

MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN, BID #21

# ANNUAL REPORT

A BUZZWORTHY YEAR FILLED  
WITH PROGRAMS & PROGRESS





## MISSION

We lead and inspire believers in Milwaukee to engage in efforts that build downtown as the thriving, sustainable, innovative and vibrant heart of the community.

## VISION

Milwaukee Downtown is an economic catalyst. Downtown is a premier destination of choice. Milwaukee becomes a renowned world-class city adding value to the region and the state.

## PRIORITIES

### Downtown Economic Development Leader

Recognized downtown economic development leader with increased support from a growing stakeholder base.

### Take a Leadership Position on Catalytic Projects

Leverage collaborative partnerships to champion and better connect catalytic, next-generation projects, including The Hop, Arena District area, Wisconsin Valley Innovation Center and Wisconsin Avenue initiatives.

### Energy and Vibrancy of Downtown

Harness the energy and vibrancy of diverse downtown residents, young professionals and other downtown believers to position them for leadership roles in the downtown community.

### Enrich Downtown's Quality of Life

Create an exceptional quality-of-life environment with a focus on enhanced safety, security, connectivity, and public space management through innovative events, landscaping, lighting, and public art installation.

## 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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U.S. BANK

**Kevin Kennedy**  
Vice-Chair  
NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL

**Tammy Babisch**  
Secretary  
COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL

**John Creighton**  
Assistant Secretary  
JCI GLOBAL  
CBRE | GLOBAL WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS

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MADISON MEDICAL AFFILIATES

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HERTZ INVESTMENT GROUP, LLC

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THE MARCUS CORPORATION

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JACKSON STREET HOLDINGS

## STAFF

**Beth Weirick**  
CEO

**Lesia Ryerson**  
Executive Assistant

**Matt Dorner**  
Economic Development Director

**Erica Chang**  
Marketing & Events Coordinator

**Gabriel Yeager**  
Downtown Environment Specialist

**Megan Kujawa**  
Marketing & Special Events Intern

**John Grunau**  
SCHLITZ PARK AND THE BREWERY WORKS, INC.

**David Hughes**  
WE ENERGIES

**Tom Irgens**  
IRGENS

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**Kurt Thomas**  
MGIC

**Scott Welsh**  
INLAND COMPANIES/  
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**Paul Upchurch**  
Ex-Officio Member  
VISIT MILWAUKEE

**Gary P. Grunau**  
Emeritus  
GRUCON GROUP, LLC

# MESSAGE FROM CEO & BOARD CHAIR

## A LATTE TO TALK ABOUT AFTER 21 YEARS

It's been a buzzworthy year for Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. For starters, we pushed the refresh button on our strategic plan. With updated priorities and goals, the revised plan set the pace for this year and will lead us into the next two decades.

Topping the agenda were a revamped nighttime economy strategy to elevate visibility of downtown as an 18-hour city, collaborative design implementation to promote better connectivity and accessibility, and advancement opportunities for young professionals and entrepreneurs. To date, all are in motion.

We also brewed new ingredients to strengthen our brand. Our new logo, website and equipment additions are giving us extra steam to raise downtown's profile – in the region, state and beyond.

Mix in the unprecedented development – \$2.9 billion in completed projects since 2010, plus another \$2.7 billion in the hopper – and it's clear to see what all the buzz is about. We'll get another jolt when the Fiserv Forum and The Hop, presented by Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, open to the public later this year. Both are much-anticipated game changers, but the wins don't end there.

The perks of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's services have made downtown Milwaukee a premier destination, and we remain committed to enriching downtown's quality of life for all our users. Thank you for your ongoing support and confidence in the mission and work of our organization.



*Beth Weirick*

**Beth Weirick**  
CEO

MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN, BID #21



*Joseph G. Ullrich*

**Joseph G. Ullrich**  
Board Chair

MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN, BID #21  
VICE PRESIDENT, U.S. BANK

# OPERATIONS – THE DAILY GRIND

Our menu of clean, safe and friendly services continued to expand to meet the growing needs of businesses and guests.

## PUBLIC SERVICE AMBASSADORS

- 90,990 PR contacts made
- 12 seasonal PSAs added
- 18,000 steps taken daily

Best described as walking concierges, the Public Service Ambassadors (PSAs) elevate our friendly profile. Since 2000, the PSAs have assisted over 4.41 million visitors. They can also be seen biking through town and staffing our new mobile kiosks – The MOTOR (Milwaukee’s Own Traveling Outdoor Resource) and Downtown GO! Kart. Plus, through a collaborative partnership with Milwaukee’s police and fire departments, the PSAs help make downtown

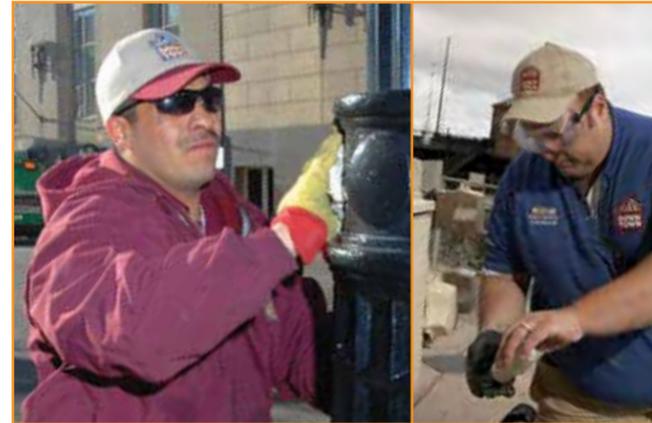


one of the safest neighborhoods in the city and country.

## CLEAN SWEEP AMBASSADORS

- 137,300 gallons of trash collected
- 500,000+ lights installed for Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival
- 77 Super Block Cleanups completed

From sunup to sundown, the Clean Sweep Ambassadors (CSAs) keep the district sparkling clean and litter-free. Over the last year, these grime-fighting agents hauled away over 137,300 gallons of trash and added a Tennant 636 Green Machine to their toolkit. The crew is also the steam behind many of our events. From installing 28 miles of wire for the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival to giving out freebies during Downtown Employee Appreciation Week, the CSAs go above and beyond.



## GRAFFITI REMOVAL TEAM

- 1,260 graffiti tags removed within 24 hours
- 21,043 tags eliminated since 2000
- 99% of all tags wiped out by PSAs

The fast-acting Graffiti Removal Team eliminates tags on public and private property within 24 hours of discovery. This year alone, they scrubbed away 1,260 tags, adding to the cumulative total of 21,043 tags removed since 2000.



## LANDSCAPE CREW

- 10,000 fall mums and kale plants
- 60,000 spring pansies
- 60,000 summer annuals

Tending to over 370 beds and planters, and 75 hanging baskets, the Landscape Crew added bursts of color to the downtown scene. Arrangements are rotated seasonally along Wisconsin Avenue, the Milwaukee RiverWalk, Old World Third Street and the Court of Honor.



## FRESH BLENDS

This summer, we rolled out two mobile kiosks onto downtown’s streets. A tiny house called The MOTOR – Milwaukee’s Own Traveling Outdoor Resource, made its debut in June. Powering ideas on what to do, where to stay and what to eat, The MOTOR is the ultimate go-to resource for newcomers.

### THE MOTOR →

Milwaukee Downtown’s new search engine, The MOTOR – Milwaukee’s Own Traveling Outdoor Resource, made its debut in June. Powering ideas on what to do, where to stay and what to eat, The MOTOR is the ultimate go-to resource for newcomers.



### DOWNTOWN GO! KART →

Over 25 free tabletop games are now available to downtown guests. Through a partnership with 310W and Plankinton Clover Apartments, the Downtown GO! Kart offers an assortment of games for all ages and skill levels, and is staffed by our friendly Public Service Ambassadors.



# MILWAUKEE HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL

- 2,914 students decorated Community Spirit Park
- 1,698 letters received at Santa's Mailbox
- 9,293 Jingle Bus passengers
- 17th edition ornament — Northwestern Mutual Tower

For 19 seasons, the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival has remained a premier winter attraction for families in southeastern Wisconsin. Aside from creating whimsical displays in three parks and adding dazzle to the streets, we wrapped the season's best events together in a comprehensive guide.

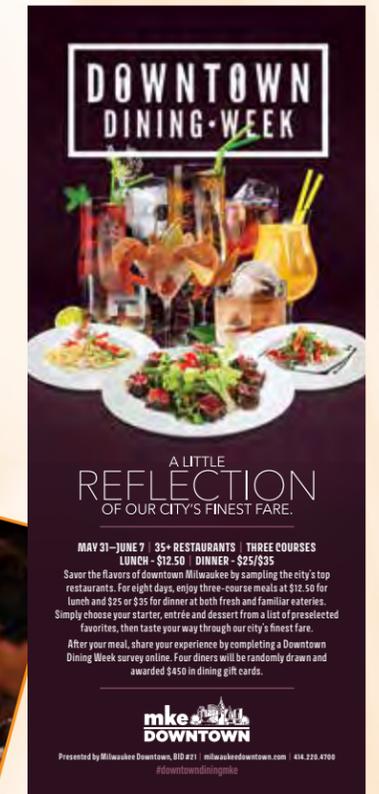
In addition, we awed visitors at the much-anticipated kick-off show, which drew more than 4,000 guests, and continued to host memory-making activities such as the Jingle Bus, Cocoa with the Clauses and Santa's Mailbox. We also spotlighted existing and emerging retailers through a new Wish List MKE program with Retailworks, Inc.



# DOWNTOWN DINING WEEK

- 75,000+ diners served
- 1,503 online surveys completed
- 53% of diners visited a new establishment

Regarded as downtown's official start to summer, the 13th annual Downtown Dining Week continued to receive rave reviews with its refreshed brand. More than 80% of all diners rated food, service, environment and menu options as "excellent" or "good." Plus, 58% of all patrons lengthened their stay with an additional activity downtown.



# SPECIAL EVENTS – BUZZWORTHY NOTES

The perks of living, working and playing downtown are beyond compare. To continually acquaint new users with downtown, we brewed four compelling reasons to experience downtown firsthand.



## TASTE & TOAST

- 7,559 diners served
- 303 online surveys completed
- 52% of diners neither lived nor worked downtown

Nearly 30 restaurants participated in this happy hour-style event, which featured discounts on small plates, craft cocktails and other libations. Held the first week in March, the 4th annual Taste & Toast continued to lift spirits and boost sales of participating restaurants.



## DOWNTOWN EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION WEEK

- 23,500 free food items distributed
- 1,500 coupon and 241 prize donations from 46 businesses
- 352 passports completed

The 13th annual Downtown Employee Appreciation Week celebrated the more than 83,490 individuals who keep our economic engine humming. With games, giveaways and after-hours socials, this first-of-its-kind spirit week continued to showcase the top perks of working downtown.



# PARTNER INITIATIVES – COMMON GROUNDS

Advancing downtown is our top priority. That's why we pride ourselves on being one of the city's biggest collaborators and advocates. We bring people together to move projects forward.

## SCULPTURE MILWAUKEE

- 21 sculptures
- 328 mobile app downloads (mid-season)
- 1,559 social followers (mid-season)

Sculpture Milwaukee, the all-access, all-season installation bringing world-class works to Wisconsin Avenue, returned to the Avenue for the second year. Showcasing 20+ sculptures, the nearly 50-person volunteer committee activated the Avenue with tours, lectures and other events. Our team continued to provide administrative and marketing support to the tune of over \$200,000 in local PR coverage.

This tremendous project has already proven to have a lasting legacy on our city. In March, an anonymous donor of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation provided a grant to Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 to acquire Tony Cragg's *Mixed Feelings*, 2012 – a piece from the 2017 installation. The work was gifted to the City of Milwaukee and installed outside City Hall.



Erwin Wurm, *Half Big Suit*, 2016,  
Photo by Kevin J. Miyazaki

## KEY TO CHANGE

- 7 key-shaped parking meters
- 225+ individuals placed into Housing First
- \$20,000+ in donations received
- 1,500 Downtown Homeless Resource cards created



In September 2017, we installed seven key-shaped parking meters on the streets to collect donations and put an end to chronic homelessness in our community. Donations are used to further the mission of Milwaukee County Housing Division's Housing First project – an initiative that recognizes housing as the first step toward stabilization. Stable living conditions are then complemented by wraparound services, which range from rehabilitation and counseling to job training and placement. To date, Key to Change has raised more than \$20,000.

## OLD WORLD THIRD STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Prompted by the Responsible Hospitality Institute's Nighttime Economy Report, we partnered with the Old World Third Street Business Association to install roofline lighting between Juneau Avenue and State Street. The upgrades will enhance the district's after-hours ambiance. In addition, we partnered with the Department of Public Works to tackle minor streetscape repairs such as replacing brick pavers and painting harp lamps.



Photo by Wendy Schreier

## PARK(ING) DAY

- 11 parking spaces transformed
- 12 street performers
- 1 pop-up bowling alley

Milwaukee's first large-scale PARK(ing) Day activated 11 parking spaces with music, games and coffee. Several hundred guests parked themselves in these temporary territories to mingle with colleagues and put the brakes on the day. Given the popularity of the first-year event, PARK(ing) Day will return September 2018.

# MARKETING – SOME OF THE BEST PRESS WE'VE RECEIVED

We made several attention-grabbing headlines in 2018. From being named the Midwest's "coolest" and "most-underrated" city by *Vogue* to one of America's "most livable" cities by AARP, we topped lists as a great place to live, work, play and invest. Adding to the buzz were the many projects and programs we unleashed on the streets.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### FACEBOOK

- 33,321 followers
- 400 posts
- 95,852 total engagements
- 5.7% rate of engagement
- 1,446,304 users reached
- 3,058,815 impressions

### TWITTER

- 56,792 followers
- 1,046 tweets (includes retweets and replies)
- 6,872 total engagements
- 12.1% rate of engagement
- 772,900 impressions

### INSTAGRAM

- 13,691 followers
- 164 posts
- 59,110 total engagements
- 431.7% rate of engagement
- 789,919 impressions
- 613,508 users reached

In 2018, followership across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram grew by 8%, pushing us beyond 100,000 followers. In addition, engagement rates among all three platforms remained high above the industry standard. Most notably, Instagram engagement rose to 431.7%, while video posting increased by over 18% due to a new video strategy. Other new tactics included launching a new blog series and implementing random acts of kindness through our social media platforms.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 280+ mentions on newscasts
- 40+ radio interviews
- \$1 million in earned media coverage

Public relations remained a key tactic in elevating visibility of downtown and awareness of its many projects and programs. From September 2017 through August 2018, we tipped the scales at just over \$1 million in earned media coverage — up 24% from 2017. Buzzworthy stories covered the scoop on PARK(ing) Day, Key to Change, Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival, Taste & Toast, Downtown Dining Week, Downtown Employee Appreciation Week, Downtown GO! Kart, and economic development news.

## WEBSITE

- 83.4% new visitors to site
- 234,198 users
- 1,168,060 pageviews

We pushed the refresh button on [www.milwaukeedowntown.com](http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com) and brewed a new user-friendly site. With fresh content and interactive maps, the new site offers resources that were never available, until now.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – THE PERKS OF BEING IN THE BID

Pound for pound, downtown Milwaukee is one of the best communities to invest in and we have the data to back it up. Since 2017, the value of all properties within BID #21 rose by nearly 11%. An increase that validates the quality-of-life services delivered by Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, and gives commercial and residential property owners security in their investment.

## BUSINESS TOOLKIT

- \$2.9+ billion invested in public/private projects since 2010
- \$1+ billion under construction
- \$1.7+ billion in proposed public/private projects

With assets like our Downtown Investment Map, Downtown Means Business brochure, Real Results newsletters, business spotlights and commercial property search tool, we've built a catalog of resources to continue the unprecedented investment. In addition, we continually seek out new funding mechanisms to push projects across the finish line. City grants, Kiva Zip loans, PACE financing and the BID #21 Business Development Loan Pool (BDLP) have all been economic generators. Since inception, \$125,000 of BDLP funds have helped leverage \$1 million in private investment.

## THE HOP

presented by Potawatomi Hotel & Casino

- 2.1-mile route (Phase 1 Route)
- 150 passengers, capacity of each of the five vehicles
- Lakefront extension anticipated in 2019

Opening to the public in fall 2018 with free rides for the first year, Milwaukee's much-anticipated streetcar is certain to be a game changer. To gear up for its arrival, we produced the MKE Streetcar Development Opportunities Guide, collaborated to host Streetcar Socials and assisted in promoting the more than 350 businesses and attractions along the Phase 1 Route. As a day-one advocate, we will continue to support The Hop and advocate for future route extensions.



## NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

- \$212+ million generated by nighttime economy
- \$40+ million from downtown resident consumption
- 6+ million visitors to downtown's largest cultural attractions annually

Recognizing the importance of the nighttime economy, we reengaged with the Responsible Hospitality Institute and over 60 partners from the entertainment and hospitality industries to refresh the nighttime economy strategy. We're currently implementing tactics to strengthen our nightlife brand and improve connectivity among districts.



## ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Through frequent property owner discussions, we uncover new ways to enhance downtown's environment. The Jefferson Street Tunnel mural project, coming October 2018, will better connect downtown and the Historic Third Ward. Over 30 artists from coast-to-coast submitted concepts to enliven the pedestrian tunnel between Clybourn Street and St. Paul Avenue. Philadelphia-based artists Katie Batten and Janson Rapisarden of CERA Studios have been commissioned for the project. Both attended Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design.

In addition, Milwaukee Downtown remains committed to assisting in the lighting improvements under the I-794 overpass, as well as the beautification projects along Old World Third Street.

## ADVOCACY

One of our top priorities is taking a leadership position on catalytic projects. We are advocates of The Hop, Bus Rapid Transit, Foxconn and many other projects that are slam dunks for the district. We also propelled reconstruction of the Cathedral Square Park playground, creation of a collaborative Jane's Walk MKE with Near West Side Partners, expansion of Amtrak service between Chicago and Milwaukee, and storefront improvements for Grand Avenue Club's Water Street Boutique. Plus, we extend support beyond our boundaries to neighboring BIDs, the MKE United Greater Downtown Action Agenda and the WEDC Connect Communities network.



# TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE OF PROPERTIES WITHIN MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN, BID #21

Representing approximately 150 square blocks and 500 property owners, BID #21 collected \$3.7 million in assessments to fund its core programs and initiatives. Collected assessments were slightly higher than the previous year given additional BID initiatives.

**2018 ASSESSMENTS: \$3,719,364**  
**ADDITIONAL INCOME: \$32,500**  
**TOTAL INCOME: \$3,751,864**



- 
**\$885,270 (24%)**  
 Clean Sweep Ambassador Program  
 (sidewalk cleaning, landscaping, graffiti removal)
- 
**\$792,905 (21%)**  
 Public Service Ambassador Program
- 
**\$318,454 (8%)**  
 Administrative
- 
**\$1,755,235 (47%)**  
 Economic Development/Marketing/  
 Business Retention & Recruitment

Please note Milwaukee Downtown, Inc. annual contributions, sales and event fees are not reflected in this budget.



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