

MKE BLUEPRINT



Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's Economic Development Digest

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THE ART OF PLACEMAKING – THREE PROJECTS TRANSFORM PUBLIC SPACES

Pedestrian walkways are getting a bit brighter in downtown Milwaukee. Third spaces, public places where people congregate between work and home, are getting a fresh lease on life through lighting and vivid pops of color. Building upon the success of Sculpture Milwaukee, it's part of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's strategy to make a huge economic impact.

Thanks to the efforts of the Downtown Placemaking Task Force and several key sponsors, a new 50-foot mural

local and migratory birds as a nod to the local ecology and a metaphor for the migration between the central business district and Historic Third Ward neighborhoods.

Just down the street, crews finished installing original artwork on two Milwaukee County Transit System bus shelters at Water and Wisconsin and Water and Mason. Part of The Bus Art Project MKE, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 provided a matching \$1,000 donation to expand the project into



Also completed in December, Milwaukee Downtown and Interstate Parking commissioned local artists Fred Kaems and John Kowalczyk for a mural along The Hop route at the parking garage at Wells and Milwaukee streets. The two-dimensional floral mural creates an optical illusion—almost as if the image was cut into the structure. Rather, through vivid pops of color, the subject matter piques visual interest and turns a newly installed electrical box and blank parking garage wall into downtown's latest public art installation.



in the Jefferson Street Pedestrian Tunnel, located underneath the I-794 overpass, is creating a welcoming experience for pedestrians. Completed in October 2018 by mural artist CERA and painter Katie Batten, both 2012 graduates of Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, *Migration* highlights Milwaukee's natural and constructed landscapes. Featuring sequences of Cream City brick and city landmarks such as the Milwaukee Art Museum, Gas Light Building, Milwaukee Public Market and the Hoan Bridge, *Migration* is juxtaposed by images of Wisconsin's

downtown. Installation at the shelters was completed in December 2018.

There are now nine original pieces of art on bus shelters throughout Milwaukee County with more planned in the coming year. The latest addition from artist Tzeng Lee, *The Collide*, features colorful kaleidoscope-like patterns at the shelter at Water and Mason streets. The shelter at Water and Wisconsin showcases photography from Dominic Inouye's ZIP MKE project—images depicting all of the city's 28 zip codes.



By supporting these and other third spaces throughout downtown, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 has reimagined the possibilities for downtown's public infrastructure. Enjoy the unexpected art that downtown has to offer and keep an eye out for new art additions in 2019.

FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR THE HOP

The streetcar fever that has been making its way across the U.S. has finally returned to Milwaukee with the recent launch of The Hop, the city's \$124 million streetcar line. Milwaukee is no stranger to the world of streetcars. In 1860, the city introduced the first street line system of horse-drawn cars that later transitioned into an extensive electric streetcar system and was in use until the middle of the 20th century. Now, after 60 years since the last streetcar was in operation, The Hop returns a modern incarnation of this critical transit service to Brew City.

The importance of connecting people to their homes, jobs, entertainment destinations and each other was Mayor Tom Barrett's point of emphasis at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for The Hop held on November 2, 2018. The existing M-Line of the system, along with the L-Line set to open in late 2020 and proposed extensions that will expand the initial 2.1-mile loop, promise to do just that. The weekend-long celebration, aptly titled "The Grand Hop-ening," drew an initial crowd of hundreds to hear remarks from dignitaries and be among the first to ride, and resulted in 16,409 total rides during the weekend for the newly opened M-Line of The Hop. All rides that weekend and throughout the first year of operations are free thanks to the 12-year, \$10 million presenting sponsorship deal The Hop has with Potawatomi Hotel & Casino.

The early returns on The Hop have been promising. Despite a late-year opening and some early rider-enhancements like real-time vehicle

information and a mobile app still in development, initial ridership is outpacing projections. Prior to launch, city officials estimated the system would generate 1,850 riders per day.



Over the course of the two months the line has been open, The Hop has posted daily averages of 2,297 riders for November and 2,453 for December, accounting for more than 150,000 total rides in 2018. These numbers are projected to grow in the warmer

months as downtown's busy slate of summer activities kicks into gear, and especially after the L-Line opens in 2020 to provide an important connection to Milwaukee's Lakefront and its numerous

attractions, including Discovery World, the Milwaukee Art Museum and Henry Maier Festival Park.

In addition to the L-Line, the city is already moving forward on design work for an additional extension that would continue up Vel R. Phillips Avenue from the southern terminus of the route towards the Convention Center, recently opened Fiserv Forum and other Westown destinations. Not only would this extension provide critical connections to some of the city's most



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— PHIL BILODEAU,
Owner, Thief Wine Bar

visited entertainment destinations, but it would provide a critical first step in ultimately bringing The Hop into the adjacent neighborhoods of Bronzeville and Walker's Point, a critical piece of the long-term vision for the project to create a more connected city.

Important connections aside, the very presence of The Hop is already serving as a magnet to attract additional development and investment in the heart of the city. Property values near the streetcar line have already increased by nearly 28 percent since The Hop's approval in 2015, and multiple developers have cited The Hop route as a motivating factor in their decisions to invest in Milwaukee.

The Hop line is also proving to be an asset to downtown business owners by generating increased traffic. The Milwaukee Public Market, the city's center for local products and pride, had its best year yet in 2018 with help from an end-of-the-year push from riders on The Hop.



In an interview with WTMJ-TV, Phil Bilodeau, who owns Thief Wine Bar inside the market, noted the correlation between The Hop and strong business. "I see people coming off the streetcar and coming right into the Public Market," Bilodeau said. "Especially on the weekends, the streetcar is extremely crowded."

As Milwaukee continues to move forward, The Hop is also full speed ahead and looking to grow right along with the city. For route and service info, visit thehopmke.com.

MILWAUKEE RANKS 29TH BEST CITY TO START A BUSINESS

There has never been a better time to make downtown Milwaukee home for your new or growing business. It's all about location, and Milwaukee is getting noticed. Featuring world-class cultural and natural amenities, a high quality of life and a low barrier of entry, downtown Milwaukee is transforming into a top-rated destination. Whether you are a startup company or a long-established business, downtown has every type of space to meet your needs with new Class A office towers, either recently completed or under construction, to renovated historic buildings. Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 also has the tools, assets like our low interest loan pool and key data metrics, to help ensure your downtown decision is the best for your business and employees.

An index prepared by *Inc. Magazine* and Startup Genome ranked Milwaukee the 29th best city

in the country in which to start a business, scoring high marks in net new business creation, job growth and early stage funding deals. The index cites new developments like the Fiserv Forum, the redeveloped Pabst Brewery complex with the NO Studios incubator and the collaboration of long-standing

corporate partners like Northwestern Mutual and Aurora in building new venture funds for companies to tap into. Milwaukee out-ranked other Midwestern cities like Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Detroit and Cleveland.

Now is the time to join companies like GRAEF, Hammes Company, Bader Rutter and others that have recently made the commitment to downtown.

Check out Doing Business at milwaukeedowntown.com for more information on how we can seamlessly assist your company with its next phase!

"We made the decision to bring Bader Rutter back downtown for one overriding reason: We were searching for a great experience for our people and our clients. Simple as that."

**— GREG NICKERSON,
Former CEO Bader Rutter**



NEW LIGHTING AND STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS ENERGIZE OLD WORLD THIRD STREET

On the heels of the recent opening of the Fiserv Forum, Old World Third Street has received a bit of a makeover. Given the wave of new visitors being welcomed to the district, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 teamed up with local property owners and the City of Milwaukee to develop a public space enhancement plan – an initiative that also addresses elements from Milwaukee Downtown’s larger nighttime economy strategy.

To date, improvements along the bustling strip have included: new street paving, which added buffered bike lanes and a seamless connection to the Fiserv Forum plaza; freshly painted harp lampposts and sidewalk benches; new holiday décor on the harp lampposts; and last, but certainly not least, 2,648 linear feet of new roofline lighting. Featured on 22 properties, this private investment of \$48,310 will light up the 1000 and 1100 blocks year-round to highlight the district’s historic architecture and create a welcoming ambiance for guests.

“The improvements that have taken place over the past several months, especially the roofline lighting, have really enhanced the

unique character of our district and give our guests a great experience that they cannot experience anywhere else downtown,” said Seth Dehne, property owner and president of the Old World Third Street Association. “It has been outstanding to see all of these smaller improvements add up to something that is truly significant.”

Milwaukee Downtown is also exploring the potential for café lighting to be strung over the sidewalks to complement the aesthetic at the Bucks beer garden, further enhancing the connectivity between the established entertainment district and the new venues being created adjacent to the Fiserv Forum.

Through this unique public-private partnership, Milwaukee Downtown,

the City of Milwaukee and private property owners have been able to make a series of small improvements that are having a big impact on one of downtown’s most important nightlife districts.

“We were thrilled to join together with Milwaukee Downtown, the City of Milwaukee, and our Old World Third Street neighbors for our street beautification and, in particular, the roofline lighting project,” said Patricia Erd, owner of The Spice House. “We feel these improvements add a lovely vitality to the street while still showcasing our old-world traditions. Third Street is looking wonderful, and we hope those who have not visited recently will pay us a visit.”

