

Building A

# STRONGER MILWAUKEE

Dept. of City Development NEWS



City of Milwaukee

Tom Barrett, Mayor

November 2009

**Building A Stronger Milwaukee** is a news digest representing our work in the community to help shape the city's future.

Under the direction of Mayor Tom Barrett and in partnership with the Milwaukee Common Council, the Department of City Development works each day in a variety of ways to guide development, grow opportunities and strengthen neighborhoods.

**Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner**  
Department of City Development



## Redevelopment of Tower Automotive property gains momentum

City plans to redevelop 84 acres of the former Tower Automotive/A.O. Smith factory complex at N. 35th Street and W. Capitol Drive have gained significant momentum. In September, the Common Council approved creation of a tax incremental financing district to pay costs related to acquiring the property, remediating environmental problems, demolishing obsolete buildings, and installing infrastructure to support a modern business park. The project will be funded through a \$15 million Tax Incremental Finance District (TID), \$10 million from the City's capital budget and \$9 million from grants and other outside sources. The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, which will own the property and serve as developer of the business park, expects to close on the land sale before the end of the year.

Two recently-announced grants will provide resources for complementary projects within the 30th Street Corridor. The Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce has announced a \$300,000 environmental clean-up grant that will assist redevelopment of the vacant Esser Paint factory, in the 1500 block of N. 32nd St. The U.S. Economic Development Administration has awarded a \$150,000 grant to support development of a transformational planning strategy for revival of the 30th Street Industrial Corridor, including the Tower property.



## Streetcar lines unveiled

Three possible routes for a downtown “starter” streetcar have been unveiled by Mayor Tom Barrett. The public is urged to provide comments on the proposed routes, which are designed to circulate the maximum number of riders throughout downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. More information about the routes and instructions for submitting comments are available at:

[http://www.milwaukeeconnector.com/public\\_meeting\\_streetcar.html](http://www.milwaukeeconnector.com/public_meeting_streetcar.html)

The streetcar would be largely funded by a \$54.9 million federal grant.



Pictured (left to right) are Common Council President Ald. Willie Hines; Donna Gambrell, director, CDFI Fund; and U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore

## Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation wins \$25 million tax credit allocation

The Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), a non-profit lending agency associated with the City of Milwaukee, has received an allocation of \$25 million in New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) from the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund. MEDC is one of 99 certified Community Development Entities that received allocations announced Friday, Oct. 30, 2009.

“As a member of Congress, I fought to establish the New Markets Tax Credits as a tool to encourage investment in low-income communities that lack access to capital,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “The allocations to MEDC ensure that this tool is put to work right here in Milwaukee central city neighborhoods to rebuild our economy and create opportunity and jobs.”

The NMTC provides investors (financial institutions, individuals, corporations, etc.) with a tax credit for investing in a Community Development Entity (CDE) that, in turn, reinvests the funds in qualified low-income communities.

Counting the most recent allocation, MEDC has received \$93 million in NMTC allocations since 2006. MEDC uses its credits to increase the number and improve the terms of low-interest loans made to central city businesses to support job growth. Since receiving its first NMTC allocation, MEDC has used NMTC to make loans at favorable terms to 33 small and medium sized Milwaukee companies. MEDC lends predominantly to minority- and women-owned firms.

Also in October, MEDC received a \$750,000 federal grant from the CDFI Fund. The grant will be used to establish a revolving loan fund available to employers in financially-distressed areas of Milwaukee. The award was one of three made to Milwaukee CDEs and one of 62 made nationwide.

The new revolving loan fund will offer subordinate financing on favorable terms, particularly targeted to minority-owned and disadvantaged businesses and companies that offer employment opportunities to Milwaukee residents.

Click here to learn more about MEDC lending: [www.medconline.com](http://www.medconline.com)



## Newberry Boulevard named “Great Street”

The American Planning Association has named Milwaukee’s East Newberry Boulevard as one of America’s “10 Great Streets.” The designation, made through APA’s Great Places in America program, singled out Newberry as an iconic example of the boulevard planning concepts espoused by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead Sr., who designed Lake and Riverside parks in Milwaukee (and Central Park in New York City).

The designation also noted the outstanding concentration of architecturally distinguished homes, built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that line E. Newberry Boulevard. The 12-block street showcases 101 fine residences and represents a veritable catalogue of residential styles, according to APA.

Newberry was Milwaukee’s second boulevard, designated as such in 1897. Highland Boulevard was the first, designated two years earlier.

To learn more about APA’s Great Places program, click here:

<http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/>



## Three new Business Improvement Districts proposed for 2010

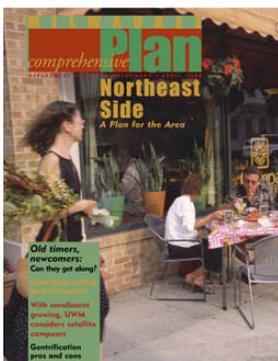
Three neighborhood commercial districts have submitted petitions to form Business Improvement Districts (BID) in 2010. The City Plan Commission has approved all three requests, and the Common Council is slated to act on the matter in late October.

The proposed S. 27th Street BID would include properties along 27th St. between Oklahoma and College Avenues. Property owners south of College, in Greenfield, also are proposing to form a BID. It’s anticipated that retailers in both Milwaukee and Greenfield would work together to improve the commercial strip.

Other proposed BIDs would cover properties in the S. Kinnickinnic Ave. commercial district, and at the Schlitz Park office development

## Northeast Side plan adopted

A new land use plan for Milwaukee’s northeast side was adopted in September by the Common Council. The 300-page plan includes detailed recommendations for seven sub-areas: Riverworks, Riverwest, Harambee, Milwaukee River, Upper East Side, Lower East Side, and the Lakefront. The planning effort was organized by the Department of City Development and directed by a contract management team and plan advisory group composed of property owners, citizens, business owners, and organizations from throughout the northeast side. The full plan is available at <http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/Northeast/pdfs/plan/NESplan.pdf>



Planning work continues to update the 1999 downtown land use plan and create new land use plans for the west side, southwest side, and near north side neighborhoods.



## **Foreclosure effort stresses home ownership**

A new Homebuyer Assistance Program is assisting individuals who want to buy a foreclosed property for owner-occupancy. The program provides forgivable second mortgage loans of up to \$30,000 for the purchase and rehabilitation of foreclosed properties in the city of Milwaukee. Households earning up to 120% of Area Median Income (\$84,840 for a family of four) can participate. The program also includes technical assistance to identify work items, obtain bids and monitor construction.

More than 500 people attended two October workshops to learn more about this program. The workshops were co-sponsored by the City of Milwaukee, US Bank, and Freddie Mac.

The Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative also sponsored a foreclosure prevention event in mid-October. Individuals facing foreclosure had an opportunity to meet with mortgage lenders and housing counselors at the session.

More information about the Homebuyer Assistance Program is available at [www.milwaukeehousinghelp.org](http://www.milwaukeehousinghelp.org).