayak course, YMCA expansion, Wausau Area Public Schools, North Central Technical College, Boys & Girls Club, South East Asian refugee ESL program and many other community assets.

"This is an exciting time for our city and the main objective of the marketing campaign is to keep the lines of communication open for everyone in our community," said Dave Eckmann, WOZ President.

The website downtownrefresh.com is the news hub for updates, strategic plans, redevelopment renderings, videos and FAQs.

"We want the community to know Downtown Wausau is open for business and that you can still get to your favorite places," said Eckmann. HOM Furniture, located in the former Younkers building, is staying right in its convenient location on Forest Street along with the two mall parking ramps.

Renovation of the over 400,000-square-foot Wausau Center Mall area is key to Wausau's economic future. A mixed-use space – including urban housing, public spaces, office spaces and retail outlets – will create opportunities and generate tax revenue for the City of Wausau.

"The downtown area will become a destination again where businesses thrive and our community gathers for fun, friendship and creating memories," said Eckmann. "Stay tuned as we roll out pertinent details impacting Downtown Wausau both in the near-term and long-term."

For more information email info@downtownrefresh.com.

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12 DOWNTOWN DOZEN

Twelve things to do in Wausau's downtown

Photo by Tom Mortenson

There's plenty to do around central Wisconsin in all seasons, but the summer months in downtown Wausau offers some special opportunities for fun things to do.

Here are a dozen of the top things you'll want to work into your warm weather schedule:

FIND FRESH VEGGIES AT THE FARMERS MARKET

The spring to fall outdoor market held on Wednesdays and Saturdays is your place for locally sourced fruits and vegetables as well as cheese, meat and baked goods. Located in the gathering space near Oak Island Park, the market offers an opportunity to meet the farmers and learn how buying locally grown food benefits the environment, the economy and your well-being.

TAKE THE SELFIE CHALLENGE

Find these iconic Wausau hot spots and take your picture, #wausauwings. There's the red telephone booth by La Prima Deli, the top of Jefferson Street Inn ramp for a cool cityscape in the background, anywhere under the colorful umbrellas of Third Street and in front of one of the city's many amazing murals.



CHEER ON THE CHUCKS

Get your ticket to fun when the Wisconsin Woodchucks are up to bat at Athletic Park. Collegiate players make up the teams in the Northwoods League, the largest organized baseball league in the world.

TAKE A WALKING TOUR OF MUSEUMS

If you haven't guessed it yet, Wausonians love their art. There's plenty to see in the heart of downtown. Stroll between award-winning museums and exhibits including Leigh-Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, Marathon County Historical Museum, 319 Gallery and Center for Visual Arts. They're free and open daily.

SEE DOZEN CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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TACKLE THE OBSTACLE COURSE AT RIVERLIFE PARK

Located along the Wisconsin River, this newer park is packed with free family entertainment, including an interactive playground, paved paths and a workout area with cardio and static weight stations for adults. Top off your visit with an ice cream cone at the concessions building.

DO DINING ON THE STREET

Third Street is the place to be Wednesday and Saturday evenings for al fresco dining and live music. Local restaurants are set up in the street each evening from early summer to early fall. Reservations are recommended.

CATCH THE ACTION AT WHITEWATER PARK

There's nothing quite like Wausau's Whitewater Park where paddlers from around the world make their way through the kayaking course. Wausau Whitewater hosts events and releases throughout the summer. Walk along the River's Edge Trail paved path by the Wisconsin River and you might get a glimpse of a paddler.

Photo by the Wausau River District

DANCE THE EVENING AWAY

Kick back with some friends on Wednesday evenings for great free concerts on the 400 Block. Bring your lawn chairs or picnic blankets and get ready for a good time. Carry-ins are allowed, and food trucks are on-site.

PACK A PICNIC FOR THE 400 BLOCK

Bring your own food or grab and go from Downtown Grocery, La Prima Deli or Polito's Pizza, a nearby restaurant on Third Street. Then, find a spot on the green space of The 400 Block and enjoy the open air. On the annual ChalkFest weekend, consider walking and eating as most seating is removed to make way for the sidewalk artists.

WALK THROUGH HISTORICAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Download a self-guided walking tour map or pick one up at the Woodson History Center and stroll by the homes of the 1800s. View various architectural styles and learn about the prominent citizens who built them. Discover why the area was first called Big Bull Falls.



STORY TIME

The downtown Wausau branch of the Marathon County Public Library offers programming for kids of all ages, as well as adults. The children's section of the library offers a vibrant setting to browse books and features a large fish tank.

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

Downtown Wausau offers an ever-expanding list of shops. Janke's, Wisconsin's oldest bookstore, is a true gem and rare find today amid the online shopping trend. Evolutions in Design promises a unique visit every time by changing up the floral and home décor store on a bi-weekly basis.

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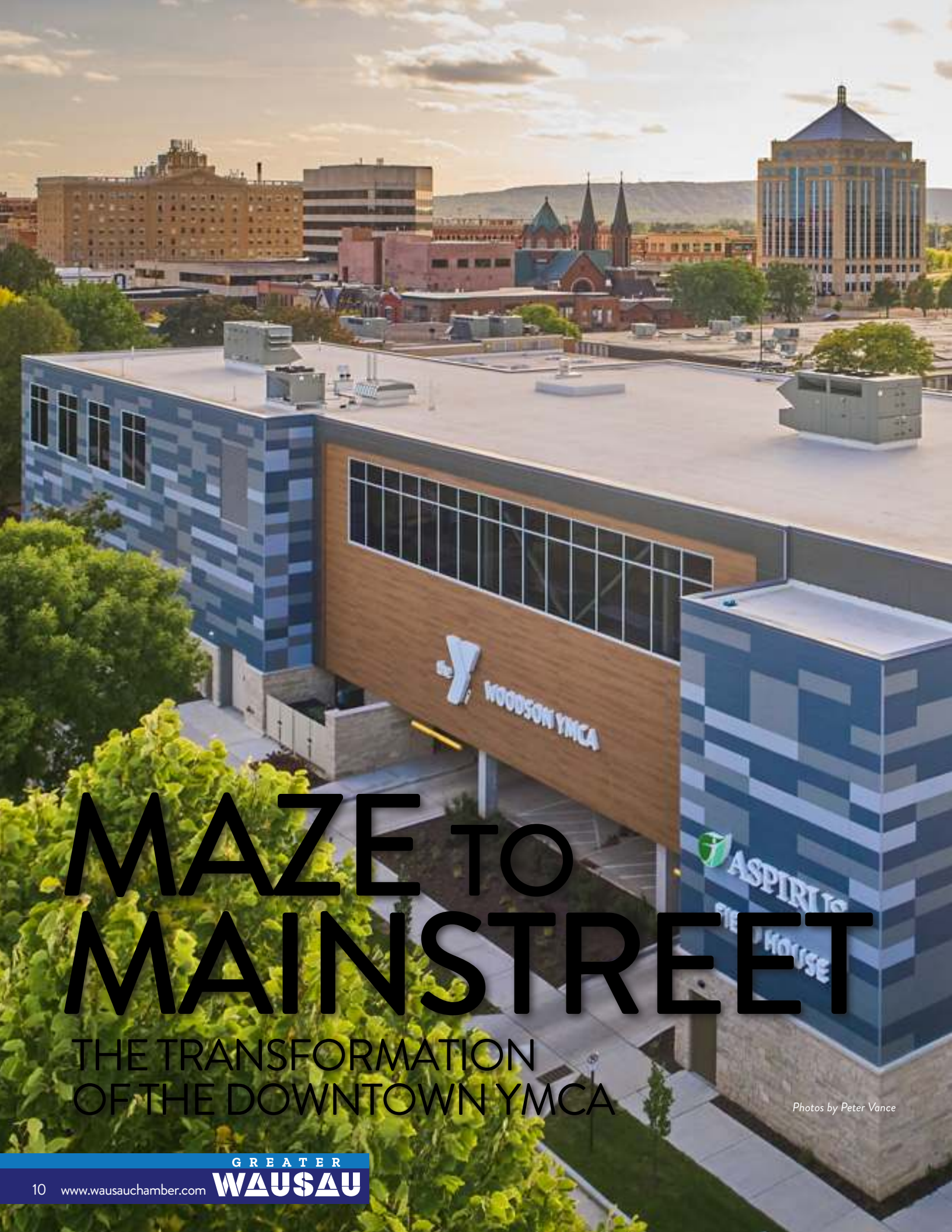
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 WOODSON YMCA

 ASPIRITO
THE HOUSE

MAZE TO MAINSTREET

THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE DOWNTOWN YMCA

Photos by Peter Vance

Gone are the days of navigating the Woodson YMCA in downtown Wausau through a narrow maze of dimly lit and twisted hallways, hidden stairwells and distant program areas. Here to stay is the fully remodeled and expanded Woodson YMCA with a centrally developed, multi-level main street that provides a visual and physical connection from one end of the facility to the other.

The \$25 million project executed by Ghidorzi Design | Build | Develop features a Social Court in the heart of the building, designed for members to connect with each other and decompress after a workout. The Social Court is bordered by complimentary program spaces including multi-purpose rooms, group exercise studios, educational classrooms, offices and child activity areas.

The thriving gymnastics program of the Woodson YMCA finally now has ample space for spectators to go along with its fully remodeled gymnasium. The connecting link widens to provide spacious viewing areas into the gymnastics gym on both the first floor and upper level.

"Part of this plan was to create a state-of-the art childcare center," said Bryan Bailey, CEO of the Woodson YMCA. "We can serve 160 children with the ability to now care for infants and toddlers."

One of the new program areas at the Woodson YMCA is The



Landing. More than a senior center, The Landing aims to offer programs which empower older adults and a place for those 55-plus can connect with each other.

"We serve infants to seniors," said Bailey. "This project should help draw young families and individuals here."

Aspirus is also building a Downtown Health and Wellness Campus just to the west of the remodeled YMCA, offering another new, vibrant facility to the downtown landscape.

Photos and content courtesy of Ghidorzi Design | Build | Develop

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