



Permit & Development Center

809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202 | (414) 286-8211 | milwaukee.gov/permits | DevelopmentCenterInfo@milwaukee.gov

Two or more structures separated by public streets or alleys can be connected with above grade skywalks or below grade tunnels. A connection of this kind will traverse City-controlled space and requires approval by the Milwaukee Common Council in the form of an air space lease or subterranean lease. These leases typically are long term (99 years), identify maintenance and operational responsibilities of the lessee, limit the structures to pre-approved design and size standards, and specify the amount of annual lease payments.

Applicants for space leases must submit a variety of information to the City's Development Center including:

- An application petition (original and one copy)
- A \$200 application fee
- Certified surveys of the lands to be joined (8 copies)
- Building plans of the connecting structure (8 copies)
- A legal description (three dimensional) of the connecting structure (8 copies)
- Floor plans of the areas adjacent to the connections (8 copies)
- A memorandum of ownership showing the last recorded owner of all the properties to be joined by the structure

Upon receipt of this information, a file is opened at the Common Council.

This file is referred to the Council's Public Improvements Committee, the City Plan Commission, the Special Committee on Air and Subterranean Space Structures, and (in the case of an above grade structure to be located in the central business district) the Skywalk Design Task Force. These committees review the proposed plans and make recommendations to the Common Council.

The lease itself is initially drafted by the City Attorney. The applicant can, of course, review the proposed lease and suggest modifications.

The annual fee for subterranean or air space leases is based upon the area of the structure, assessed values of the connected properties and an amortization rate. The fee may be adjusted every ten years.

The review and decision-making process for a space lease typically takes two to four months. In addition to the space lease, a normal building permit is also required before construction can begin.

Owners contemplating air or subterranean connection of structures are encouraged to contact the Department of Public Works, City Engineer's Office at (414) 286-2451 early in the concept development stage to avoid any untimely delays or excessive costs for changes in design. Staff will be happy to offer guidance to allow for smooth completion of the process.