



MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Business Improvement District 21 | 301 W Wisconsin Ave. Suite 106 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203

Phone 414.220.4700 | www.milwaueedowntown.com

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VISIT Milwaukee

Dear Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21 Property Owner,

As Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21 (BID #21) nears 30 years of service to the downtown community, your investment remains paramount to our efforts, not only for Downtown Milwaukee, but for our City, Region, and State. Over three decades, we have collectively built a solid foundation rooted in clean, safe, and welcoming core services, while adapting to new opportunities and challenges.

Our mission, to enhance Downtown Milwaukee as a premier destination to work, invest, socialize, and live, has never been more important. We are in year three of Milwaukee Downtown's five-year strategic plan, and our programs, events, and initiatives have had a transformational impact on downtown. Downtown Milwaukee continues to excel in the areas of new and renewed investment, increasing pedestrian counts, cleanliness, connectivity, and placemaking. More and more people (locally, nationally, and globally) are taking note of our momentum, which is all made possible by your support and investment.

After fiscally responsible contract renegotiations, our core programs remain focused on providing a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. With a daily presence on our streets and sidewalks, over the past year alone, Milwaukee Downtown's Public Service Ambassadors delivered more than **157,000 hospitality assists**, distributed nearly **60,000 brochures**, made over **9,000 business contacts**, and removed over **3,000 graffiti tags**, while serving as concierges to Downtown for residents, workers, and visitors alike. Our landscape crew installs nearly **100,000 plants and flowers** annually in over 375 planters and 75 Riverwalk hanging baskets, beautifying downtown. Our Clean Sweep Ambassadors collected more than **406,000 gallons of trash** and maintained nearly **150 blocks** daily, ensuring Downtown remains clean and welcoming.

Our efforts are furthered by strong partnerships with the Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee County Housing Services and continued investment in initiatives such as **Key to Change**, which provides coordinated, **long-term solutions for our unhoused population** and improves public safety and quality of life. We have a full-time Homeless Outreach Coordinator dedicated to downtown and an Outreach Public Service Ambassador driving these efforts. Our collaborative approach has become a nationally recognized model and is highlighted in the documentary "Beyond the Bridge: A Solution to Homelessness," which continues to be shown in cities across the country.

Through our agreement and funding with the District Attorney's Office, we have established a dedicated Community Partnership Unit. This unit, with the support of downtown stakeholders like you, monitors offenders to reduce 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.

Milwaukee Downtown plays a critical role in driving economic activity. Our signature events, including Taste & Toast, **Downtown Dining Week**, **Downtown Employee Appreciation Week**, the **Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival**, and our new Winter Wellness Week continue to make a significant impact. 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 small businesses and the arts and cultural community. All of 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. Our website features an interactive investment map and pitch decks that highlight recent development activity, including more than **\$6.5 billion** in completed and under-construction projects—evidence of continued market confidence and long-term investment in Downtown's future. We also monitor key metrics to support business recruitment and assist our property owners, managers, and brokers in their daily work. The momentum is significant and measurable.

We continue to engage with our CEOs, business leaders, and workers launching our ***Get Down to Business*** digital campaign promoting downtown's competitive advantages in our business recruitment and retention efforts. Since 2020, **more than 8,000 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** and connections to additional local and state programs. These are all parts of our toolbox to assist businesses in expanding or locating downtown.

Advocating for and advancing catalytic public space projects continues to be a high-profile agenda item to enhance Downtown's quality of life. We are leading a team in the reimagining of the future of Red Arrow Park with a preferred alternative to be selected by the end of the year. **Downtown's first Dog Park** is celebrating its first anniversary. The project exceeds expectations, enhancing downtown livability while reinventing a blighted, underutilized parcel along the Milwaukee River that has already attracted significant new investment in the under-construction Foxtown Landing project. A special thank you to our corporate sponsors, donors, and other community partners who helped make this award-winning amenity a reality. In its first year, the dog park has already attracted over 25,000 visits.

Our placemaking efforts, which receive significant media attention, are a testament to their effectiveness in building a vibrant community. These efforts have not only activated public and underutilized spaces but also fostered stronger community connections. Recent projects include the new, larger-than-life **Bob Uecker mural**, Rainbow Summer, and 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 Center plaza are a result of our collective involvement and ongoing partnerships to create an exciting daytime environment. 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 that is part of the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival.

Most importantly, Milwaukee Downtown serves as a catalyst. The organization consistently identifies opportunities, convenes partners, secures resources, and advances projects that otherwise would not move forward. Whether creating Downtown's first public dog park, implementing nationally recognized public art installations, supporting businesses of all sizes, publishing key market metrics, advancing the goals of Connecting MKE - Downtown Plan 2040, or managing public spaces and signature events, Milwaukee Downtown provides the leadership and organizational capacity necessary to transform ideas into action. Many of the improvements, experiences, and investments that define Downtown Milwaukee today exist because of the collective support of our stakeholders and the work of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21.

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Looking ahead, Milwaukee Downtown's 30th anniversary is another important milestone. This will be the **sixth renewal** in our organization's history, each one reflecting strong and growing confidence and collaboration with our stakeholders.

We respectfully request your continued support by signing and returning the attached five-year renewal ballot (if you have not already) to ensure Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 remains a driving force behind our collective success. A postage-paid return envelope is included to allow you to return your executed ballot conveniently. You can also send a scanned copy of the executed ballot via email to mdorner@milwaukeedowntown.com.

This renewal is about continuing and building on our momentum together as we enter our next phase. The services delivered by Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 are not supplemental. They are essential to maintaining a clean, competitive, vibrant, and economically resilient Downtown.

Your investment directly supports these critical outcomes. It sustains the services that keep Downtown clean and safe, the events and activations that drive customers to local businesses, and the strategic initiatives that position Downtown as the premier location to grow businesses, live, and visit.

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 has made a significant impact on our community.

I am enclosing a copy of our 2025 Annual Report, which provides a recent snapshot of our organization's work. Our 2026 Annual Report will be available in the coming months.

We want to update you on our current plans and initiatives as we move the organization forward into its 30th year of servicing the downtown community. 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.

We invite you to attend a public hearing regarding the District's 2027 Year Thirty Operating Plan and Budget on Thursday, September 17, 2026. The details of the public hearing are as follows:

Thursday, September 17, 2026

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

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

<https://zoom.us/j/93232119698?pwd=8jf3CsWFqfACKJwoLoiR5Q09zu2co.1>

Meeting ID: 932 3211 9698

Passcode: 649760

The primary purpose of the public hearing is to present and solicit feedback about the Year Thirty 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.

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The Operating Plan and Budget can be accessed online at:
<https://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/about-bid-21/operating-plans/>

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 Thirty 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 17, 2026.

Property owners within the District will not 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 17, 2026. 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@reinhardt.com of any changes in your property's assessed value occurring after May 1, 2026, but before September 17, 2026.

The City of Milwaukee's Common Council will also hold a public meeting to consider the District's 2027 Year Thirty Operating Plan and Budget, and those of other business improvement districts.

If you have questions regarding the Public Hearing or the 2027 Year Thirty 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 investment, grow our workforce, visitor, and residential populations, and focus on furthering a high quality of life for all.

With gratitude,

Matt Dorner
Chief Executive Officer

Encs: Renewal Ballot
[2025 Annual Report](#)
Welcome to Downtown Milwaukee Guide

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