

DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
of
Peoria

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DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

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DDC Activities

2022 Downtown Rental Market Study



On February 16th, the DDC and the city of Peoria co-hosted a press conference announcing the recently updated Downtown Peoria Rental Market Study. According to the study done by Valerie S. Kretchmer & Associates, **“Despite the pandemic and the increase in hybrid and work from home arrangements, the Downtown apartment market has stayed strong. Our analysis shows continued demand for market-rate rental apartments Downtown over the next five years.”** City officials were encouraged by this news, as evidenced in the article below. The complete study can be found on our website at www.downtownpeoria.us.

Downtown Wayfinding Signage



The Downtown Wayfinding Implementation Committee, led by the DDC, is forging ahead. Committee members are working closely with the Downtown Advisory Commission, Corbin Designs and Ace Sign Company on location and design elements for three to four prototype signs on the Peoria Riverfront. These prototypes will provide valuable input and pave the way for a full-scale wayfinding implementation plan led by the city of Peoria. We will keep you apprised of this initiative and will be excited to share the fruits of our labor with the public in the coming months.

Greater Peoria 2030

Last month, DDC staff and board members were in attendance for the Greater Peoria 2030 Welcome Wagon seminar, an event aimed at fostering positive vibes to attract talent to this great downstate area. HR professionals and real estate representatives were invited to share ideas and to learn about resources available for talent attraction. Several agencies, including the local area chambers of commerce, economic development councils, CEO Council, and the DDC have collaborated on this initiative. We together are ready to grow Peoria! To “Discover Peoria,” visit www.peoria.org.

Results: 2022 Downtown Peoria Rental Market Study



Demand for rental housing units in Downtown Peoria and the Warehouse District appears to be strong - and still growing! A recently-updated Downtown Peoria Rental Market study commissioned by the city of Peoria and the Downtown Development Corporation shows some positive indicators for residential growth in the downtown area. Mayor Rita Ali said the study shows current downtown unit occupancy rates of 98 percent, above the state average of 92 percent.

Cooperage 214



Murray Place



Kickapoo Apartments



Marquette Building

“Ultimately, this study suggests a strong demand for downtown rental housing,” said Ali. “It’s an encouraging sign for new development.” The study estimates demand for 278 to 404 additional market-rate rental units in the downtown and Warehouse District areas through 2026. **“This study really validates the fact that our market, and the demand for this type of market rate housing downtown is there,”** said Urich, noting “downtown” is defined in the market study as also including the Medical and Warehouse Districts.

Additional buildings last opened up for housing in the downtown area in 2018. The study noted many properties currently have waitlists exceeding building capacities. The average age of people living in the downtown area is 33, slightly younger than the city’s average age of 37. Urich said the targeted market for downtown living is a “dual track” of younger residents and older empty-nesters looking to downsize, more so than families with children.

Urich said the city’s focus right now is primarily upon the Warehouse District, where most existing buildings can be redeveloped more affordably under State Historic Tax Credits within the River Edge Redevelopment Zone. He said some office buildings downtown may also eventually become good candidates for a conversion to mixed-use commercial and residential usage.

“I would just say that we eventually expect that to be happening. But it’s an expensive process,” said Downtown Development Corporation president and CEO Michael Freiling. **“We’ll probably have to look at the incentive package and how it’s structured to get the same type of incentive**



Persimmon Lofts



Lofts at Waterfront Place



Winkler Lofts

benefit in, let's say, the central business district, as we would in the Warehouse District.”

Urich said while more than 9,000 parking spaces are currently available throughout the downtown study area, if capital funding becomes available, the city would love to see construction of a parking structure for the Warehouse District. He said the city has also signed onto a redevelopment agreement to place 300 new parking spaces along Commercial Street, south of Washington and next to the WTVP studios.

The average household incomes targeted for downtown residency are between \$35,000 and \$150,000, with \$35,000 the baseline considered minimum to afford \$1,000 in rent with utilities. The current median household income downtown is \$16,650, which includes those residing in existing low-income and senior housing within the study area.

Urich said Low Income Housing Tax Credits could allow for a mix of market-rate and affordable housing downtown. **“I think that that becomes part of the conversation, a part of the equation, is that you look at that and you start to see where a development like that might make sense, or there may be a mix of of both affordable units and market-rate units in development. And we’ve had those discussions with with interested developers in the past,”** he said.

Freilinger said there likely won't be any incentives offered for affordable housing in the downtown area at the state or city levels, citing existing federal programs. **“At some point, we’ll probably see more of that, but right now, because of the market-rate demand is so high, that’s where you’re seeing most of the develop-**

ment projects be in that price category,” he said. “But it will change as the market moves forward.”

First District councilmember Denise Jackson said she expects residential growth downtown to spur additional developments. “As more people are living and working in downtown, we expect to see additional convenience-oriented stores, as well as services, that eventually we hope to see open and serve our growing population,” Jackson said.

At least one additional residential building is expected to open in the downtown market study area later this year. “What we’re looking at is that hopefully over the course of this next year, that we’ll be seeing more buildings coming forward,” Urich said. (Reported by www.WCBU.org)

Development Aids

According to Kevin Evans with the City of Peoria’s Economic Development Dept., there are two separate (recently updated) programs to aid developers who are in the market to update historical buildings:

1. The Façade Improvement Grant
2. Commercial Rehabilitation Program

The latter allows for interior improvements, as well as exterior. The updates use federal dollars to increase the city share from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and both can be used at the same time. Both can be up to \$50,000 from the city, with up to 75% being paid for by the city. The 75% factor applies if the project is in a “distressed” area of the city. This designation is generally defined as properties in TIF districts and/or the River’s Edge Redevelopment Zone (REDZ).

Note that not all of the application requirements will be required for each and every type of project (e.g. no drawings needed for roofing and other types of work). Typically, two bids are needed for the work. Also, since most of Downtown Peoria is in the DERZ or one of the TIF districts, you can apply to have the materials sales tax waived, which will save about 8.5% of the material costs.

For more information on these and other development incentives, contact Kevin Evans at kevans@peoriagov.org.

Property For Lease

Marquette Building Apartments



The Marquette Building Apartments were designed in 1924 by Hewitt & Emerson Architects, designers of the Commerce Bank Building and Pere Marquette Hotel. This historic building is located at the intersection of Main St. and Perry Ave. (701 Main Street), located adjacent to Methodist Medical Center; the Illinois College of Medicine – Peoria; and near Thirty Thirty Coffee and the Civic Center! Professionally managed by Lemay Property Management Co.

To see availability and photos of these well-appointed apartments, visit the website at www.apartments.com/marquette-building-peoria-il/13m4yk7/.

New Business Spotlight

Pure Oasis Barbershop and Beauty Salon



There's a new cut in town! Entrepreneur Jamar Hardin, owner of Major League Barber-shop on Dries Lane, has opened a new barbershop and hair salon at 315 Main Street in Downtown Peoria. Pictured above on the left during their Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting ceremony hosted by the Peoria Chamber of Commerce and on the right, inside their newly renovated space!

Hardin wanted to create a new, upscale barbershop, like those he says bigger cities have. Pure Oasis will have hair stylists, estheticians, and will offer manicures, pedicures, laser hair removal, micro-blading and micro-pigmentation. He is hopeful that his downtown shop will bring in different people, different clientele, but also different types of stylists, and different services. Pure Oasis will also have a traditional barber-shop inside. As Downtown Peoria gains traction with more and more people living and working downtown, businesses like Jamar's have a great potential to thrive. To learn more about their offerings and see their upscale space and services, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/PureOasisHairandBeautySalon>.

Ardor Bread & Provisions Is Rising!



Congratulations, Ardor Bread, on your expansion on the Peoria riverfront! According to a recent news article by CI Proud, Ardor Bread, located at 301 Water Street in the Downtown Peoria, is expanding!

Owner Cody Scogin said the business will have two floors. On the first floor, people can dine at the 50 seat restaurant. He said a glass window will be installed so customers can watch the cooks prepare their food.

“The menu is going to be very vegetable-focused and with lots of wood fire cooking. This has always been the goal and a big passion of mine. I think the style and the aesthetic of the food and space will match what you see in our baked goods, bread, and the food we are doing now,” said Scogin.

On the second floor, people can enjoy specialty cocktails and small appetizers at the cocktail lounge. Scogin said there is no exact date for the opening, but they are hoping for July 2022.

The DDC wishes Ardor Bread and Provisions much success with their expansion to their existing thriving business in Downtown Peoria's Iconic Riverfront!

Downtown Activities

The Scotty

The historical Scottish Rite Cathedral, located at 400 NE Perry Ave. in Peoria, Illinois has reopened and is rocking the house! Upcoming shows include An Irish Heritage Celebration on March 16th, We Banjo 3 on March 17th, and Jim Messina on March 18th. Why sit home and miss out on this outstanding lineup in a beautifully restored venue? Come out and enjoy the nightlife in Downtown Peoria. For show tickets and information on future events at the phenomenal Scotty, visit their web site at www.scottishritepeoria.com/upcoming-events.

Visit Peoria!

The DDC web site is a wonderful resource for development information, updates and also things to do in Downtown Peoria. From markets to festivals to concerts and more, Downtown Peoria has multiple offerings every month of the year. In collaboration with Peoria Riverfront Association, we keep an updated pulse on downtown activities. If you are looking for a fun escape, visit our web site at www.downtownpeoria.us/play.

Announcements

Greater Peoria Area Passenger Rail Service

According to a recent article by Mayor Rita Ali, the Peoria region has long advocated for passenger rail connections, but the state's strained transportation budget made finding the needed dollars difficult. Consequently, Peoria has been left as the largest metropolitan area in Illinois without passenger rail.

Thanks to a revitalized commitment and the opportunity to access new funding, passenger rail for Peoria may be a real possibility. A public interest survey was released to gauge the interest of area citizens. Within one week of the survey's release, more than 27,000 responses were received.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents indicate they would likely use the passenger rail service in and out of Peoria. Mayor Ali says, **“Our momentum is building, and I remain optimistic that we are ‘on track’ for bringing passenger trains to and from Peoria.”** To read the article recently published by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in its entirety, follow this link: <https://tricityrprc.org/building-the-case-for-peoria-passenger-rail/>.

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