



# 2025 Snapshot of Unprecedented Momentum in Downtown Milwaukee

[www.milwaukeedowntown.com](http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com)

Prepared by:  
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Economic Development Director  
Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21



# Milwaukee is Experiencing Unprecedented Investment

Downtown Milwaukee is the economic hub of Southeastern Wisconsin. Since 2015, over \$5.4 billion has been invested in completed private and public projects. Meanwhile, more than \$3.6 billion is currently under construction or proposed to start soon, spurring significant momentum that reinforces Downtown as the vibrant economic center of Wisconsin.

This development adds to the more than \$2 billion invested between 2005 and 2015. The Downtown Area Investment map showcases where unprecedented growth is occurring.

Download the Greater Downtown Area Investment Map at  
[www.MilwaukeeDowntown.com](http://www.MilwaukeeDowntown.com)



**\$5.4 Billion +**  
COMPLETED PROJECTS SINCE 2015



**\$3.6 Billion +**  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR PROPOSED



Photo Courtesy of Nate Vomhof

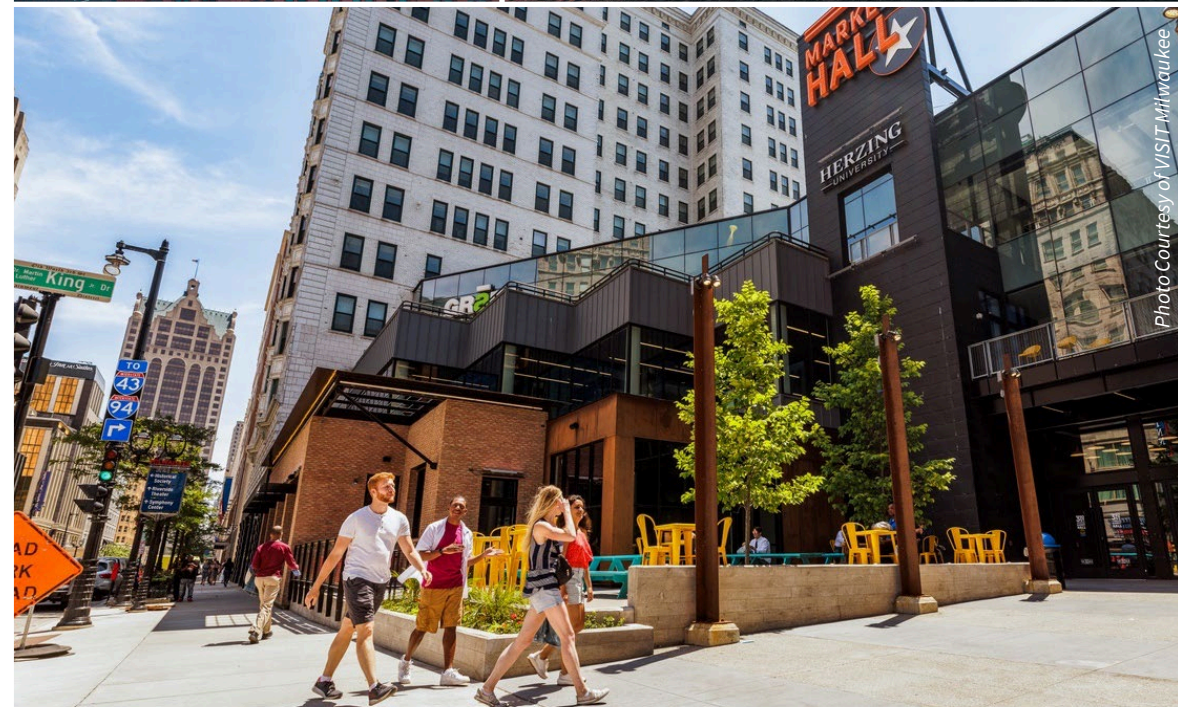


Photo Courtesy of VISIT Milwaukee



# By the Numbers

THE GREATER DOWNTOWN AREA IS IN ONE OF ITS GREATEST GROWTH PERIODS, ADDING RECORD INVESTMENT SINCE 2010:

- **21.2%** population growth since 2010, up to 42,275+ residents
- **4.7+** million SF of new/renovated office space
- **90,700+** estimated total jobs downtown
  - 7,800+ new employees located or announced plans to grow downtown since 2020
  - 31% of all jobs within the City of Milwaukee are located Downtown
- **2,950+** new hotel rooms
  - Hilton Tempo and the Moxy expected to start in 2025
- **11,000+** new housing units with 11% being non-market rate units
  - 900+ additional housing units under construction with more in the pipeline



## Nearly 1 in 3 City of Milwaukee Jobs are Downtown

Downtown concentrates both a high share of jobs and is the core of several key industries: Finance & Insurance, Real Estate, Public Administration, Professional Services, and Knowledge-based Jobs.

### Employment (Primary Jobs)

**31%**CITYWIDE  
JOBS**28%**CITY'S PRIVATE  
JOBS**85%**CITY'S FINANCE  
& INSURANCE  
JOBS**51%**CITY'S REAL  
ESTATE JOBS**90%**CITY'S PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
JOBS**38%**CITY'S  
KNOWLEDGE  
INDUSTRY JOBS

### Employment 2020

	Downtown	City	Region
Primary Jobs	80,332	255,187	928,393
All Jobs	84,896	276,971	999,896
Share of Land Area	n/a	2.9%	0.1%
District Share Of All Jobs	n/a	31%	8%
District Share Of Primary Jobs	n/a	31%	9%
Employees Per Acre (Primary)	45.6	4.1	0.6
Primary Employment Growth 2002–2020	6%	-8%	3%

Source: LEHD On the Map (2020)

*2023 International Downtown Association Value  
of Downtowns and Center Cities Study*



# Downtown Milwaukee's Recovery & Resiliency is driven by its Vitality

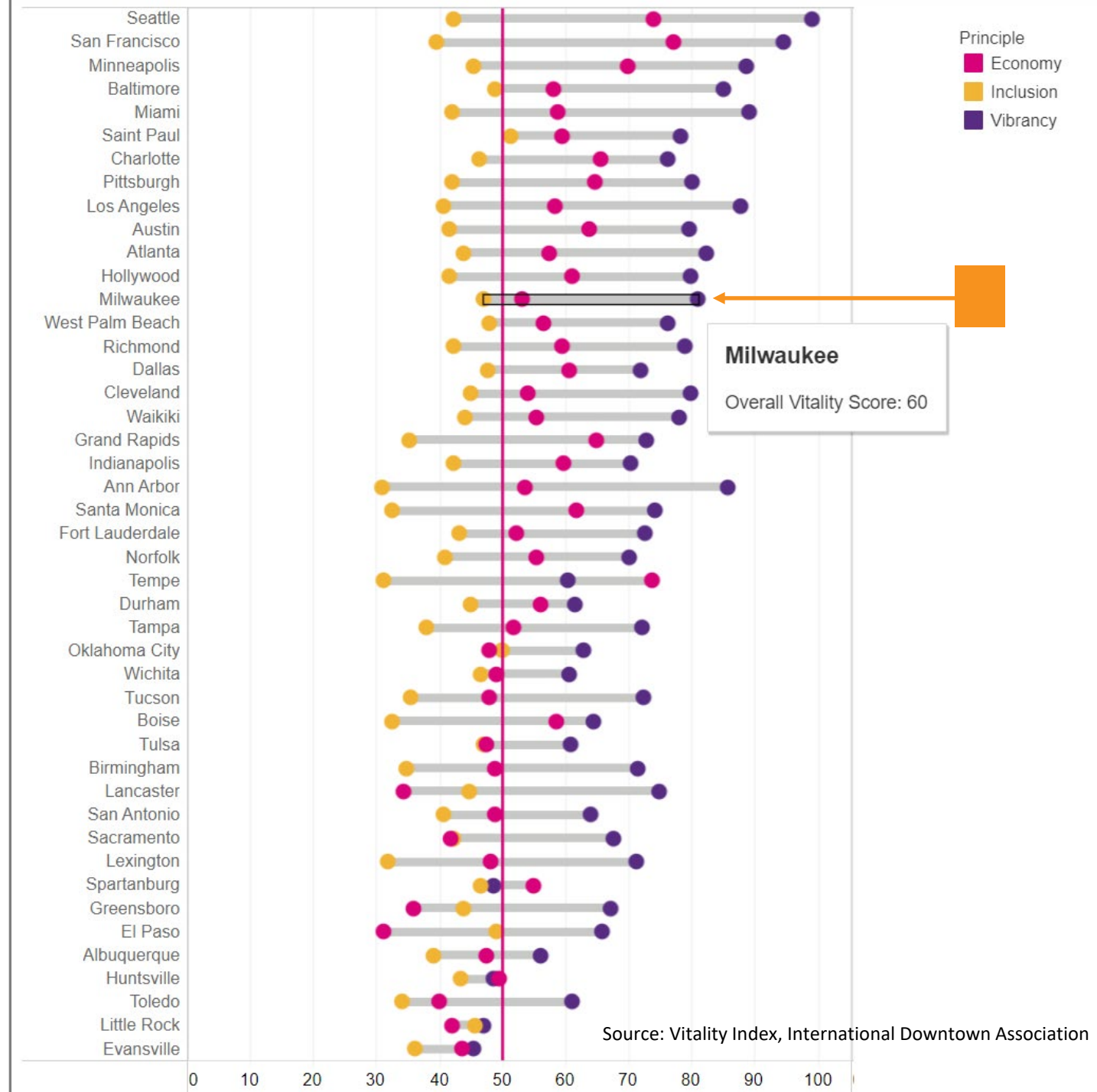
Downtown Milwaukee ranks high with an overall score of 60, ten points above the national benchmark of 50.

Milwaukee boasts an inclusion score of 47, an economy score of 58 and a vibrancy score of 81.

Outpacing: Indianapolis, Cleveland, Dallas, Tampa, Richmond and many others



Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Oct. 4, 2024





# Downtown Activity Tracking with Placer.ai

## April 2019 to April 2025

MKE  
2025



### Measuring Downtown Activity

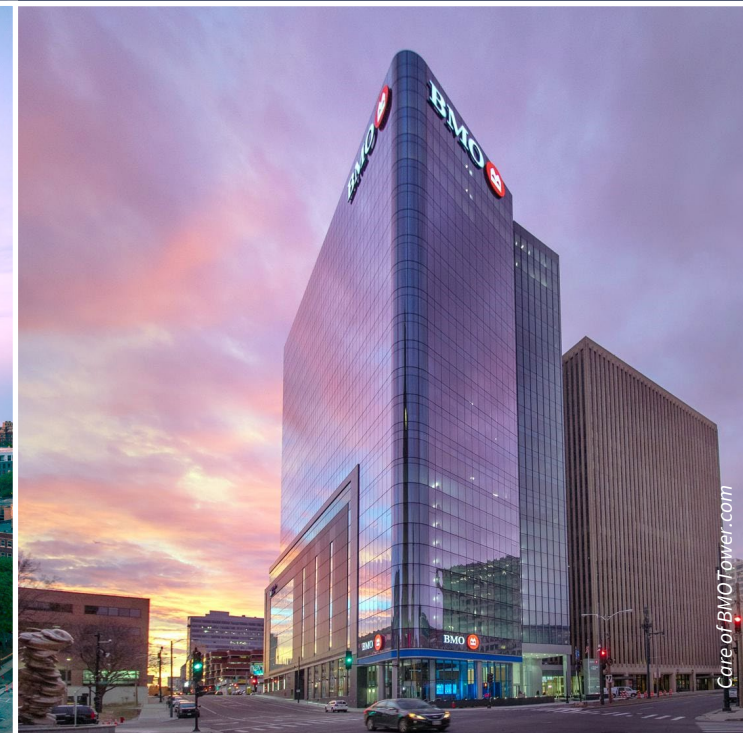
Comparing April 2019 to April 2025, the number of the *Employee, Resident and Visitors* in 53202 and 53203 was nearly equal, signaling a full activity recovery in Downtown Milwaukee!



MKE  
2025



**AND... significant investment continues to outpace peer cities, positioning Downtown Milwaukee as the premier location for doing business.**





# Downtown Milwaukee is Experiencing Record Business Recruitment & Expansion Success

7,800+ new jobs have located or announced plans to grow employment in downtown Milwaukee since 2020 alone!

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**Milwaukee employers say new downtown offices have bolstered their recruitment efforts**

Northwestern Mutual plans \$500 million upgrade to its HQ, will bring 2,000 Franklin employees downtown

Company will transform North Office Building at Milwaukee campus

By Andrew Welland - Feb 2, 2023 7:15 am

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**Investment firm will move 300 employees from Menomonee Falls to the Third Ward**

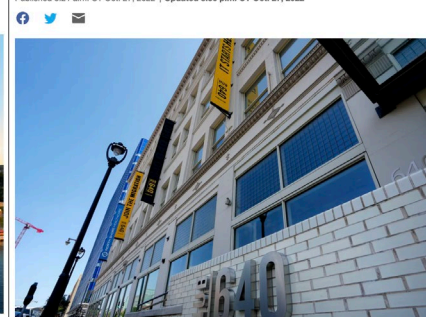
By Hunter Turpin - Jan 17, 2024 5:28 pm



**Fiserv moving headquarters to downtown Milwaukee from Brookfield. 800 jobs are involved.**

**Tom Daykin**  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Published 8:21 a.m. CT Oct. 27, 2022 | Updated 8:36 p.m. CT Oct. 27, 2022



**Potawatomi Business Development Corp. opening downtown office**

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**LAND AND SPACE**

**Downtown lands another corporate headquarters. Enerpac moving from Menomonee Falls**

**Tom Daykin**  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Published 8:55 a.m. CT Feb. 21, 2024



**Global technology firm opening downtown Milwaukee office**

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**Veolia North America hosts grand opening of new downtown Milwaukee office**

CEO teases future growth

By Ashley Smart  
Sep 6, 2024 10:58 am

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Real Estate

**HNTB again expands downtown Milwaukee office**

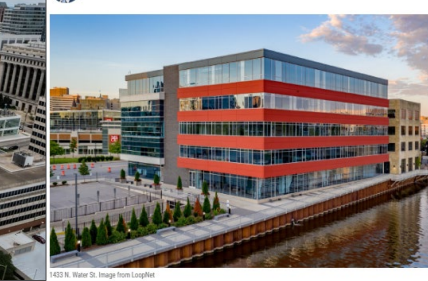
By Andrew Welland  
May 11, 2023 11:04 am



The Two-Fifty building in downtown Milwaukee

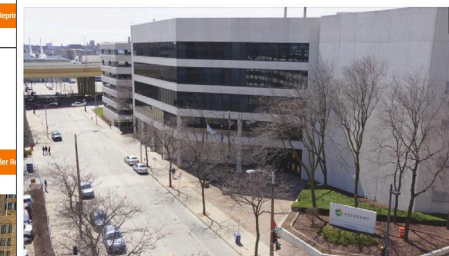
**Staffing firm MARS Solutions Group moving HQ to downtown Milwaukee**

By Hunter Turpin  
Oct 15, 2024 11:52 am



**Milwaukee Tool to expand corporate offices to downtown Milwaukee, add up to 2,000 jobs**

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A 2015 photo of Assurant Health's former downtown Milwaukee offices  
LEE MATZ

**SoftwareONE to move U.S. HQ from Waukesha County to Milwaukee's Third Ward**

By Ashley Smart - Apr 15, 2022 12:17 pm

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# Downtown Milwaukee's Momentum is Attracting More Companies and Thousands of Employees


"Fiserv, a Fortune 500 payments and financial technology firm, is among a recent string of major companies moving jobs to downtown Milwaukee. Others include Northwestern Mutual, Milwaukee Tool, SoftwareOne, Allspring Global Investments and Enerpac Tool Group."

"**Milwaukee has a ton of momentum**," Fiserv's Nelson said. "One of the things that attracted us to come downtown was wanting to be part of that."

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2024 REAL ESTATE AWARDS  
Honoring the best real estate deals and projects  
completed in 2023 >

Milwaukee Business Journal, March 22, 2024



DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE CEO ROUNDTABLE • COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

## DOWNTOWN MOMENTUM

More companies, including Fiserv and Milwaukee Tool, are being drawn to the city's central business district, bringing with them hundreds of employees.

Fiserv officially opened new downtown Milwaukee office in early March.

# Milwaukee Employers say new Downtown Offices have bolstered their recruitment efforts

"Thanks in part to its new downtown space, Fiserv has seen a 56% surge in job applications from 2023 to 2024. Hau said the office has created a positive buzz and become a "powerful driver" for attracting top talent."

**BizTimes**  
MILWAUKEE BUSINESS NEWS

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Milwaukee Business Journal, March 22, 2024

## Milwaukee employers say new downtown offices have bolstered their recruitment efforts



By Ashley Smart  
Sep 8, 2024 11:24 pm

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Workers gather in a common area at Fiserv's Milwaukee office. Credit: Fiserv



# Regal Rexnord execs thrilled with move to downtown Milwaukee, anticipate growth

"We continue to scale up here at the headquarters for sure. Milwaukee is a really good place for us. We have some critical mass here. We have over 1,500 associates in the greater Milwaukee area. It's close to our other segments across the border in Illinois. And the talent that we're able to recruit here through the universities that are in town and through just available talent is a huge enabler for us. People like working for us in Milwaukee. So, it was a good choice for us."

## One year later: Regal Rexnord execs thrilled with move to downtown Milwaukee, anticipate growth

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Regal Rexnord's downtown Milwaukee office is just west of the Milwaukee River.

RICH KIRCHEN

Milwaukee Business Journal, September 27, 2024

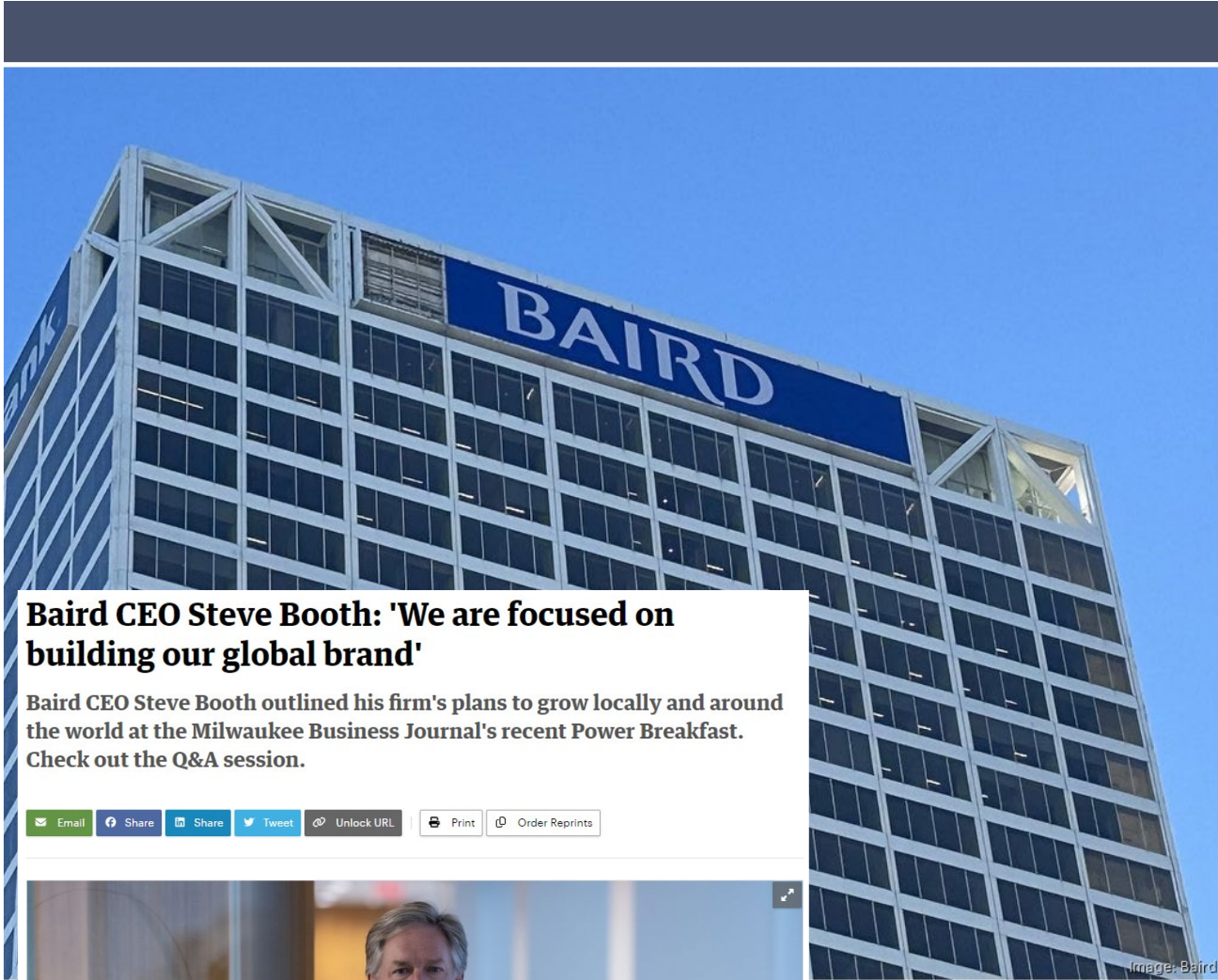
# BAIRD'S Position on Milwaukee's Quality of Life Advantages

**Q:** You're now in markets all over the country and all over the world. How does Milwaukee compare to those other markets?

**A:** *"When people come here, they say this just feels different than other places in the U.S. We have a smaller, second headquarters in Louisville. It's about the same size as Milwaukee, but it is fundamentally different. If you were to walk from the Louisville equivalent of The Pfister Hotel to the equivalent of where Baird is headquartered, you would have concerns about your personal safety. That's just the way it is."*

*"That's in cities like Portland and Seattle, which are huge cities for us. In Portland, we've actually had to relocate our office from downtown out to the suburban area and essentially abandoned it. We do not have that issue in Milwaukee, and we take it for granted because we live and work here every day. But I have 200 locations, and real estate expenses are the second-biggest expense after people, so it's a huge issue for us."*


Steve Booth, BAIRD CEO



**Baird CEO Steve Booth: 'We are focused on building our global brand'**

Baird CEO Steve Booth outlined his firm's plans to grow locally and around the world at the Milwaukee Business Journal's recent Power Breakfast. Check out the Q&A session.

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Milwaukee Business Journal,  
May 17, 2024



An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Chicago, featuring a river in the foreground and a dense cluster of skyscrapers in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is positioned in the upper middle section of the image.

OFFICE | RESIDENTIAL | SPECIALTY MIXED-USE | HOTELS | ENTERTAINMENT | RETAIL | CIVIC | TRANSPORTATION | PUBLIC SPACE

# Sample of Transformational Projects Recently Complete, Underway & Proposed in all Development Sectors

*Projected renderings are included for some projects and are subject to change.*



MKE  
2025

# Office

- BMO Tower
- Northwestern Mutual
- Associated Bank River Center
- The Huron Building
- Milwaukee Tool
- The Avenue
- Hub 640
- Deer District Office Building

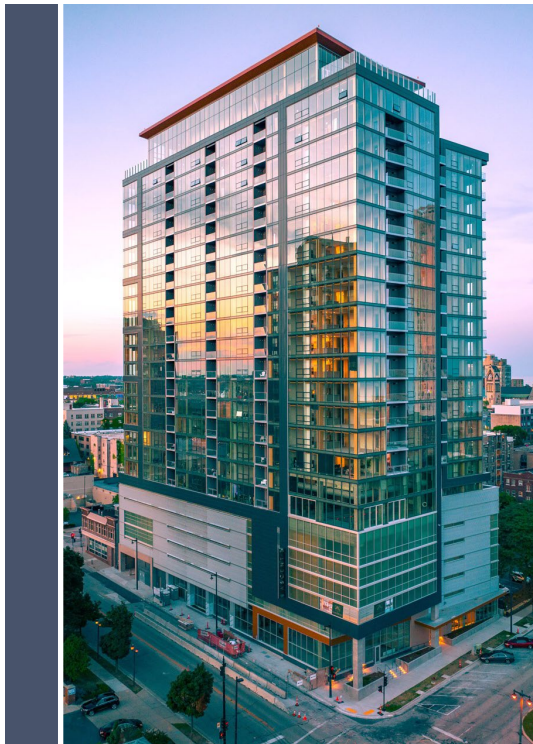




MKE  
2025

# Residential

- The Couture
- 333 Water
- Nova
- The Fifteens at Park East
- Ascent MKE
- 740 North
- River House Phase II
- Evoni
- Deer District Block 5
- Eighteen87 on The River
- The Edison
- Michigan Street Commons
- Elevation 1659



MKE  
2025

# Milwaukee has the 10<sup>th</sup> Strongest Apartment Rental Market in the United States

Milwaukee ranked the 10<sup>th</sup> most competitive apartment rental market in the United States out of the 137 rental markets at the start of 2025 according to RentCafe.com with a 94% occupancy and an overall competitive score 7% higher than the national average signaling the strong demand for more housing.

## Top 20 Most Competitive Rental Markets at the Start of 2025

Rank	Market	Competitive Score	Average Vacant Days	Occupied Apartments	Prospective Renters	Lease Renewal Rate	Share of New Units
1	Miami, FL	93.1	36	96.3%	14	76.0%	1.39%
2	Suburban Chicago, IL	88.4	39	95.4%	10	70.4%	0.26%
3	North Jersey, NJ	85.7	41	95.2%	9	71.4%	0.14%
4	Lansing - Ann Arbor, MI	85.4	38	95.0%	6	70.2%	0.00%
5	Suburban Philadelphia, PA	85.3	44	94.9%	9	77.1%	0.09%
5	Grand Rapids, MI	85.3	38	95.6%	7	74.3%	1.03%
7	Cincinnati, OH	84.5	42	94.3%	10	66.4%	0.00%
8	Omaha, NE	84.4	38	94.7%	8	66.4%	0.59%
9	Bridgeport - New Haven, CT	84.2	40	95.4%	10	66.4%	0.81%
10	Milwaukee, WI	82.8	43	94.0%	8	70.1%	0.00%
11	Suburban Twin Cities, MN-WI	81.3	40	94.2%	7	65.1%	0.57%
12	Detroit, MI	80.9	43	93.5%	7	69.3%	0.11%
13	Broward County, FL	80.4	42	94.6%	10	70.1%	1.47%
14	Orange County, CA	80.0	45	95.6%	10	60.6%	0.15%
15	Kansas City, MO	79.7	41	93.6%	7	68.7%	0.91%
16	Silicon Valley, CA	79.6	39	95.1%	10	53.8%	0.93%
17	Eastern Los Angeles, CA	79.4	44	96.0%	13	51.4%	0.63%
18	Chicago, IL	79.3	40	94.4%	8	59.2%	0.54%
19	Orlando, FL	79.0	39	94.4%	8	67.6%	1.76%
20	Eastern Virginia, VA	78.7	42	93.4%	8	63.9%	0.61%



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2025

# Specialty Mixed-Use

- Milwaukee Athletic Club
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Market Hall & The Avenue
- Journal Square





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2025

# Hotels

- Tempo by Hilton
- Moxy Downtown Milwaukee
- Hilton Milwaukee Downtown
- The Trade Milwaukee
- Kinn Guesthouse
- Adams Hotel
- Hilton Tapestry
- Third Ward Marriott Tribute





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# Entertainment

- The Iron District
- Vivarium
- Foxtown Landing & MKE Dog Park
- FPC Live



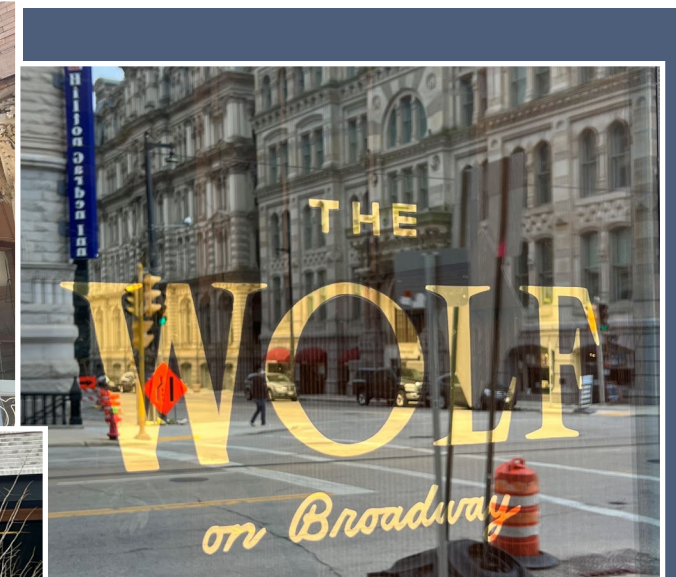


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2025

# Retail & Restaurant

- Kohl's
- Sweetgreen
- Foot Locker
- Uncle Wolfie's Dinner Diner
- Ben & Jerry's
- 801 Restaurant
- The Edison
- Electric Lime
- Mediterranean Cuisine
- Brisa Do Mar
- Awi Sushi
- Visual Comfort & Co.
- Biggby Coffee
- AntetokounBros Shop

*Healthy mix of  
national and local  
brands expanding  
into the downtown  
Milwaukee area*





MKE  
2025

# Kohl's Opens First Downtown Store

Downtown Milwaukee is one of the only markets among its peer cities to have a department store open in recent years!

www.milwaukeekeedowntown.com



## Kohl's To Test Smaller, Urban Concept in Headquarters' Hometown

Downtown Milwaukee Store Will Complement Major Mall Redevelopment





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# Civic

- BAIRD Center Expansion
- Bradley Symphony Center
- Milwaukee Repertory Theater
- Milwaukee Public Museum





MKE  
2025

# Transportation

- Bus Rapid Transit
- The Hop Streetcar
- Bike Network Expansion
- 6<sup>th</sup> Street Complete Street
- Michigan Street Pedestrianization
- Wells Street Reconstruction
- Van Buren Street Cycle Track
- Kilbourn Bike Lane Expansion
- FlexRide
- E-Scooters
- Bublr Bike Share Expansion





MKE  
2025

# Public Realm Projects

- Downtown Dog Park
- Red Arrow Park Redesign
- Brighten The Passage
- Frame the Square
- Vel R. Phillips Plaza
- Light The Hoan
- Zeidler Union Square



Design team picked to improve Red Arrow Park





# Downtown Dog Park Groundbreaking

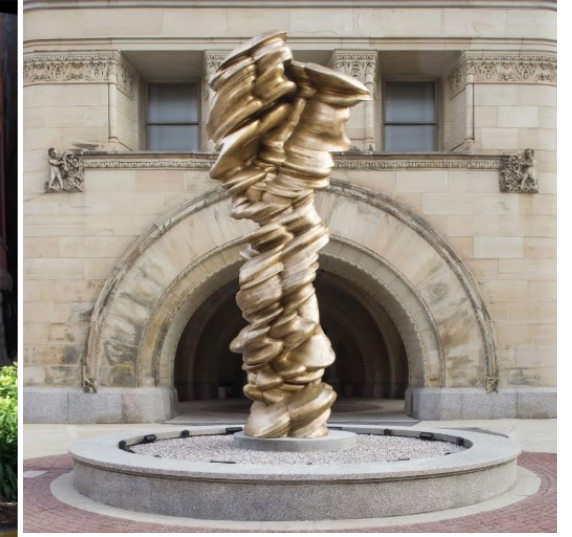




MKE  
2025

# Sculpture Milwaukee

Since the first exhibition in 2017, Sculpture Milwaukee has been transforming downtown Milwaukee's cultural landscape every year with world-renowned sculpture that serves as a catalyst for community engagement, economic development, and creative placemaking.





An aerial photograph of the downtown Chicago skyline, featuring numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Sample of Near-Downtown Transformational Projects" is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# Sample of Near-Downtown Transformational Projects

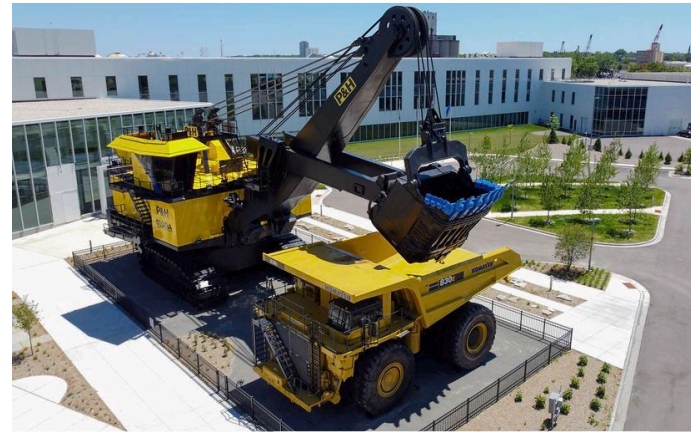
*Projected renderings are included for some projects and are subject to change.*



# Catalytic Projects Near to Downtown

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- Rite-Hite
- Michels/River1
- ThriveOn King
- Komatsu
- Marquette College of Business Administration





An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Chicago, featuring a river (the Chicago River) and a bridge (the Michigan Avenue Bridge). The skyline is filled with various skyscrapers and buildings, including the BMO Tower. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Continuing our Momentum! What's In Store for Downtown?" is centered in the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Continuing our Momentum!  
What's In Store for Downtown?**



# More Major Initiatives & Projects Moving Forward in 2025 & Beyond!

- Begin the implementation of “Connec+ing MKE 2040” – Downtown Plan update recommendations and goals
- Build on business recruitment and retention wins
- Launch the redesign of Red Arrow Park
- Promote the findings of the International Downtown Association’s Value of Downtown Study
- Build Downtown’s first dog park
- Open several catalytic projects
- Bolster the nighttime economy
- Enhance Downtown’s quality of life programs
- Expand public art throughout Downtown
- Create and activate additional third spaces
- Track trends nationally and implementing best practices locally
- Continue to position Downtown Milwaukee as the premier destination to live, invest, do business, work, and socialize in the Great Lakes region

## MEASURING THE VALUE OF DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE

A strong downtown is critical for a successful city and region. A recent study by the International Downtown Association and Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, analyzed the contributions of Downtown Milwaukee as an economic driver. Through a variety of metrics, including five key principles – economy, inclusion, vibrancy, identity and resilience – the study demonstrated the central business district’s value as an epicenter for culture, innovation, community and commerce.

To view Milwaukee’s Value of Downtown study, visit [www.milwaukeekeedowntown.com/do-business](http://www.milwaukeekeedowntown.com/do-business).

54% of Downtown residents are ages 18-34.

7,000+ new

16th out of 63 U.S. and Canadian cities for post-pandemic

65,749 passengers rode The Hop in July 2023 marking the 4th highest month since it opened in the highest since the start of COVID-19, signaling a significant recovery.

2,000+ new residential units are currently under construction, with thousands more in the pipeline.

CONNECTING MKE DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040

\$4.6+ billion worth of completed projects in Downtown since 2010.

16th in the top cities for young professionals to live, according to a July 2023 ranking by Forbes.

### Downtown Business Executives Applaud Downtown’s Value

Milwaukee business leaders agree that Downtown is a great place to do business and attract talent. From the synergies that exist among neighboring companies and organizations to the unparalleled amenities and emerging pool of talent fed by nearby universities, Downtown Milwaukee is where business gets done. Plus, with more than \$77 billion in completed and recently announced investments since 2010, it’s no wonder that Downtown’s growth is outpacing peer cities of its size.

**Ashley Booth**  
Wisconsin Office Leader & Vice President, HNTB

“HNTB, much like Downtown Milwaukee, is on an accelerated growth track. The opportunities in Downtown Milwaukee are endless and it continues to be a tremendous location for retaining and attracting talent.”

**Renee Herzog**  
President, Herzog University

“We came relocated to our roots when we relocated our national central offices to the heart of Downtown Milwaukee. Being Downtown has strengthened Herzog University’s ties and involvement with business, healthcare and educational communities. I love working Downtown and our team members nationally love visiting us here.”

**John Kissinger**  
President & CEO, GSK

“Our office is not just a physical space; it’s a reflection of our deep-rooted commitment to the community we call home. We consider it a privilege to be woven into the fabric of Milwaukee through our work, and we embrace the vibrant energy that permeates Downtown!”

**Lyle Landowski**  
President & CEO, Colliers Wisconsin

“Colliers Wisconsin is in the business of finding companies the right home. When it came to our own space, we decided Downtown Milwaukee was the place to be. Downtown has the amenities, activity and access to talent that has propelled our growth for the last 10 years.”

**Tim Mattie**  
CEO, MGIC

“MGIC has been committed to Downtown Milwaukee since our founding in 1957. The amenities that surround our home office are unmatched. Our Downtown is a vibrant work environment that aligns with our top-workplace culture and our commitment to a thriving local community.”

**Jim Popp**  
President & CEO, Johnson Financial Group

“We make it a point to invest in and support the communities we serve. Our flagship location at the top of Cathedral Place is a perfect example of that commitment. Our associates love the energy, activities and the connections they’re able to make by being Downtown. It’s a great time to be in the city of Milwaukee.”

**Mary Ellen Stanek**  
President of Baird Funds and Co-Chief Investment Officer of Baird Advisors, Baird

“Baird has been invested in the vitality of Downtown Milwaukee for over a century. As one of Downtown’s largest employers, we believe in supporting the communities we serve. We’re proud to call Downtown our home and even prouder to elevate our city’s world-class amenities with a new convention center.”

To learn more about Downtown Milwaukee’s competitive advantages, visit [www.milwaukeekeedowntown.com](http://www.milwaukeekeedowntown.com).



# Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 Catalytic Projects

- Public Museum & State Office Building Redevelopment at MacArthur Square
- Place Management Organization for Parks & Public Spaces
- Streetcar Extensions
- Water Street Transformation
- Performing Arts Center Parking Garage Redevelopment Site
- Clybourn Street & I-794 Corridor
- 6th Street Complete Street
- Lakefront Gateway Plaza & Connections
- Haymarket District

## BUILDING UPON DOWNTOWN'S MOMENTUM

Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040, co-led by the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, sets a vision for the future of Downtown Milwaukee.

The last Downtown Area Plan was adopted in 2010 and included recommendations for streets, public spaces and new development that aimed to foster a distinct Downtown center, a strong sense of place, a connected Downtown, and attract a density of vibrant uses Downtown.

Since the Plan's adoption in 2010, many of its catalytic projects have been implemented and more than \$4.6 billion has been invested in public and private projects Downtown, with an additional \$3.1 billion proposed or under construction.

Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 looks to continue the momentum of the 2010 Plan, build on the success of recently completed or announced projects, and lay out an aspirational vision for the future of Downtown – one that takes into consideration global post-COVID trends and Downtown Milwaukee's distinguishing physical characteristics to unlock its full growth potential with a focus on creating great places connected by walkable streets, enhanced transit options, greater connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods, and active and inclusive gathering spaces and plazas.

## CONNec+ING MKE

### DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040

connectingmke.com

## CONNec+ING MKE

### DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040

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## DEFINING A COLLECTIVE VISION

The vision set forth in Connec+ing MKE represents a collective vision for our city center, generated through significant community engagement. During nearly two years of outreach, the Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 received input from more than 2,500 individuals – including participants from all 17 Milwaukee zip codes. This robust and inclusive engagement shaped the eight overarching goals for the Plan, as well as “big ideas” and catalytic projects.

## GOALS FOR 2040

- Housing & Neighborhoods**  
GOAL 1: Increase the Downtown population through density and diversity of housing, and improve the quality of life in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Business & Education**  
GOAL 2: Create environments and programs that support an increase of diverse businesses and a talented workforce.
- Retail, Services, Food & Nightlife**  
GOAL 3: Create vibrant retail and entertainment districts with streets and public spaces that feature active uses and pedestrian-friendly design.
- Arts, Culture, Entertainment & Sports**  
GOAL 4: Create more opportunities for shared experiences, and highlight the diverse stories, people and places that make MKE unique.
- Sustainability & Resilience**  
GOAL 5: Create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable & resilient Downtown.
- Transportation & Mobility**  
GOAL 6: Redesign our streets to support walkability, and expand options for the safe, comfortable and accessible movement of people.
- Streets & Public Spaces**  
GOAL 7: Invest in the public realm by improving streets, parks and other public spaces to encourage a more vibrant, inclusive and resilient MKE.
- Land Use & Development**  
GOAL 8: Create more opportunities for public and private investment in the built environment.

## BIG IDEAS

Public input helped shape six “big ideas” for how public and private investment can drive physical changes to Downtown that meaningfully advance Connec+ing MKE goals.

- GROW DOWNTOWN**  
Double the Downtown population through intensive housing development. Significantly increase Downtown's job and talent density. Leverage publicly owned development sites to promote housing density, affordability and new economic opportunities.
- REDESIGN STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES**  
Focus on walkable streets designed for people, including Water Street, Wisconsin Avenue, King Drive and Jefferson Street.
- IMPROVE STREETS TO SUPPORT ALL USERS**  
Create an enhanced transit experience, including improvements to transit facilities on Wisconsin Avenue, Water Street and 6th Street. Build a bike network for all that connects to greater Downtown neighborhoods. This includes improvements to Wisconsin Avenue, 6th Street, Van Buren/Jefferson Streets and connections to the Lakefront, Oak Leaf and Bank Square Trails.
- EXPAND & ENHANCE TRANSIT**  
Create robust transit options, including greater extensions, expansion of bus rapid transit, and expansion of intensity of bus routes and connections to surrounding cities, Milwaukee and neighboring cities.
- RECONNECT PLACES DIVIDED BY HUMAN-MADE BARRIERS**  
Create connections across Downtown, to the Lakefront and to surrounding neighborhoods. Transform key Downtown streets and corridors to create new places and connections.

## CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 recommends a series of public and private development projects that have the potential to bring significant improvements to Downtown. Among those, several are identified as catalytic projects, which represent high-priority opportunities with some of the largest potential to have transformative impacts Downtown, including generating momentum to spark complementary investments in the surrounding areas.

- Public Museum & State Office Building Redevelopment at MacArthur Square**
- Place Management Organization for Parks & Public Spaces**
- 6th Street Complete Street**
- Water Street Transformation**
- Performing Arts Center Parking Garage Redevelopment Site**
- Reimagining the I-794 & Clybourn Street Corridor**
- Haymarket District**
- Lakefront Gateway & Connections**



# Milwaukee Downtown's Updated 5-Year Strategic Plan

Building on the momentum started with the CONNEC+ING MKE - Downtown Plan 2040 to redefine and re-envision the future of Downtown Milwaukee, the updated Milwaukee Downtown 5-year Strategic Plan establishes a clear set of priorities, partnerships, programs, and projects to ensure that the next phase of downtown Milwaukee's growth is consistent with the needs, values, and overall vision for Downtown Milwaukee. Areas of Focus including:

- Continuing and augmenting our **Clean, Safe, and Welcoming** initiatives
- **Placemaking, marketing,** and signature **events**
- Enhancing quality of life and the attractiveness of **downtown living**
- Leveraging recent business recruitment wins to attract more **economic growth**
- Creating more **art, culture and entertainment**
- Building on our existing strong neighborhood and district **partnerships** for increased collaboration and collective action

## FOR 25 YEARS,

Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District 21 (BID 21), has been a committed supporter of Downtown businesses and initiatives that **create and enhance unique experiences in Downtown Milwaukee**. Building on the excitement started with the CONNEC+ING MKE - Downtown Plan 2040 to redefine and re-envision the future of Downtown Milwaukee, this 5-year Strategic Plan establishes a clear set of priorities, partnerships, programs, and projects to ensure that the next phase of the BID 21's growth is consistent with the needs, values, and overall vision for Downtown Milwaukee.

Leveraging its strong reputation and the momentum from recent successes to reinforce its impact in and on Downtown, this Plan articulates a framework for building upon assets and advance strategies and ideas to create new destinations and experiences that will elevate Downtown Milwaukee on regional, national, and global stages.

For the complete list of strategies and the adopted BID 21 Milwaukee Downtown 5-Year Strategic Plan, please visit [milwaukeekeedowntown.com](http://milwaukeekeedowntown.com)

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**CLEAN, SAFE, & WELCOMING**

Continue to provide BID 21 services and expand programs that keep Downtown Milwaukee clean, safe, and welcoming for all.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will act as the steward for Downtown's public realm -- expanding beautification services: identifying and advocating for needed repairs and improvements; and activating the Riverwalk.

**PLACEMAKING, MARKETING & EVENTS**

Bring people together through new and exciting shared experiences by activating Downtown's public and privately owned/publicly accessible open spaces.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will take the lead in establishing a public space management initiative to develop, maintain, and activate inclusive public spaces in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner.

**DOWNTOWN LIVING**

Engage residential developers and residents in the revitalization and activation of Downtown through financial contributions and active participation.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will engage Downtown residential developers and residents to better fund, create and advocate for a complete Downtown neighborhood with vibrant, accessible, and affordable programs, events, and services.

**ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Strengthen Downtown's role as the best place in the Region for local businesses, large and small employers, start-ups, retail, daytime and nighttime entertainment, and tourism to grow and thrive.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will take the lead in establishing an Economic Development Coalition (peer organizations, government officials, and business executives) that will prioritize recruiting, retaining, and supporting employers of all sizes, and will help recruit, retain, and support a strong, diverse, and creative workforce.

**ARTS, CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT, & SPORTS**

Grow Downtown Milwaukee's reputation as a premier location for arts, culture, entertainment, film, nightlife, and sports.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will continue and increase its role in elevating and promoting Downtown as a world class destination for the public and performing arts, music, film and tv, and sporting events

**NEIGHBORHOOD AND DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS**

Leverage the exciting diversity of Downtown neighborhoods and the potential for collective action by strengthening existing partnerships and creating new relationships with neighborhoods, community organizations, and other districts.

**Big Move**

Milwaukee Downtown BID 21 will continue to and further take the lead in convening partners and coordinating efforts to strengthen Downtown, community, and district connections.





# 2025 Snapshot of Unprecedented Momentum in Downtown Milwaukee

[www.milwaukeedowntown.com](http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com)

Prepared by:  
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