



MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Business Improvement District 21 | **301 W Wisconsin Ave. Suite 106** | Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203
Phone **414.220.4700** | www.milwaukeedowntown.com

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MARTY BROOKS
Wisconsin Center District

PEGGY WILLIAMS SMITH
VISIT Milwaukee

August 8, 2025

Dear Business Improvement District #21 Property Owner,

As BID #21 enters the fourth quarter of our 28th year, it is more apparent than ever that our programs, events, and initiatives have had a transformational impact on our central business district and the City as a whole. Downtown Milwaukee continues to excel with new and renewed investment, pedestrian counts, cleanliness, connectivity, and placemaking. More and more people (locally, nationally, and globally) are taking note of our exceptional quality of life, which is all made possible by your support!

We are in year two of Milwaukee Downtown's five-year strategic plan and are implementing initiatives tied to each of the plan's goals to continue building a more competitive, connected, livable, vibrant, diverse, and resilient Downtown.

Our core programs remain a primary focus on providing clean, safe, and welcoming environments. With a daily presence on our streets and sidewalks, our Public Service Ambassadors and Clean Sweep Ambassadors ensure Downtown is inviting to all users. They also pay close attention to the public realm, identifying and advocating for needed repairs and improvements, and eliminating graffiti within 24 hours of discovery. Meanwhile, landscape crews beautify Downtown with seasonal rotations of flowers and temporary installations in over 375 planter beds and more than 75 hanging baskets.

Our commitment to safety is apparent in our strong working relationship with the Milwaukee County Housing Division and the Milwaukee Police Department. The ongoing work of the Community Intervention Team has led to the identification and implementation of real solutions to end chronic homelessness. We have a full-time homeless outreach coordinator and a Public Service Ambassador dedicated to our greater Downtown homeless population. Our program was showcased as a case study in the documentary "Beyond the Bridge: A Solution to Homelessness", which continues to be shown in cities across the country. Governing Magazine also recognized our successes with a cover story in its February 2025 edition.

Through our agreement and funding with the District Attorney's Office, we have established a dedicated Community Partnership Unit. This unit, with the support and cooperation of property owners like you, tracks repeat offenders to eliminate crimes and public nuisance behaviors. The success of these programs is evident in the safer spaces and improved quality of life for all our Downtown workers, residents, and visitors.

Our signature events, including Taste & Toast, Downtown Dining Week, Downtown Employee Appreciation Week, and the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival, continue to make a significant impact on Downtown Milwaukee. They connect the community and drive traffic and awareness of all there is to do in our vibrant downtown. These events elevate awareness and financially support our businesses and arts and cultural community. All this work reinforces positive perceptions of Downtown Milwaukee and the role of BID #21 as an advocate for our businesses.

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Economic development is one of our top priorities. We benchmark developments taking place in the central business district through an interactive investment map and economic development pitch decks available on our website. We engaged with the International Downtown Association and participated in the latest “Value of Downtowns” study that looks at over 100 different metrics and showcased why downtown Milwaukee is the economic engine for the City and beyond.

Since 2015, more than \$9 billion has been completed, proposed or is under construction. In addition, since 2020, we have documented that more than 7,800 jobs have been located or announced plans to locate in downtown Milwaukee. We understand that every business is unique, which is why we offer a variety of development incentives such as the Milwaukee Downtown Business Development Loan Pool, Kiva Loans, and connections to additional local and state programs. These are all part of our toolbox to assist businesses in expanding or locating within the neighborhood.

Advocating for catalytic projects continues to be a high-profile agenda item. We assisted in advancing several projects to enhance Downtown's quality of life, including Frame the Square and the Vel R. Phillips Plaza, and continued to oversee the active streets for businesses program. Leading a team of stakeholders, we kicked off the design process for the reimagination of Red Arrow Park. Over the next year, through robust community engagement, the project and consultant team will arrive at a preferred design solution for the future of this important community gathering space.

In the fall of 2024, we broke ground on Downtown's first dog park. The project opens this summer and will enhance downtown livability while also reinventing an underutilized parcel on the west banks of the Milwaukee River that has already attracted a significant new investment in Foxtown Landing. A special thank you to our project and community partners, corporate sponsors, and donors who helped make this community amenity a reality.

Our placemaking efforts, which receive significant attention in the news and on social media platforms, are a testament to the positive impact of these projects. These efforts have not only activated public spaces but also fostered stronger community connections. The success of projects such as Rainbow Summer, featuring a larger-than-life installation by Amanda Parer drew thousands to the Marcus Performing Arts Center lawn. We also completed four new murals along the Riverwalk that added more than 1,500 linear feet of public art in the heart of downtown. Our weekly concerts at Red Arrow Park and the 411 East Wisconsin Courtyard are a result of our collective involvement and ongoing partnerships. We continue to surprise and delight our workforce, families, and visitors with seasonal events like Big Truck Day, Jack-O-Lantern Jubilee, and the Ornament Trail.

Keeping an open dialogue with downtown CEOs, business executives, commercial brokers, government partners, and other community-based organizations is a top priority. These relationships give us insight into how stakeholders feel about Downtown. Regular feedback also helps inform and identify how we should prioritize utilizing our resources and key initiatives moving forward.

But for your annual contribution and support, these projects, programs, and so much more would not exist. Your annual contribution to Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, is thoughtfully invested with oversight from our engaged Board of Directors and continues to make a significant impact on our community.

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I am enclosing a copy of our 2024 Annual Report, which provides a snapshot of our organization's work and successes. Our 2025 Annual Report will be available later this fall.

We want to update you on our current plans and initiatives as we move the organization forward into its 29th year. Our work is more important than ever as we continue to enhance our safe, vibrant, and strong economic environment. We must continue our work to remain a competitive Downtown, regionally and beyond.

We invite you to attend a public hearing regarding the District's 2026 Year Twenty-Nine Operating Plan and Budget on Thursday, September 18, 2025. The details of the public hearing are as follows:

Thursday, September 18, 2025

8:00 a.m. (Central Standard Time)

Please join Matt Dorner's Zoom meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://zoom.us/j/97836684438>

Meeting ID: 978 3668 4438

Passcode: 636084

The primary purpose of the public hearing is to present and solicit feedback about the year Twenty-Nine Operating Plan and Budget. In addition, the public hearing provides you with an opportunity to learn more about the accomplishments and the future direction of the District.

The Operating Plan and Budget can be accessed online at:

<https://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/bid-basics/operations>

Under "Public Review Process," you will find four choices directly related to the Operating Plan and Budget:

Download the "DRAFT" Operating Plan.

Download Summary of Changes in the Year Twenty-Nine Operating Plan.

Download the list of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 properties.

A copy of this letter with links to connect you to the meeting virtually.

The list of properties includes the City assessor's property tax assessed value for your property and the special assessment to be collected by the City of Milwaukee on behalf of the District.

Please review the assessment information thoroughly to confirm that the information provided by the City and the District's special assessment calculations relating to your property is accurate. Annual assessments for District operating expenses will be levied against each property within the District in proportion to the property tax assessed value of each property on record with the District as of the District's public hearing date on September 18, 2025.

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No property owners within the District will be eligible to receive or be subject to any reductions or increases in their District assessment due to a decrease or increase in the assessed value for their property **occurring after September 18, 2025**. To ensure accuracy in our records, please notify the District's attorney, Deborah Tomczyk, by telephone at 414-298-8331 or by email at dtomczyk@reinhardtllaw.com of any changes in your property's assessed value occurring after May 1, 2025, but before September 18, 2025.

The City of Milwaukee's Common Council will also hold a public meeting to consider the District's 2026 Year Twenty-Nine Operating Plan and Budget and those of other business improvement districts.

If you have questions regarding the Public Hearing or the 2026 Year Twenty-Nine Operating Plan and Budget, please feel free to contact me at mdorner@milwaukeedowntown.com or 414-220-2243.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Chief Executive Officer. Our team and I look forward to another exciting year in which we all continue to promote Downtown Milwaukee as a destination, increase our tax base, grow our workforce and residential populations, and focus on furthering a high quality of life for all.

With gratitude,

Matt Dorner
Chief Executive Officer

Encs: [2024 Annual Report](#)
[2025 Ripple Effect](#)
[2025 Summer Calendar](#)
[Downtown Employee Appreciation Week](#) Brochure
Business Card—Matt Dorner

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