

# CONNECTING MKE

## DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040



AUGUST 2023

# Acknowledgments

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# CONNECTING MKE

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## DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040

FINAL PLAN – AUGUST 2023



# City of Milwaukee

Office of the City Clerk

200 E. Wells Street

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Certified Copy of Ordinance

FILE NO: 230317

**Title:**

**An ordinance approving Connecting MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 (the Downtown Area Plan) as part of the City of Milwaukee’s Overall Comprehensive Plan, in the 3rd, 4th, and 6th Aldermanic Districts.**

**Body:**

Whereas, Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, requires that all cities adopt a comprehensive plan and specifies that comprehensive plans shall be updated no less than once every 10 years; and

Whereas, On March 2, 2021 the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee (“Common Council”) adopted Common Council File No. 201357 directing the Department of City Development (“DCD”) to prepare a strategic update to the Downtown Area Comprehensive Plan that, upon approval of the Common Council, will amend the existing Downtown Area Plan as part of the City of Milwaukee’s (“City”) Overall Comprehensive Plan; and

Whereas, An updated Downtown Area Plan has been prepared, titled Connecting MKE: Downtown Plan 2040, a copy of which is attached to this Common Council File; and

Whereas, The Downtown Comprehensive Planning Area is generally bound by West Walnut Street and East Lyon Street to the north, West Clybourn Street and the Menomonee River to the south, Interste-43 to the west, and Lincoln Memorial Drive to the east; and

Whereas, DCD partnered with The Downtown Business Improvement District to co-lead the planning process and create the Plan; and

Whereas, The Department of Public Works, the Historic King Drive BID, Westtown Association, MKE United, and Milwaukee County served as core partners in developing the Downtown Plan Update; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the update and amendment procedure for comprehensive planning adopted by Common Council File No. 161076, the planning process involved extensive community engagement and public participation; and

Whereas, The updated Downtown Area Plan replaces the previous Downtown Area Plan that was adopted by the Common Council on October 12, 2010, by Common Council File No. 100235; and

Whereas, The Downtown Area Plan contains recommendations related to housing, business, entertainment, culture, sustainability, multimodal transportation, public space, land use, and development; and

Whereas, Approval of the Downtown Area Plan by the Common Council will establish the Plan as a guide for the City regarding the use and development of public and private land in the area and facilitate implementation of the recommendations in the plan; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the amended Downtown Area Plan, as approved, shall provide guidance and serve as the basis for decision-making by the Common Council in its consideration of land use and physical development issues; and, be it

Further Resolved, That DCD, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Neighborhood Services and other appropriate City departments and agencies are directed to work toward implementation of the Plan; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Commissioner of DCD is authorized to send copies of the Plan to the parties identified as having responsibility for implementation of the Plan for their reference and use.

**Analysis:**

This ordinance approves Connecting MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 (The Downtown Area Plan) as part of the City of Milwaukee’s Overall Comprehensive Plan, and directs various City departments and agencies to work towards implementation of the plan.



I, James R. Owczarski, City Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a(n) Ordinance Passed by the COMMON COUNCIL of the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin on July 31, 2023, published on August 17, 2023, effective August 18, 2023.

*James R. Owczarski*

James R. Owczarski

August 03, 2023

Date Certified

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Grow the  
Downtown population  
to 40,000 residents  
by 2040

Add ~15,000  
housing units  
Downtown  
by 2040  
20% of Units  
Affordable

Grow  
Downtown  
jobs to 100,000  
by 2040



# Executive Summary

Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040, co-led by the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, sets a vision for the future of Downtown Milwaukee. Connec+ing MKE serves as the City's Downtown Area Plan, one of 14 area plans that together serve as the City's Comprehensive Plan. Updated and amended on an ongoing basis, the comprehensive plan guides neighborhood development with land use, urban design, and catalytic project recommendations.

The last Downtown Area Plan was adopted in 2010 and included recommendations for streets, public spaces, and new development that aimed to foster a distinct Downtown center, a strong sense of place, a connected Downtown, and to attract a density of vibrant uses Downtown. The 2010 Plan recommended a series of catalytic projects representing major public and private investments designed to have ripple effects throughout the area including: the addition of a fixed-rail streetcar system, the revitalization of W. Wisconsin Avenue, improvements to the Lakefront Gateway, and a strong Broadway Connection to better link Downtown to the Historic Third Ward.

Since the Plan's adoption in 2010, many of the catalytic projects have been implemented and more than \$4.6 billion has been invested in public and private projects Downtown, with an additional \$3.1 billion proposed or under construction.

Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 looks to continue the momentum of the 2010 Plan, build on the success of recently completed or announced projects, and lay out an aspirational vision for the future of Downtown — one that takes into consideration global post-COVID trends and Downtown Milwaukee's distinguishing physical

characteristics to unlock its full growth potential with a focus on creating great places connected by walkable streets, enhanced transit options, greater connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods, and active and inclusive gathering spaces and plazas.

The vision set forth in Connec+ing MKE represents Milwaukee's collective vision for our city center, and was generated through significant community engagement. This engagement included the formation of a Downtown Plan Community Council who helped shape plan recommendations through candid discussions surrounding racial and social equity, and by identifying opportunities to make Downtown Milwaukee more racially representative and inclusive. Key Downtown stakeholders served as a Plan Advisory Group to guide the recommendations of the Plan throughout the process.

During nearly two years of engagement and outreach, the Connec+ing MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 received robust public participation at multiple community open houses, extensive feedback received on the EngageMKE.com online platform, small group meetings with stakeholder groups, and one-on-one discussions. In total, more than 2,500 individuals — including participants from all Milwaukee zip codes — provided input on their vision for the future of Downtown. This robust and inclusive engagement shaped the eight overarching goals for the Plan, as well as "big ideas" and catalytic projects to guide public and private investment to continue to grow Downtown.







# Goals for 2040

**1**

## Housing & Neighborhoods

**GOAL 1:** Increase the Downtown population through density and diversity of housing, and improve the quality of life in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

**2**

## Business & Education

**GOAL 2:** Create environments and programs that support an increase of diverse businesses and a talented workforce.

**3**

## Retail, Services, Food & Nightlife

**GOAL 3:** Create vibrant retail and entertainment districts with streets and public spaces that feature active uses and pedestrian friendly design.

**4**

## Arts, Culture, Entertainment & Sports

**GOAL 4:** Create more opportunities for shared experiences, and highlight the diverse stories, people, and places that make MKE unique.

**5**

## Sustainability & Resilience

**GOAL 5:** Create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable & resilient Downtown.

**6**

## Transportation & Mobility

**GOAL 6:** Redesign our streets to support walkability, and expand options for the safe, comfortable and enjoyable movement of people.

**7**

## Streets & Public Space

**GOAL 7:** Invest in the public realm by improving streets, parks, and other public spaces in ways that encourage a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient MKE.

**8**

## Land Use & Development

**GOAL 8:** Create more opportunities for public and private investment in the built environment.

# Big Ideas

Public input received throughout the planning process helped shape six “big ideas” for how public and private investment can drive physical changes to Downtown that meaningfully advance Connecting MKE goals.

## Grow Downtown

- **Double the Downtown population through intensive housing development**
- **Significantly increase Downtown’s job and talent density**
- **Leverage publicly owned development sites to promote housing density and affordability and new economic opportunities.**

**A connected Downtown** is vibrant day and night, 7 days a week and encourages a wide mix of uses. Milwaukee has a competitive advantage by already having a larger share of residential uses Downtown than many peer cities. Encouraging new housing development Downtown to complement office, commercial, civic, and entertainment uses will bring new residents to support Downtown businesses and entertainment venues, reinforce efforts to bring improved transit options and public spaces Downtown, and grow the workforce for Downtown businesses.

## Redesign Streets as Public Spaces

- **Focus on walkable streets designed for people, including Water Street, Wisconsin Avenue, King Drive, and Jefferson Street**

**A connected Downtown** is safe, fun, and easy to navigate for all. Public input throughout the planning process has been resounding that residents and visitors want to see changes to Downtown streets to make them safer and more enjoyable for people to walk Downtown and want to see Downtown streets redesigned and repurposed as vibrant and social public spaces.

## Invest in Parks & Gathering Spaces

- **Create world class gathering spaces including improvements to Red Arrow Park, Pere Marquette Park, and Cathedral Square**

**A connected Downtown** has places for people to gather, celebrate, protest, and reflect. Downtown Milwaukee has a network of existing parks that can serve this purpose. The projects identified in this plan are based on public input received during the planning process and recommend improvements to existing parks and gathering spaces that work towards achieving a vision for world-class public spaces that bring together residents, workers, and visitors in Downtown.

## Improve Streets to Support All Users

- **Create an enhanced transit experience including improvements to transit facilities on Wisconsin Avenue, Water Street, and 6th Street**
- **Build a bike network for all that connects to greater Downtown neighborhoods. This includes improvements to Kilbourn Avenue, 6th Street, Van Buren/Jefferson St; and connections to the Beerline, Oak Leaf and Hank Aaron Trails.**

**A connected Downtown** is welcoming and accessible to those arriving by foot, transit and bicycle, and prioritizes the experience of individuals who are walking, bicycling, and using transit while Downtown. Downtown streets should be designed to provide enjoyable experiences for those residents, workers and visitors in order to create a walkable and vibrant Downtown.

## Expand & Enhance Transit

- Create robust transit options, including streetcar extensions, expansion of bus rapid transit, enhance transit user experience, and expansion of intercity rail between Milwaukee and neighboring cities

**A connected Downtown** provides transit options to connect to adjacent neighborhoods and to key destinations within the regional economy. Increased bus service and an improved experience for riders Downtown links residents to jobs and reduces the need for Downtown visitors to rely on private automobiles. The Hop has demonstrated the ability of the streetcar system to spur economic development, and planned extensions will bring this momentum and increased connectivity to residents and businesses in adjacent neighborhoods. New or improved intercity rail connections to Chicago, Madison, Minneapolis, Racine and Kenosha provide direct linkages to workers and businesses in growth sectors in the global economy.

## Reconnect Places Divided by Human-made Barriers

- Create connections within Downtown, to the lakefront, and to surrounding neighborhoods
- Rethink I-794 by transforming the corridor in a way that creates new places and connections

**A connected Downtown** evolves constantly, including re-examining past decisions and striving to reconnect places that may have been divided by the creation of human-made barriers. The creation of the Riverwalk and the removal of the Park East Freeway show the transformative potential that comes from reconnecting people to the city's waterways and for reimagining how land devoted to transportation infrastructure may be repurposed for people, jobs, homes, and open space.



# Catalytic Projects



This Plan recommends a series of public and private development projects that have the potential to bring significant improvements to Downtown. Among those, several are identified as catalytic projects, which represent high-priority projects with some of the largest potential to have transformative impacts Downtown, including generating momentum to spark complementary investments in the surrounding areas.

## Catalytic Projects:

- Public Museum & State Office Building Redevelopment at MacArthur Square
- Place Management Organization for Parks & Public Spaces
- Streetcar Extensions
- Water Street Transformation
- Performing Arts Center Parking Garage Redevelopment Site
- I-794 Corridor & Clybourn Street
- Lakefront Gateway Plaza & Connections
- 6th Street Complete Street
- Haymarket District

## Public Museum & State Office Building Redevelopment at MacArthur Square

*See Chapter 8: Streets & Public Space + Chapter 9: Land Use & Development*

The existing Milwaukee Public Museum Site should be redeveloped with high-density mixed-use development with a goal of including mixed income housing and neighborhood supporting commercial uses on the ground floor. Extending the street grid north of Wells Street to connect to MacArthur Square will also help to support additional infill development on surface parking lots in the area, and the reuse or redevelopment of the State-owned office building at 6th and Wells Streets.



## Place Management Organization for Parks & Public Spaces

See Chapter 8: Streets & Public Space

### for Implementation of:

- Red Arrow Park
- Zeidler Union Square
- Pere Marquette Park
- Cathedral Square

Creating a “place space management organization,” and identifying sustainable funding opportunities for the management and activation of public spaces will be critical to bringing about the improved public spaces envisioned by the Plan, including at Cathedral Square, Red Arrow, and Pere Marquette Parks. Milwaukee is not alone when it comes the need to address the fiscal challenges for the local park systems.

Cities across the country are turning to innovative funding and management structures to support the construction, maintenance, and programming of their Downtown public spaces. After initial upfront investments are made in parks, the most successful urban parks remain active with an abundance of free and inclusive activities designed to users of all ages and races, improving the ability of Downtown parks to be gathering spaces for ALL Milwaukeeans.



## Streetcar Extensions

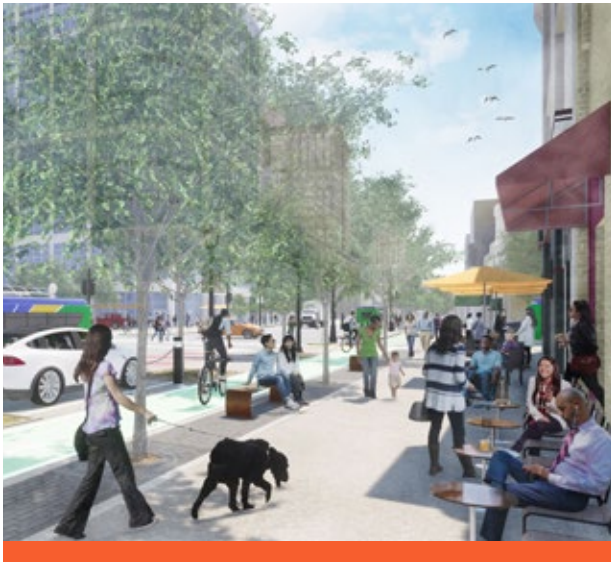
See Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility

- Westtown
- Walker’s Point
- Bronzeville
- East Side

The vision for The Hop has always been to extend the system into the surrounding neighborhoods, providing enhanced connectivity and boosting economic growth throughout the Greater Downtown area. Efforts to expand The Hop are ongoing and have focused on future connections to King Drive and the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District north of Downtown, the Walker’s Point neighborhood south of Downtown, and the East Side.

The City should continue to pursue these planned and future streetcar extensions, and work aggressively to secure funding and support for these extensions. The Hop provides a reliable, high-quality means of connecting people and places within Downtown in a way that is convenient, comfortable, and enjoyable for area residents, employees and visitors. The Hop has also shown its value as a catalyst for economic development, with dozens of large new developments rising along the route representing billions in new investment.

# Catalytic Projects



## Water Street Transformation

See Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility  
+ Chapter 8: Streets & Public Space

- Water Street Complete Street
- Water Street Entertainment District
- City Hall Square & Market Street Plaza

A redesigned North Water Street could reduce the number of motor-vehicle lanes and add safety improvements for transit riders and people walking and on bicycles. The added sidewalk space would provide an improved experience for all users and visitors to this area. Street improvements will also help spur development along the Water Street corridor, which includes a number of priority redevelopment sites with the potential to add significant new development.

This catalytic project would make Red Arrow Park more accessible, better connect pedestrians to a variety of destinations including the Riverwalk, City Hall Square, the North End neighborhood, and Wisconsin Avenue, and support the Water Street Entertainment District.



## Performing Arts Center Parking Garage Redevelopment Site

See Chapter 9: Land Use & Development

The parking structure for the Marcus Center would be replaced with new high-density mixed-use development that adds density and vibrancy to the district. This could spur the development of underutilized sites in the area including surface parking lots along Water Street and the RiverWalk.



## I-794 Corridor & Clybourn Street

*See Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility  
+ Chapter 9: Land Use & Development*

The I-794 Lake Interchange cuts through the heart of Downtown Milwaukee and serves as a barrier between the East Town neighborhood, the Historic Third Ward, and the Lakefront — three of the region’s most desirable areas. The location and design of this freeway spur is in conflict with the overarching goal of a Connected Downtown and should be reimaged.

Connecting MKE calls for exploring the eventual removal of the I-794 Lake Interchange and replacing it with a traditional connected grid of comfortable multi-modal streets, public spaces, and high-density mixed-use development.

The State of Wisconsin is currently undertaking efforts to study alternatives for this segment of I-794. The alternative that is selected through that ongoing process should be the one that best advances overall Connecting MKE goals, including safety and connectivity for all users.

If full removal is not feasible via this current project, any interim alternative should prioritize modernization of the infrastructure to reduce the footprint, activation of the public spaces and streets under the bridges, improvements to the ramp connections, and increased safety for pedestrian crossings.

Improvements in this area will also provide significant opportunities for a reimaged Clybourn Street, where public improvements that increase walkability and connectivity will spur private development along this key corridor.

# Catalytic Projects



## Lakefront Gateway & Connections

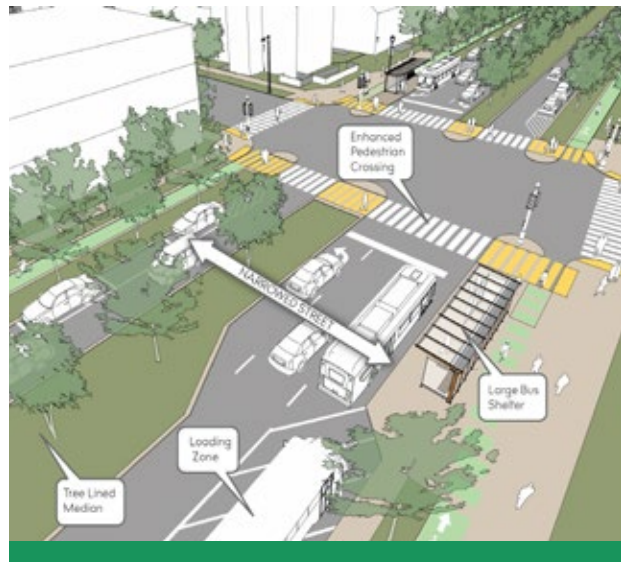
See Chapter 8: Streets & Public Space

Build the proposed Lakefront Gateway Plaza. The Plaza should include pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown and the Lakefront.

In addition to the plaza itself, efforts to better connect Downtown to the Lakefront should remain a priority to showcase Milwaukee as America’s Fresh Coast Destination. This includes several supporting projects found in other chapters including pedestrian safety improvements along and across Lincoln Memorial Drive, enhanced bike accommodations, and improvements to Museum Center Park.

In 2015, a national design competition was held with the vision of creating a world-class public space to anchor Milwaukee’s Downtown Lakefront. The winning design team proposed a dynamic free flowing design featuring a pedestrian bridge over Lincoln Memorial Drive, a water feature, and a commercial space to help activate the plaza.

This plan reaffirms the importance of this public space and the need to continue to look for funding solutions to build the plaza.



## 6th Street Complete Street

See Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility

To accommodate interstate traffic North 6th Street was widened in the 1960s. This resulted in the removal of historic structures and the creation of a street that prioritized car traffic over the experiences of people who live, walk, work, and shop along the corridor. 6th Street should be redesigned as a priority transit street and enhanced bikeway.

Redesigning 6th Street will better connect both north and south side neighborhoods to Downtown via improved transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access. It will build on the momentum of the Future Museum being constructed on 6th and McKinley by making it a more accessible destination for residents of the city and the region and will spur adjacent private development. An improved 6th Street would embody the vision of a Connected Downtown, linking Bronzeville, Halyard Park, Hillside, MATC, the Brewery District, the Deer District, the Convention Center, West Wisconsin Avenue, the Iron District and Walker’s Point via a street that is truly designed for all users.





## Haymarket District

*See Chapter 2: Housing & Neighborhoods  
+ See Chapter 9: Land Use & Development*

Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized properties throughout the Haymarket district, with an emphasis on high and medium density residential uses. Rezone industrial properties in the area to allow for mixed activity. Encourage new mixed-use development along King Drive between Juneau and Cherry Streets to create a new walkable commercial node between Bronzeville and the Old World Third Street Entertainment District.

The Haymarket District, north of the Deer District and south of the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District has significant potential for new development. The area is currently underutilized and represents a gap in activity between adjacent areas. Recent and proposed projects like the Fiserv Forum and the Future Museum have led to renewed development interest in the area.

Residential uses are currently prohibited in much of the district, which has generally retained its light industrial zoning classification. To reach its full potential as a unique Downtown neighborhood, the Haymarket area should be rezoned to allow for a mix of uses. This could allow existing businesses to remain while facilitating a gradual transition into a mixed-use neighborhood. Similar approaches have allowed former industrial areas like Walker's Point and the Historic Third Ward to transition into vibrant places with a diverse mix of activities.

# 40 Recommendations



The goals of Connecting MKE: Downtown Plan 2040 are intended to create a roadmap for city leaders over the next two decades. These goals were derived from a comprehensive public engagement strategy to ensure Downtown Milwaukee is a place where every resident, in every neighborhood, can feel welcome and connected to our city. The Plan includes 40 specific recommendations and related action strategies to achieve these goals.



**GOAL 1****Housing & Neighborhoods**

**Increase the Downtown population through density and diversity of housing, and improve the quality of life in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.**

Connecting MKE envisions a thriving mixed-use Downtown with over 40,000 residents by 2040, more than doubling the current Downtown population. This will require continued high-density residential development, and new amenities to support a growing population. This Plan encourages new residential development on underutilized land throughout Downtown, and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The Plan recommends strategies to provide housing choices for all income levels, establishing a goal that at least 20% of Downtown housing units are affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

- 1** Increase the supply of Downtown housing, and grow the Downtown population.
- 2** Provide housing choices for all income levels.
- 3** Provide a range of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- 4** Increase opportunities for homeownership in Downtown.
- 5** Provide world class amenities to serve a diverse downtown population.
- 6** Support the growth and diversity of adjacent neighborhoods and strengthen neighborhood connections.
- 7** Reduce homelessness and provide support for the unhoused population.

**GOAL 2****Business & Education**

**Create environments and programs that support an increase of diverse businesses and a talented workforce.**

As the economic hub of the State of Wisconsin, Downtown Milwaukee continues to attract new businesses and employees. Connecting MKE promotes an approach to expand economic opportunity for more Milwaukeeans, increasing the number of businesses from 2,400 to 4,000 and increasing Downtown employment from 60,000 to 100,000. The Plan also acknowledges the role of educational institutions in Downtown to attract and grow a talented workforce as well as the need to implement initiatives to encourage a larger presence of BIPOC owned businesses in Downtown, and be proactive in attracting, retaining, and growing small businesses owned by people of color and women.

- 8** Reinforce Downtown as the premier business center for the state of Wisconsin and one of the top employment centers in the Midwest.
- 9** Foster local innovation and entrepreneurship to increase the number and diversity of Downtown Businesses.
- 10** Attract, retain, and grow a diverse and talented workforce.
- 11** Extend economic opportunity in Downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods, and increase access to employment for city residents.

# 40 Recommendations

## GOAL 3

### Retail, Services, Food & Nightlife

Create vibrant retail and entertainment districts with streets and public spaces that feature active uses and pedestrian friendly design.

Retail, restaurants and nightlife establishments add life to our streets and public spaces and are a critical component of creating vibrant districts. Connecting MKE envisions a thriving retail environment with an increased number and diversity of retail, dining and service offerings. The Plan also emphasizes the need for coordinated management of the nighttime economy and improved streets and public spaces in our most active commercial districts.

- 12 Increase the number and diversity of Downtown retail, dining, and service offering.
- 13 Prioritize the development of walkable, pedestrian-scaled commercial districts through enhancements to the public realm and by fronting streets and public spaces with active uses and pedestrian friendly façades.
- 14 Embrace Downtown as the region's center for nightlife and social gathering, and ensure the proper management of the nighttime economy.
- 15 Develop a high concentration of retail, dining, and other active uses in the center of Downtown, and promote the Downtown core as a regional destination for the experiential shopping and entertainment.

## GOAL 4

### Arts, Culture, Entertainment & Sports

Create more opportunities for shared experiences, and highlight the diverse stories, people, and places that make MKE unique.

Downtown Milwaukee is the region's center for art, culture, entertainment, and sports. It's one of the reasons why over 20 million people visit our city each year. Connecting MKE envisions Downtown as the neighborhood for everyone, and seeks to expand opportunities for shared experiences, and highlight the diverse stories, people and places that make Milwaukee unique.

- 16 Reinforce Downtown as the region's center of art, culture, entertainment, and sports.
- 17 Expand access to positive shared experiences and build connections between people of different cultures and backgrounds.
- 18 Promote public art and provide more opportunities for creative expression.
- 19 Promote social gathering and celebrate the city's unique history and cultural diversity.
- 20 Preserve and restore Downtown's historic buildings.
- 21 Connect to the river, and reorient the lakefront as the "front door" to the city.

**GOAL 5****Sustainability & Resilience**

Create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable & resilient Downtown.

Connecting MKE envisions an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable and resilient Downtown. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emission from buildings and transportation and protecting our rivers and Lake Michigan for future generations. The plan proposes a 45% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The Plan also recommends using green infrastructure to capture the first ½ inch of rainfall across Downtown, keeping over 13 million gallons of stormwater out of the combined sewer system for each major rain event. To support economic and social resilience, the Plan emphasizes the need to grow the City's tax base, promote public health and safety, and eliminate racial disparities.

- 22** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and transportation.
- 23** Reduce the amount of rainfall that enters the City's combined sewer system, and eliminate sewage overflows into Milwaukee's Rivers and Lake Michigan.
- 24** Increase the property tax base in Downtown to support services citywide.
- 25** Promote public health and safety, and eliminate racial disparities.

**GOAL 6****Transportation & Mobility**

Redesign our streets to support walkability, and expand options for the safe, comfortable and enjoyable movement of people.

A diversity of options for connecting people and places is critical to a vibrant Downtown. Connecting MKE envisions redesigning our streets to create the most walkable Downtown in the Midwest. This includes making improvements to streets throughout Downtown to better serve people who are walking, biking, and riding transit, as well as creating signature streetscapes at key locations.

The Plan also recommends increasing bicycle ridership by building a bike network that is safe and inviting for all, enhancing the experience of using local bus routes, expanding The Hop streetcar to adjacent neighborhoods, and addressing human-made barriers to connections within Downtown and to surrounding neighborhoods.

- 26** Create the most walkable Downtown in the Midwest.
- 27** Increase the bicycle ridership and build a bike network that is safe and inviting for all.
- 28** Expand transit options to adjacent neighborhoods.
- 29** Prioritize slow motor vehicle speeds on all streets.
- 30** Manage the curb, and adapt Downtown streets to accommodate new trends and technologies.
- 31** Increase the efficiency of existing parking assets.

# 40 Recommendations

## GOAL 7

### Streets & Public Space

Invest in the public realm by improving streets, parks, and other public spaces in ways that encourage a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient MKE.

Downtown Milwaukee is experienced through its streets and public spaces. Connecting MKE envisions a completely transformed public realm and seeks to focus investment in streets and public spaces that encourage a more vibrant, inclusive and resilient city. This includes designing streets for people, improving parks and open spaces, increasing the tree canopy within the public way, and using creative placemaking to enhance, activate and connect key places. Instrumental to this vision is the creation of a “public space management organization” to help fundraise, maintain, program, and promote our Downtown parks and public spaces.

- 32 Design streets as public spaces.
- 33 Invest in our parks, and expand efforts to activate and manage key public spaces.
- 34 Provide the amenities needed to support enjoyment of the public realm, and ensure that streets and public spaces are welcoming and accessible to all.
- 35 Increase the tree canopy Downtown, and encourage sustainable landscape design within the public realm.
- 36 Foster an authentic “sense of place” within Downtown districts and implement creative placemaking strategies to activate Downtown streets and public spaces.
- 37 Enhance connectivity between downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods that are physically separated by overhead highways and/or high volume surface streets.

## GOAL 8

### Land Use & Development

Create more opportunities for public and private investment in the built environment.

The continued growth and development of Downtown Milwaukee will help to bolster our economy, activate our public spaces, and generate revenue for infrastructure and public services city-wide. Connecting MKE envisions new development on underutilized land throughout Downtown, and supports policies that add to the density and diversity of land uses and building types. This includes ensuring zoning regulations continue to promote density and activity, and leveraging public land and economic development tools to create more opportunities for investment in the built environment. The Plan identifies more than 100 acres of land, mostly surface parking lots, that have the potential for redevelopment.

- 38 Encourage a diversity of compatible land uses and building types that contribute to cohesive districts and corridors.
- 39 Encourage buildings to engage the public realm and promote walkability.
- 40 Promote high density development and discourage development that is significantly less dense than the surrounding context.







# Introduction

Downtown Milwaukee is the cultural and economic hub of the city of Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin and boasts the highest density of jobs and residents in the state. Downtown shapes the collective identity of the city and its residents, and a vibrant and inclusive downtown is vital to the city as a whole. In recent years the construction of a modern streetcar system, a new arena, new office and residential towers, new hotels, and renovated historic buildings have further shaped the identity of Downtown and surrounding areas.

While this momentum is notable, there is much work still to be done. Milwaukee has lagged behind many of its peer cities in designing and rebuilding its public realm in a way that creates safe, sustainable, inclusive, and memorable places that connect people to the city and to each other.

Connec+ing MKE – Downtown Plan 2040 provides a coordinated framework for public and private investment decisions, and practical implementation strategies to enhance and promote the public realm with an emphasis on equity and high quality urban design. This vision for the future is built on a connected network of streets and public spaces that reflect Downtown's unique character and promote social and racial equity by becoming more physically inviting and engaging to all – families, elders, people of color, immigrants, women, other under-represented groups, and community members of downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

## Commitment to Equity

In planning, we must acknowledge the historical trauma of racism and discrimination inflicted on people of color, wrought by the planning profession itself, which led to structural disadvantages in housing, transportation, education and employment that last to this day.

The City of Milwaukee is committed to examining current practices and making strategic improvements to further racial and social equity.

The Department of City Development has developed an implementation plan to reduce barriers to participation in the City of Milwaukee's neighborhood planning process, with an explicit focus on reducing barriers that may be disproportionately impacting residents of color and additional under-represented groups.

## Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge in Milwaukee that we are on traditional Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk and Menominee homeland along the southwest shores of Michigami, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee and Kinnickinnic rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin's sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida and Mohican nations remain present.

# TRACKING A DECADE OF GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

With more than \$4.6 billion in completed public and private projects since 2010, Downtown Milwaukee is experiencing record growth. This is further supported on the base of \$2 billion invested in projects completed between 2005 to 2010. While these figures are unprecedented, we remain poised for additional growth. Across all industry sectors, over \$2.5 billion in a varied list of public and private projects are currently under construction or slated to start soon. These projects and more continue to transform Downtown Milwaukee into a competitive city center.

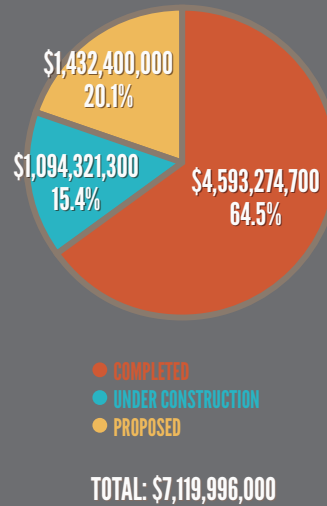
COMPLETED (2010 – PRESENT)  
**\$4,593,274,700**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
**\$1,094,321,300**

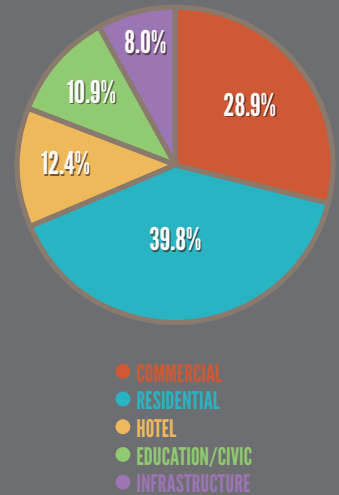
PROPOSED  
**\$1,432,400,000**

\*Figures tallied September 2022

Total Downtown Investment  
 2010 to Present:  
**\$7.1 Billion**



Percentage of  
 Total Projects Since 2010  
 by Industry Sector



## Market Trends Complement Soaring Investment

From the Lower East Side to Walker's Point, the greater downtown area has experienced significant growth over the last ten-plus years, validating a growing central business district, highlighted by:

- 21.2% population growth, to more than 42,275 residents
- 4.3+ million sq. ft. of new or renovated office space
- 9,500+ new housing units
- 2,750+ new hotel rooms
- 90,700+ estimated employees, a 12.1% increase since 2010
- 30.6% share of all jobs in the City of Milwaukee

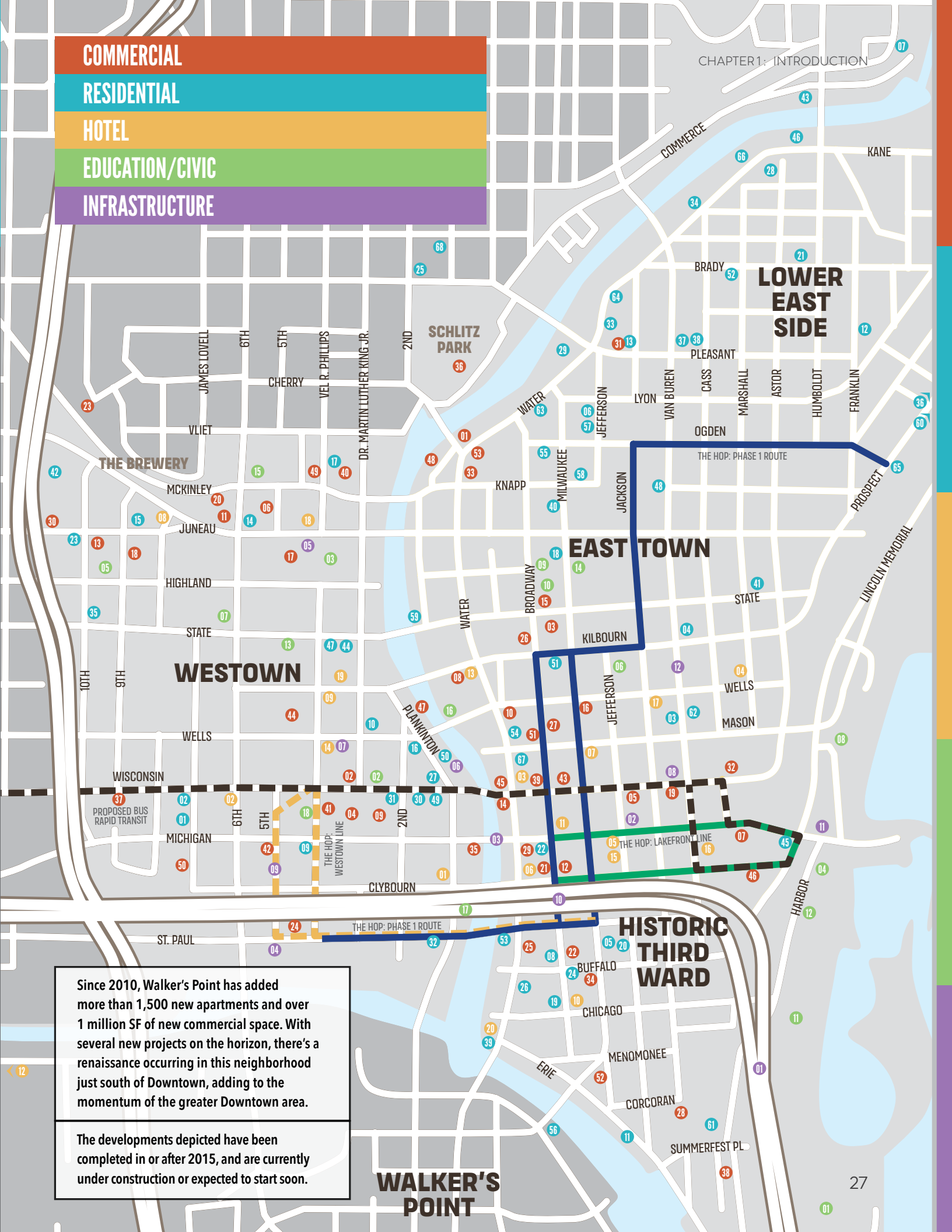
COMMERCIAL

RESIDENTIAL

HOTEL

EDUCATION/CIVIC

INFRASTRUCTURE



### LOWER EAST SIDE

### EAST TOWN

### WESTTOWN

### HISTORIC THIRD WARD

### WALKER'S POINT

Since 2010, Walker's Point has added more than 1,500 new apartments and over 1 million SF of new commercial space. With several new projects on the horizon, there's a renaissance occurring in this neighborhood just south of Downtown, adding to the momentum of the greater Downtown area.

The developments depicted have been completed in or after 2015, and are currently under construction or expected to start soon.

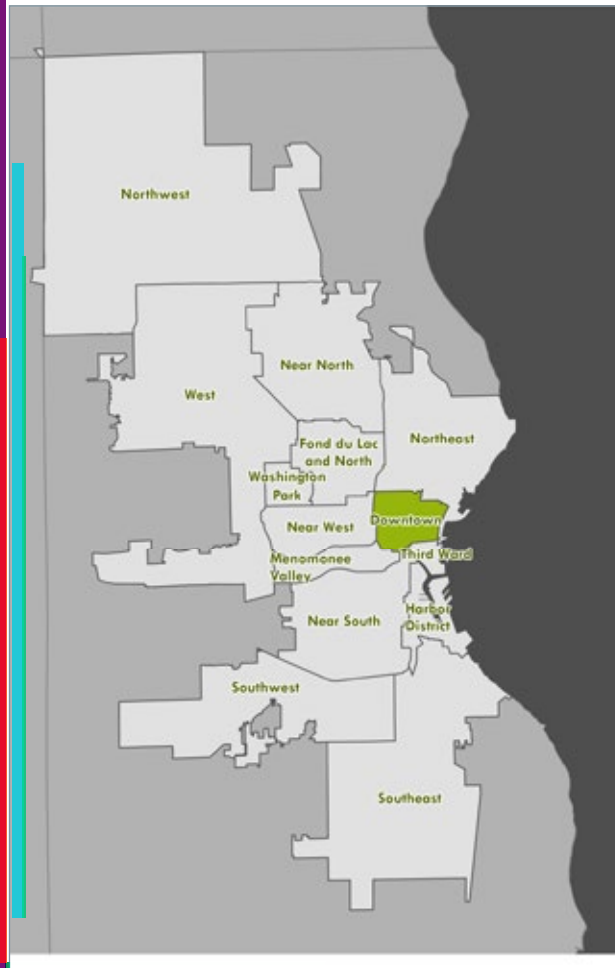
## City of Milwaukee's Comprehensive Plan

The Downtown Area Plan is one of 14 area plans that together comprise the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the physical, social and economic development of the city and is updated and amended on an ongoing basis. The last Downtown Plan was adopted in 2010. Many of the recommendations in the 2010 Plan have been implemented or are underway, signaling it is time for an update that sets new goals and recommends ambitious projects for Downtown.

## Why Do We Need a Plan Update?

To build momentum for collective action through civic engagement & to establish updated recommendations for:

- Housing
- Business & Economy
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Streets & Public Spaces
- Sustainability
- Visionary projects for future development



### Downtown Area Plan

The Plan area covers the following area of Milwaukee:

- West Walnut Street and East Lyon Street to the north,
- West Clybourn Street and the Menomonee River to the south,
- Interstate-43 to the west, and
- Lincoln Memorial Drive to the east
- Recommends improved connections to surrounding neighborhoods



# MKE United

The MKE United Greater Downtown Action Agenda (MKE United) is a comprehensive planning process that developed a shared and, inclusive vision for Downtown Milwaukee and its adjacent neighborhoods, supported by a strategic Action Agenda that will make that vision a reality. The Downtown Plan utilized the MKE United Action Agenda and Transformative Directions as a foundation for the plan recommendations.

Within the Greater Downtown, MKE United’s Action Agenda is focused on:

- Neighborhood development and commercial corridors
- Open space, sustainability and the public realm
- Land use and zoning
- Transportation and mobility
- Economic development and workforce
- Housing, office, hospitality, cultural and entertainment development



## MKE United “Transformative Directions”



### Who

- Creating a Just Milwaukee



### Work

- Achieving Inclusive Growth



### Live

- Promoting Authentic Neighborhoods of Choice



### Move

- Advancing Access & Mobility for All



### Engage

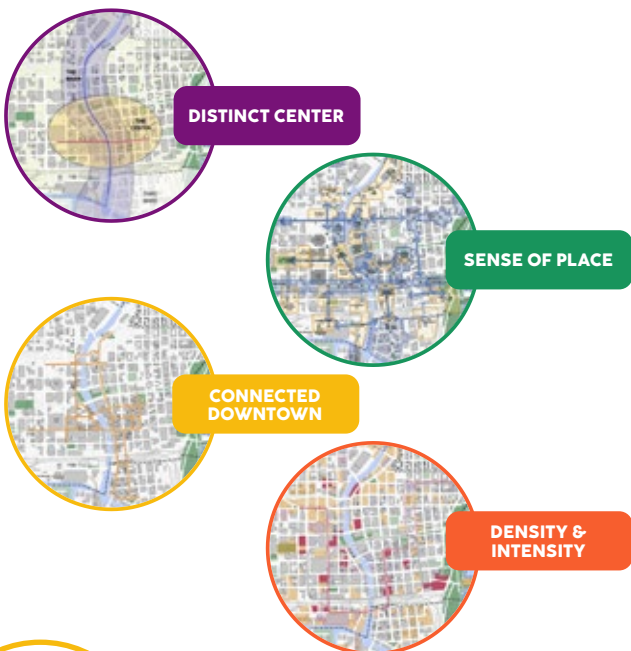
- Building a New Capacity to Engage & Act



### Food, Art, Culture, Entertainment, Sports

- The Fresh Coast Destination

# 2010 Downtown Plan



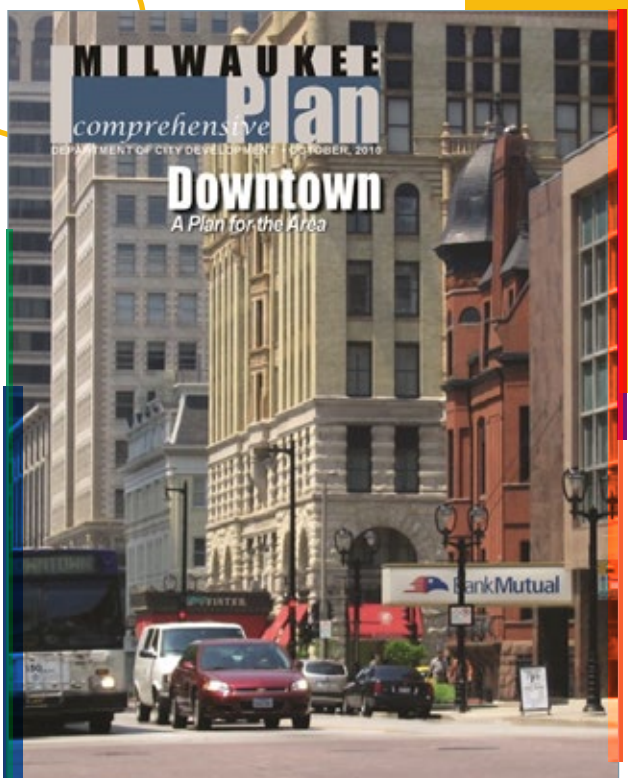
The last Downtown Area Plan was adopted in 2010, as an update to the City’s 1999 Downtown Plan. The planning process lasted more two years and engaged over 2,500 people. The plan included overall policies and strategies for Downtown based on four themes: a distinct center, a sense of place, a connected downtown, and density and intensity. The plan identified seven geographic sub-areas and provided specific recommendations for each area. The plan also identified a series of 8 catalytic projects to focus public and private investment.

**Center Focus:** Creating a distinct downtown center with cohesive character.

**Placemaking:** Using form and design elements to create an attractive and memorable experience Downtown that draws in residents, visitors, and businesses. Public art, historic landmarks, and civic design are some examples of design that creates a sense of place.

**Improved Connections:** The plan identified that the bright and engaging points downtown are often disconnected from one another, and strengthening these connections through infill and revitalization would lead visitors and residents to each of Downtown’s “key sites,” such as Milwaukee’s Riverwalk, the lakefront, and the Intermodal Station.

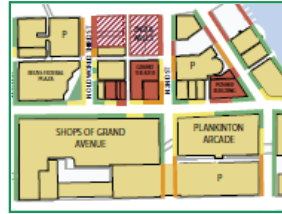
**Increased Density/Intensity:** The high commercial and residential density of Downtown Milwaukee was identified as a key asset for investments and services that benefit the entire city. Increasing the population of residents and employees downtown, the number of uses and the presence of university and corporate entities was recommended to create a more vibrant downtown.



## Catalytic Projects:



**Downtown Streetcar**



**Wisconsin Avenue**



**Lakefront Gateway**



**Broadway Connection**



**Pere Marquette**



**Station Plaza**



**Kilbourn Extension**



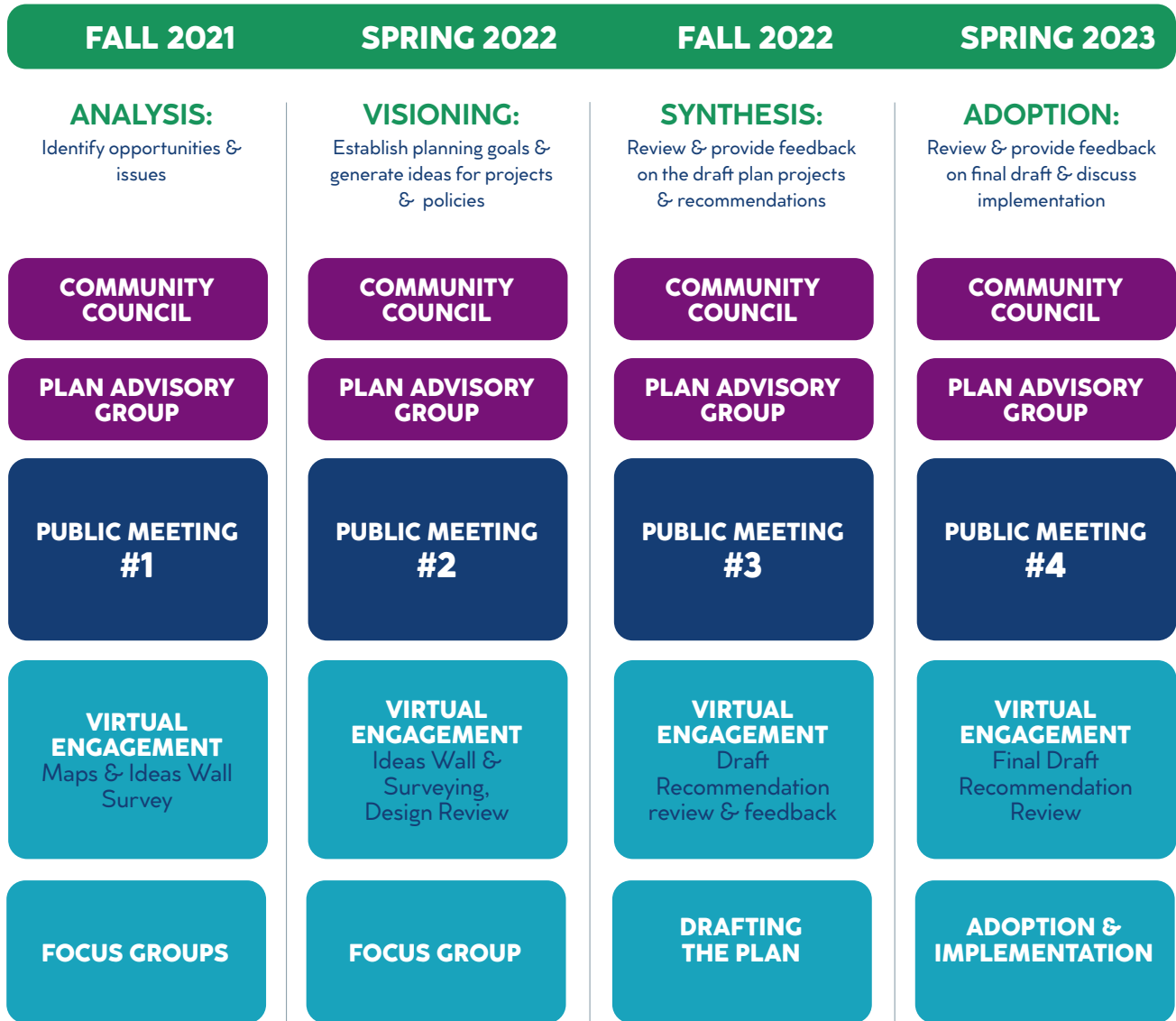
**Haymarket Square**

Planning efforts were largely focused on specific districts and sites throughout Downtown, with recommendations that were often specific to the unique characters of each district downtown. The 2010 plan had a number of high-profile successes, including (but not limited to):

- The initial streetcar line is in operation and has been a success, with better than anticipated ridership and a substantial amount of new development along the route.
- The I-794 lake interchange has been reconfigured to make room for new development and improve connections to the Third Ward.
- The redevelopment of historic buildings has occurred including the Hilton Garden Inn, the Mackie Building, multiple storefronts on N Broadway, and the Homewood Suites on N Water Street.
- Redevelopment of the Warner Grand Theater as the new home of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.
- Redevelopment of the Grand Avenue Mall into a mixed use complex, with additional office and housing uses and the 3rd Street Market Hall, which now hosts a variety of local food and drink vendors.



# Project Timeline



### Community Meetings

4 public meetings throughout the process

### Sign-Up for Email Updates

- Downtown Project Site: [www.connectingmke.com](http://www.connectingmke.com)
- City of Milwaukee e-notify: [city.milwaukee.gov/News-Events/enotify](http://city.milwaukee.gov/News-Events/enotify)

### Virtual Engagement

Online engagement platform:

[www.engagemke.com/connectingmke](http://www.engagemke.com/connectingmke)

— Updated throughout the process with idea boards, maps for comments, surveys, project information, & meeting information, etc.

### Community Programming

- Neighborhood events and interactive pop-up exhibits around downtown.



# Engagement Dashboard

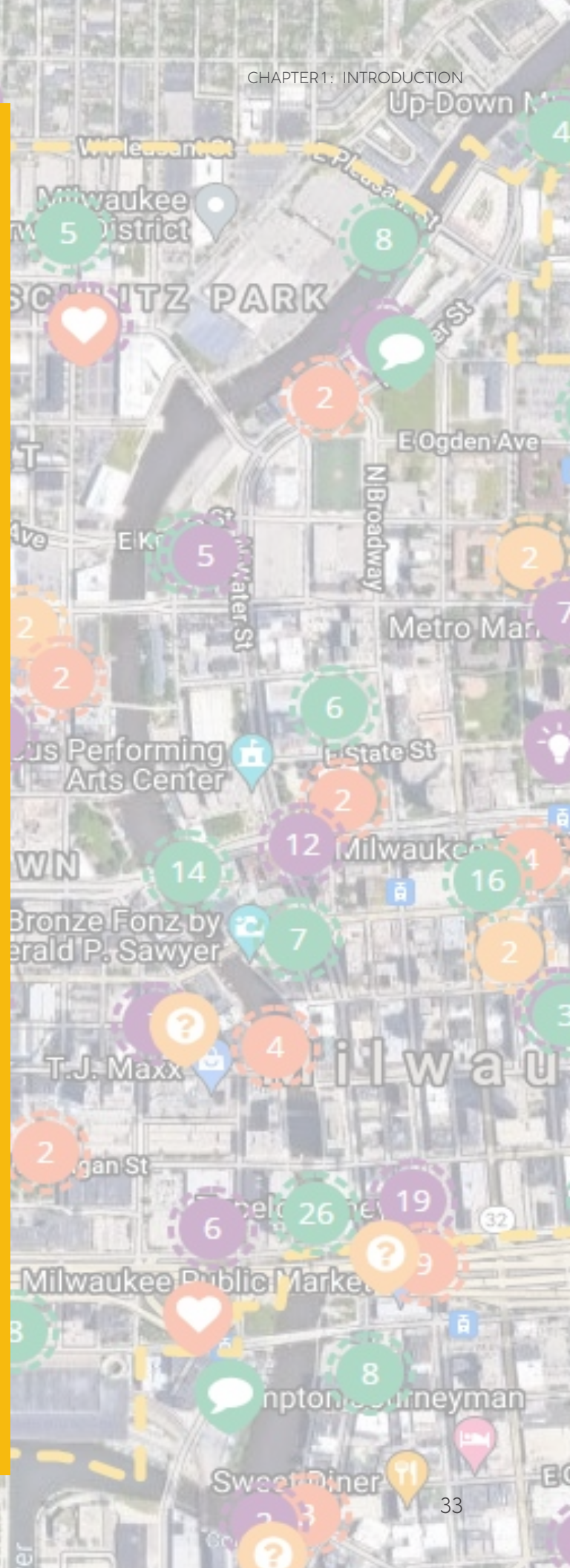
**~2,500+** individuals have voiced their opinions in meetings and online to-date from every Milwaukee zip code

**19,550** total visits from...  
**6,400** different people on the online engagement platform

Downtown Plan Community Council **17** Community leaders from Greater Downtown

Comments (and still counting!) that form the **topics of focus, & goals for the Plan** **3,000+**

Participation from every City Zip Code **All MKE Zip Codes**



# Downtown Plan Community Council

The Downtown Plan Community Council is a group of 17 individuals committed to racial & social equity in downtown. The Council’s purpose was to nurture intimate discussions about our community and opportunities to make it the best it can be.

The Downtown Plan Community Council’s focus on racial and social equity topics and factors has steered the planning and design process and informed the vision and recommendations of the Downtown Plan Update, reflecting a Downtown Milwaukee that serves ALL Milwaukeeans.

Participants were asked to share their personal experiences and visions for downtown – for themselves, their Milwaukee community, and all current and future Milwaukeeans. This work has been essential to identify opportunities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in downtown Milwaukee.

Over the course of four Community Council meetings, engagement with the Community Council included:

- Capturing members’ personal experiences and perspectives on Downtown;
- Identifying interests and priorities for the Plan; and
- Leveraging the members’ networks and ideas to deliver a more inclusive planning process

When asked about areas of interest, Community Council members expressed keen interest in:

- Increasing racial mix of residents who feel comfortable being and engaging Downtown
- Increasing small, minority and women owned business engagement and connectivity
- Need for affordable commercial spaces and additional restaurants and family-centered activities
- Need for minority-owned businesses that are thriving Downtown
- Increasing affordable housing, preservation of affordable units, and avoiding displacement
- Improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Improving connections to neighborhoods – clear paths and connections in and out of Downtown
- Highlighting diverse culture as a key part Downtown’s identity

**Most Community Council members said they love or like Downtown but acknowledged room for improvement, especially to make Downtown more racially representative and inclusive.**

# The Community Council's Vision of an Equitable Downtown:

## A Diverse Downtown

Diversity of people, housing options, and social and economic opportunities

## An Inclusive Downtown

A downtown that is welcoming to all and that everyone can identify with and be proud of

## An Equitable Downtown

Economic opportunities for people of color.

## An Affordable Downtown

Both rental and ownership housing options.

## A Vibrant & Walkable Downtown



# Engagement

## Community Open Houses

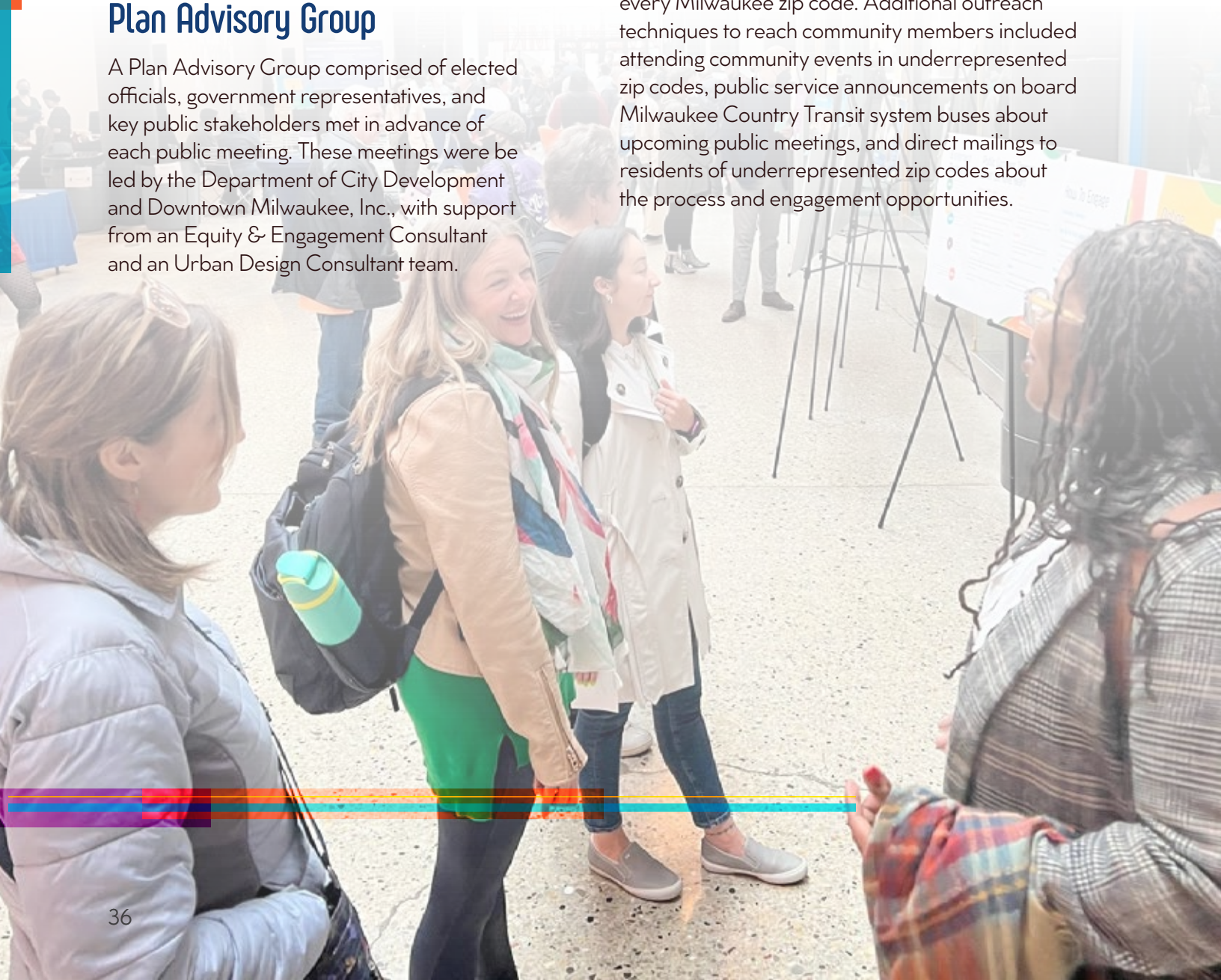
Four large meetings were held open to the general public. The first meeting was hosted on Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings 2-4 were hosted at the 3rd Street Market Hall/ The Avenue on Wisconsin Avenue. All meetings were well attended by community members who gave significant feedback that shaped the plan.

## Plan Advisory Group

A Plan Advisory Group comprised of elected officials, government representatives, and key public stakeholders met in advance of each public meeting. These meetings were led by the Department of City Development and Downtown Milwaukee, Inc., with support from an Equity & Engagement Consultant and an Urban Design Consultant team.

## Community Outreach

One of the core goals for outreach in the Downtown Plan update was to ensure equitable engagement throughout the process, including a priority on meaningfully engaging with communities of color and other groups that may experience current or historical barriers to participation in city planning initiatives and in influencing land use decisions. Feedback was received from community members in every Milwaukee zip code. Additional outreach techniques to reach community members included attending community events in underrepresented zip codes, public service announcements on board Milwaukee County Transit system buses about upcoming public meetings, and direct mailings to residents of underrepresented zip codes about the process and engagement opportunities.



# What We Heard From You

An unprecedented amount of feedback was received during the planning process in community meetings, during outreach, and on the new online engagement platform. The plan has been written based on the community feedback received. Below are some key themes that echoed throughout the process. Each chapter includes additional detailed community feedback.

## Streets & Public Spaces

- Design streets to be people-centered that are walkable, safe, and with more space for pedestrians and less space for vehicles.
- Create a bike network that is safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Improve the transit experience overall, extend The Hop to adjacent neighborhoods.

## Sustainability & Resilience

- Green the City with more trees and green infrastructure.
- Celebrate the city's connection to water, and keep our lake and rivers clean.
- Create a carbon neutral, solar and wind powered city.

## Housing

- Develop more housing and increase residential density Downtown.
- Diversify housing options, including affordable housing and ownership opportunities.

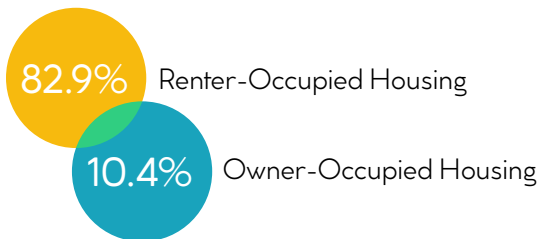
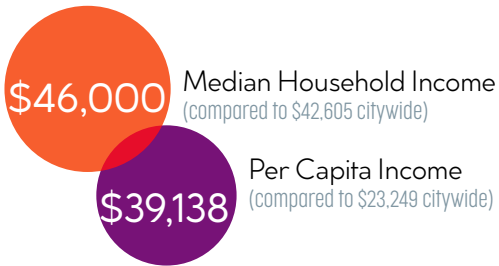
## Business

- Increase the diverse business mix, to include variety of retail, dining and entertainment options, with a focus on more BIPOC-owned businesses.
- Strengthen the shopping and entertainment districts to be more family-inclusive.

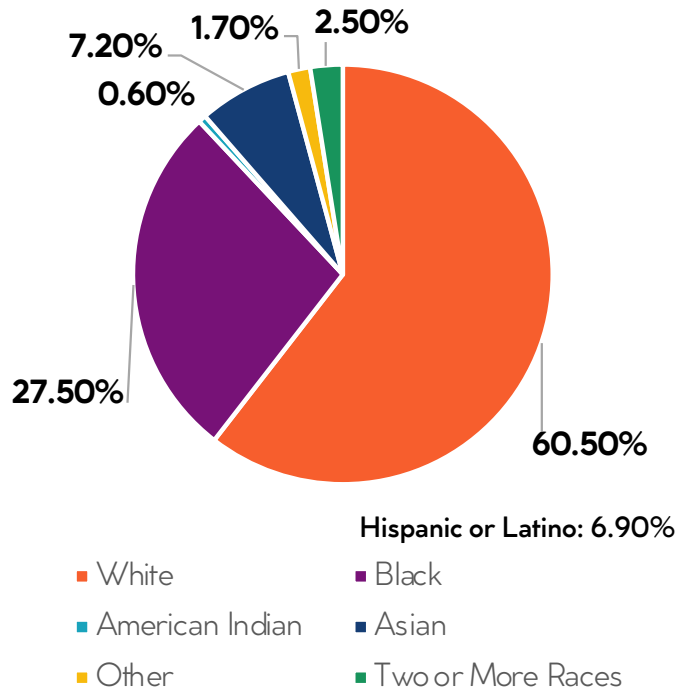
## Culture

- Build more authentic & diverse experiences.
- Create a welcoming public realm for all with vibrant streets and public spaces that encourage social interaction.

# Downtown By The Numbers

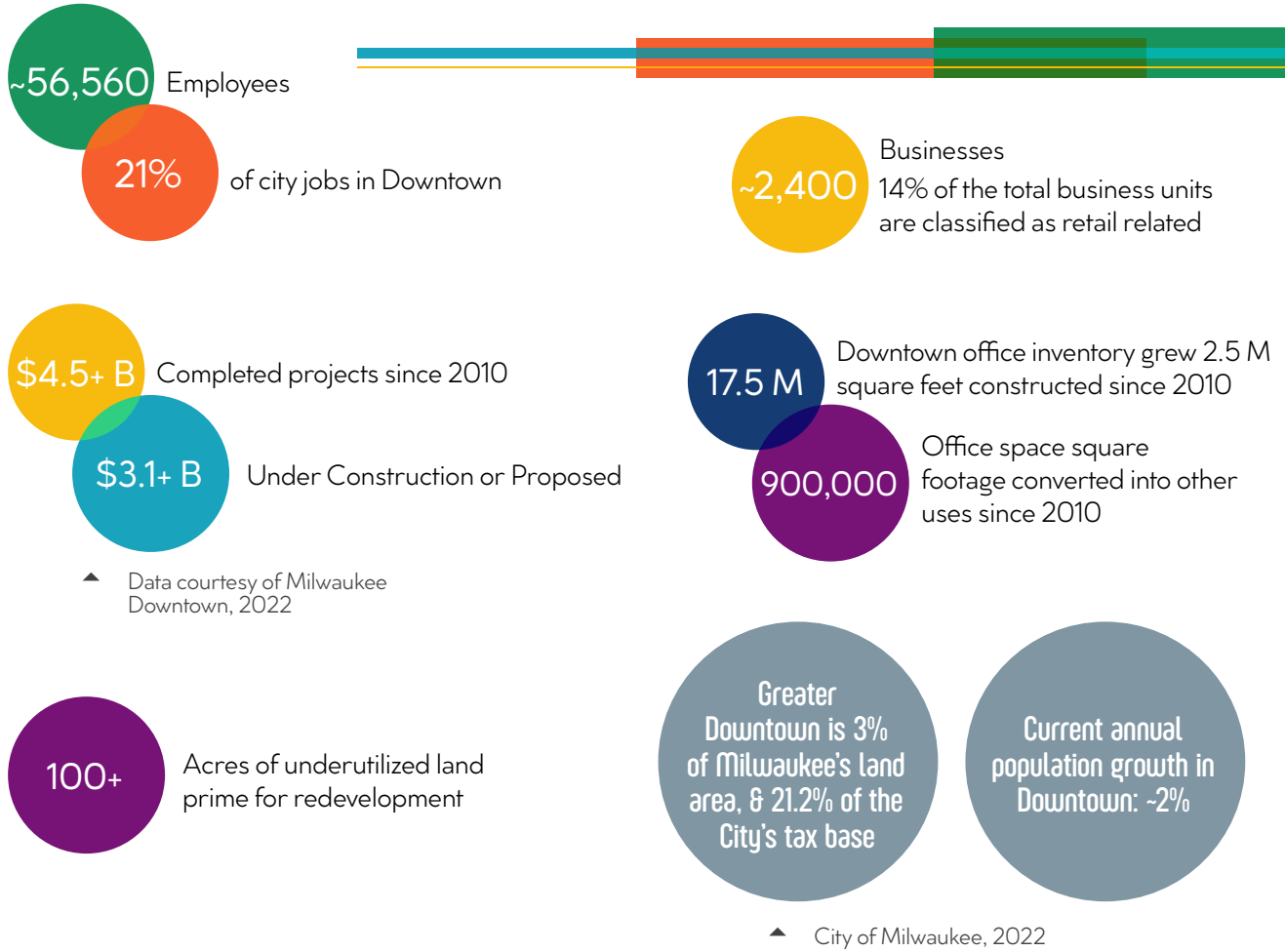


## Race & Ethnicity of Downtown Residents

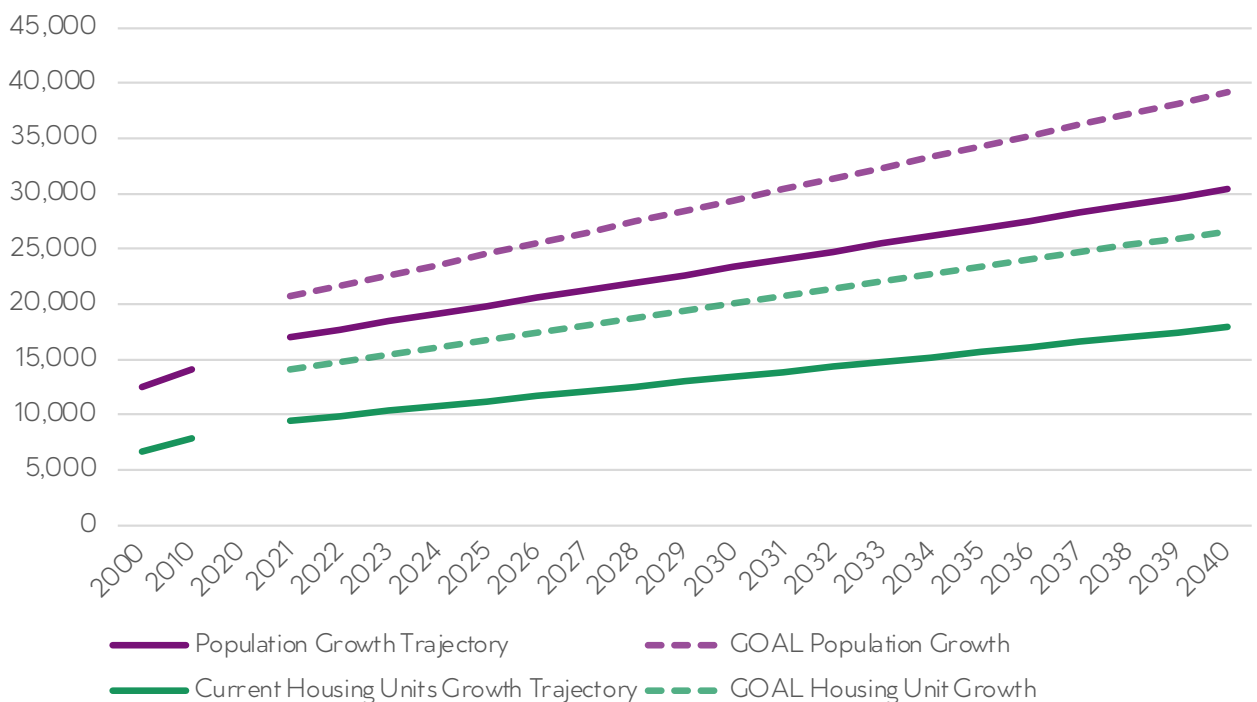


▲ Data courtesy of Colliers, 2022

▲ Data is from ESRI Community Analyst (2022) using the Downtown Area Plan Boundary, unless otherwise noted.



## Population & Housing Unit Growth in Downtown







# Housing & Neighborhoods

**Goal:** Increase the Downtown population through density and diversity of housing, and improve the quality of life in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

## Background

Downtown Milwaukee is poised to add thousands of new residents in the coming years, continuing its evolution as a 24-hour mixed-use neighborhood. People are choosing to live Downtown because of its dynamic environment and the social and economic opportunities it provides. More people living Downtown means more people connecting in Downtown public spaces, and more customers and employees for Downtown businesses.

Despite impressive housing unit growth in recent decades, vacancy rates in Downtown Milwaukee are among the lowest in the country – putting pressure on affordability and signaling a need to accelerate the pace of new housing development. To accommodate the strong demand for Downtown living, and to reinforce the walkability, vibrancy and diversity of Downtown neighborhoods, we need more places for more people to live.

Connecting MKE envisions a thriving mixed-use Downtown with 40,000 residents by 2040, up from only 17,000 today. This will necessitate higher density development, and new amenities to support a growing population. As Downtown grows, it is critical that we make space for everyone. A diverse and inclusive Downtown requires a diversity of housing options, including a substantial amount of new affordable housing. The following recommendations seek to increase the density and diversity of downtown housing and improve the quality of life in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

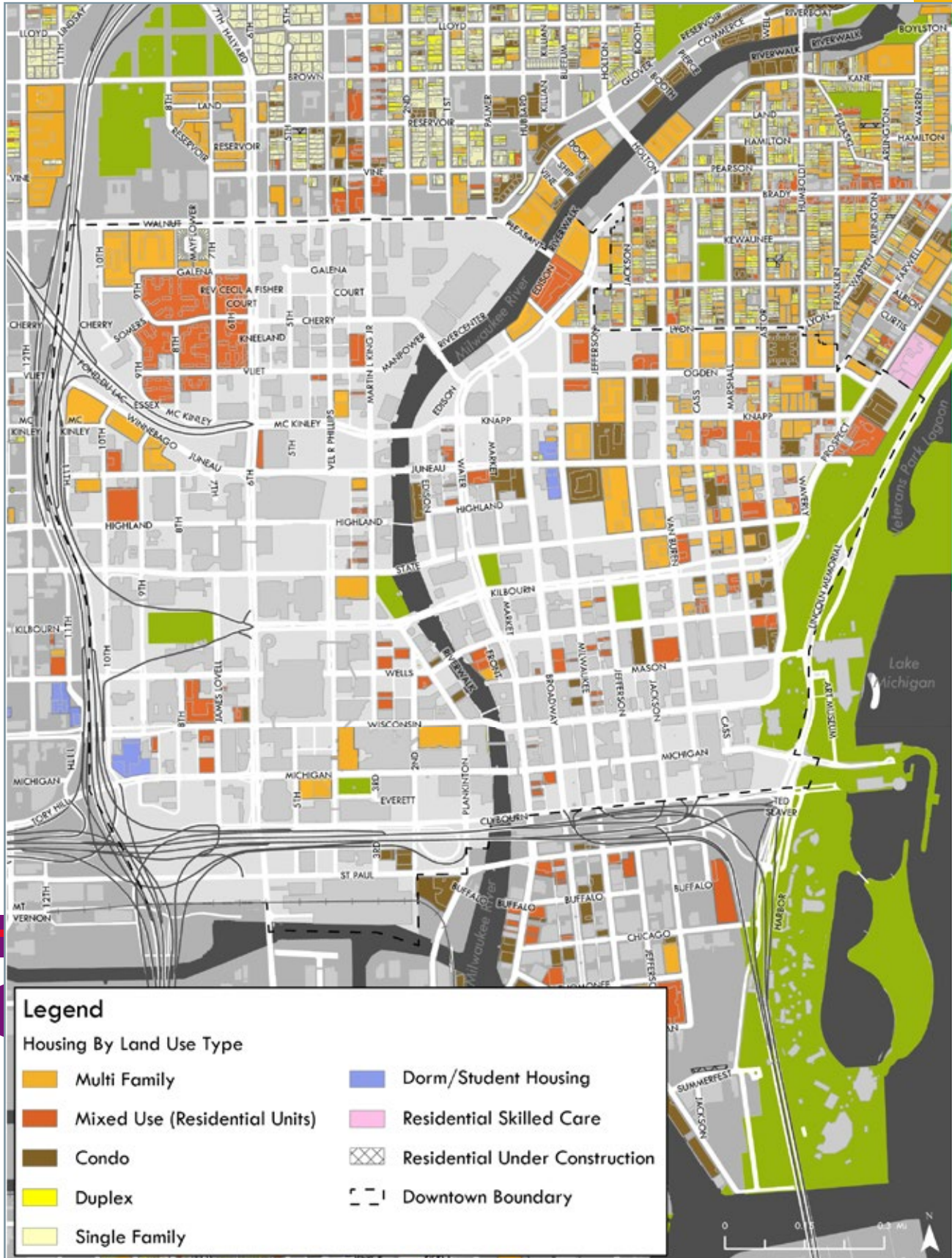
## What We've Heard From You

- More housing
- More affordable housing
- More housing types
- More housing for families
- More ownership opportunities
- Quality housing
- More adaptive reuse of existing buildings into housing
- Additional neighborhood amenities to support residents (parks, retail, services)
- More downtown schooling options

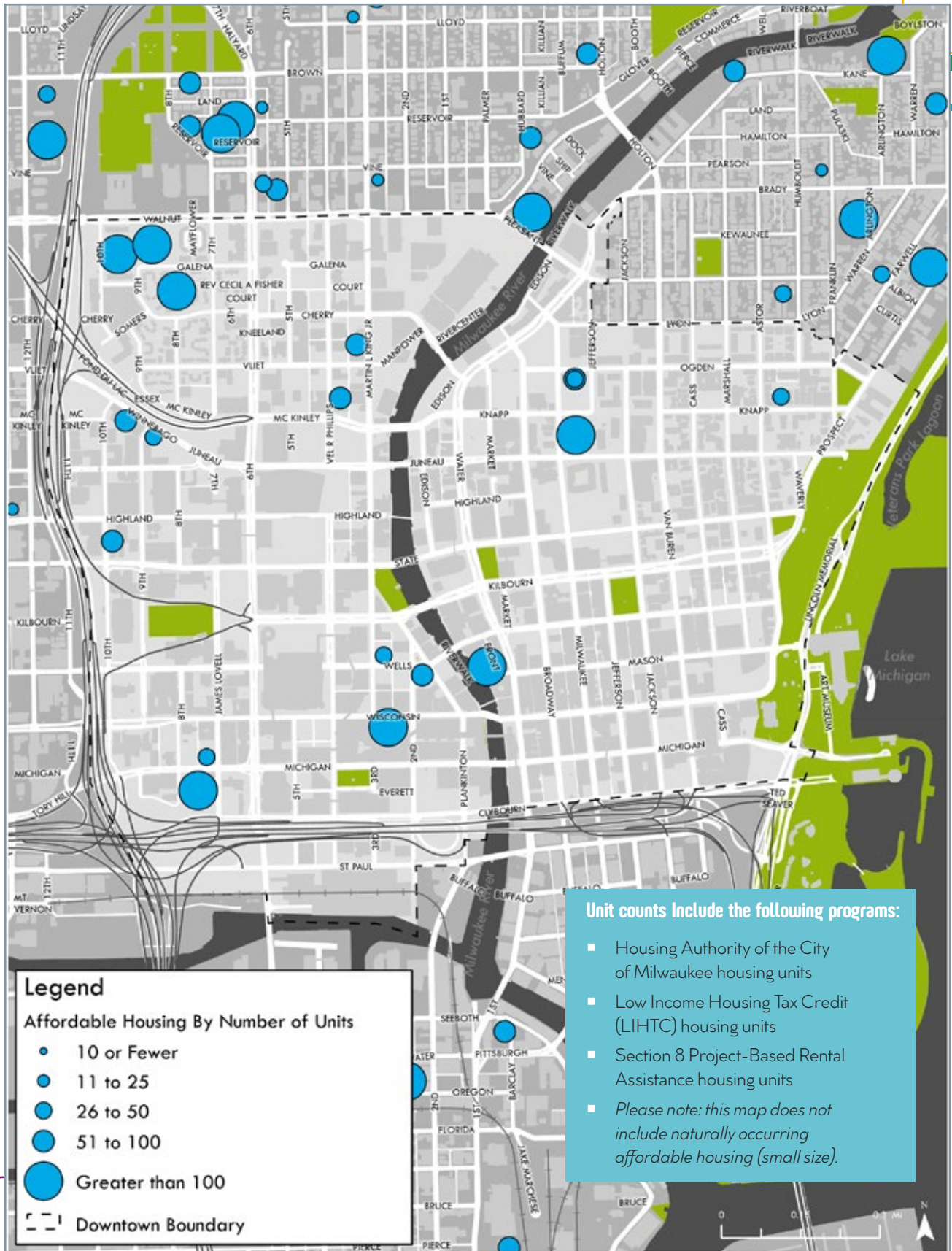
**Key Priority:**  
Grow the downtown population to 40,000 residents by 2040

**Key Priority:**  
Add ~15,000 housing units in Downtown by 2040  
20% of new units affordable

# Residential Land Use by Type



# Affordable Housing in Downtown



## Recommendation 1

**Increase the supply of Downtown housing, and grow the Downtown population.**

### Target

Increase the total number of housing units in Downtown Milwaukee at an average rate of more 5% per year, reaching a total of 15,000 units by 2030 and 25,000 units by 2040 – an increase of more than 15,000 units.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Encourage new residential development on underutilized land throughout downtown, including in areas that do not currently have a significant residential population such as the Haymarket District and MacArthur Square.
- B** Encourage high density development, with larger residential and mixed-use developments providing at least 100 dwelling units per acre (435 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit), with significantly greater densities near high frequency transit lines, retail and entertainment districts, and other public amenities.
- C** Identify potential regulatory barriers to high density development, including maximum floor area ratios and minimum lot area per dwelling unit ratios, and implement changes to the Zoning Code to promote high density development.
- D** Identify potential changes to City regulations, processes and procedures to reduce the cost of development and make the development process more predictable.
- E** Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the conversion of underutilized class B and C office space to housing.
- F** Leverage Federal Opportunity Zones within Downtown to attract investment in new housing development, particularly in the Park East corridor, Haymarket District, and the Hillside Neighborhood.

## Recommendation 2

**Provide housing choices for all income levels.**

### Target

Increase the percentage of Downtown housing units reserved for low- and moderate-income households to at least 20% of all Downtown housing units, reaching a total of 3,000 affordable units by 2030 and 5,000 units by 2040.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Provide financial incentives to developments seeking to create new affordable housing, and streamline existing processes for accessing these programs.
- B** Leverage public land for the development of affordable and mixed-income housing, including encouraging a percentage of affordable units when soliciting and reviewing proposals for publicly owned land.
- C** Support the preservation of existing affordable housing, both subsidized and naturally occurring.
- D** Identify and advocate for changes in the State of Wisconsin’s Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to better support the provision of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to projects in Downtown Milwaukee.
- E** Continue to monitor displacement indicators, and provide support for residents in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods that may become at risk of displacement.

### Recommendation 3

Provide a range of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Encourage a diverse mix of building types including high-rise, mid-rise, town homes, and mixed-use with housing above street level commercial space.
- B** Encourage a mix of building ages by preserving and restoring older buildings while filling in the gaps with modern context sensitive development.
- C** Encourage development of all sizes including small infill projects on narrow lots with less than 10,000 square feet, medium size developments on lots of 10,000 to 20,000 square feet, and large multi-use projects at larger sites.
- D** Encourage a larger share of housing units with 2 or more bedrooms to support families and/or people working remotely from home.
- E** Continue to monitor market trends and ensure that the mix of available housing includes options that appeal to a diverse population including seniors, students, young professionals, couples, families, seniors, and people with special needs.
- F** Ensure that adequate housing choices are available to people with special needs.



“In this future I envision, we will have one million residents and many more peaks to our skyline...”

— **Mayor Cavalier Johnson**  
*Economic Prosperity Vision (2022)*



## Recommendation 4

**Increase opportunities for homeownership in Downtown.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Identify barriers to increasing the supply of condominiums in Downtown, and develop strategies to make potential condominium projects competitive with rental housing developments.
- B** Assess existing programs designed to promote homeownership, and ensure that condominiums are eligible for similar incentives as single-family homes.
- C** Support cooperative housing and other innovative ownership models that can reduce cost and/or ensure long term affordability for homeowners.

## Recommendation 5

**Provide world class amenities to serve a diverse Downtown population.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Create, improve and maintain a diversity of high-quality public spaces throughout downtown – including playgrounds, gathering spaces, and walkable streets.
- B** Provide amenities that foster a high quality of life for city residents including high-quality schools, childcare centers, commercial and public services, and a diversity of transportation options.
- C** Allow neighborhood serving commercial uses to occupy the street level of buildings in residential areas, and require active uses along the street frontage of developments in commercial areas with high levels of high pedestrian activity.
- D** Encourage common indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, such as courtyards, roof terraces, and community rooms in larger residential developments.
- E** Work with the Downtown Neighborhood Association to identify needed amenities in Downtown to support existing and future residents.
- F** Attract a new grocery store to Downtown on the west side of the river.





### Recommendation 6

**Support the growth and diversity of adjacent neighborhoods and strengthen neighborhood connections.**

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Preserve, strengthen, and celebrate the authentic ethnic and cultural identities of neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.
- B** Continue to leverage funds from successful downtown TID districts to support housing programs City-wide by utilizing the “Affordable Housing Extension” allowed by Wis. Stat. sec. 66.1105(6)(g).
- C** Continue to monitor displacement and gentrification indicators, and provide support for residents in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods that may become at risk of displacement.
- D** Create distinct and authentic neighborhoods in and around Downtown with unique identities and lifestyle offerings that expand options for attracting and retaining residents.

### Recommendation 7

**Reduce homelessness and provide support for the unhoused population.**

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Continue efforts to engage unsheltered individuals in public spaces and distribute information on housing resources.
- B** Preserve, improve, and expand public housing that serves the lowest income residents.
- C** Reduce barriers to development for transitional housing and group residential uses — including rooming houses, adult family homes, foster homes, shelter care facilities, and community living arrangements.
- D** Continue to convene regular communication between government agencies, non-profits, and business leaders to identify and implement strategies to reduce homelessness and support the unhoused population.





# Business & Education

**Goal:** Create environments and programs that support an increase of diverse businesses and a talented workforce.

## Background

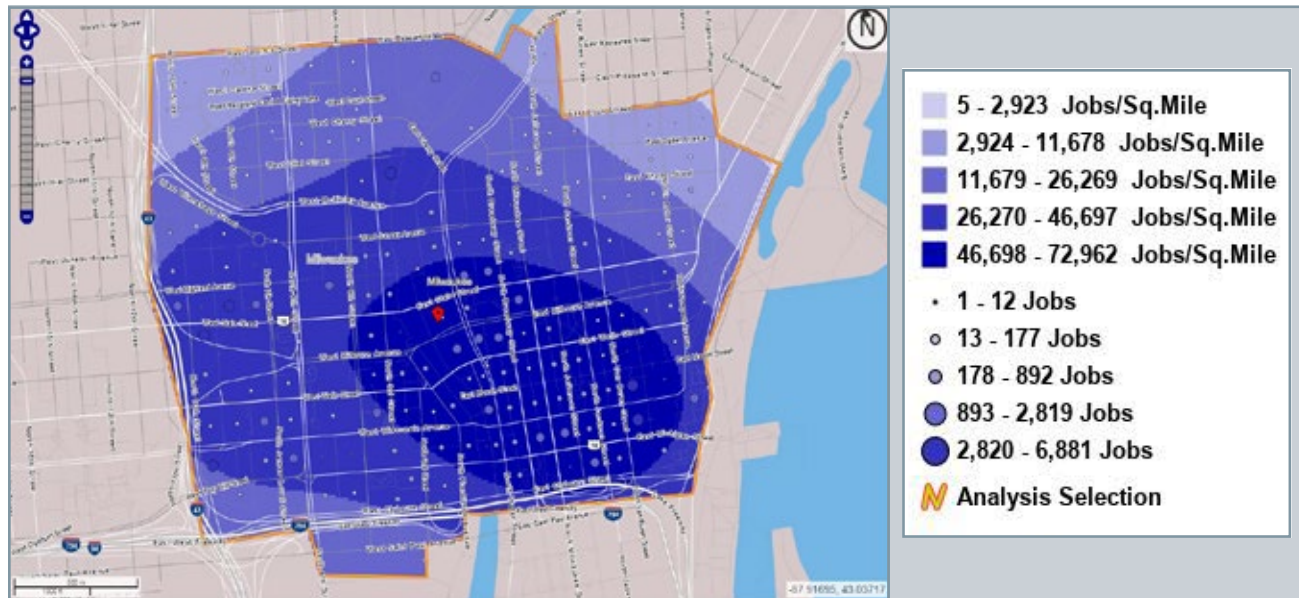
Downtown Milwaukee is one of the most vibrant centers of commerce in the Midwest. Since 2010, over \$4.6 billion in private and public projects have been completed and over \$3.1 billion more of investment is currently underway. As cities across the country struggle with high office vacancy rates as a result of the shift to hybrid and remote work, Downtown Milwaukee continues to attract new businesses and employees. Companies are choosing Downtown for its vibrant, walkable, amenity-rich environment, diversity of transportation options, and access to a diverse and talented workforce.

In recent years, an abrupt shift in the nature of office work has led many companies to think differently about their workplaces. Businesses are investing in spaces that promote collaboration and innovation with amenities and social opportunities that encourage in-person work, create a sense of belonging, and help shape a company's culture. As offices become hubs for creativity and interaction, many companies are shifting to higher-quality buildings with more amenities. This has resulted in higher vacancy rates at older buildings, creating opportunities for adaptive reuse or lower-cost space for small start-ups.

## What We've Heard From You

- Support and grow more BIPOC-owned businesses, property owners, and developers in downtown
- More locally owned establishments
- Better connect economic opportunity in Downtown to adjacent neighborhoods
- Attract more employers & jobs to Downtown
- Continue to strengthen Milwaukee as a region of choice for Milwaukee's diverse and talented community
- Connect existing and new job opportunities to young people of color
- Continue to make Downtown employment opportunities accessible to a diverse workforce, with a focus on residents of color

## Job Density in Downtown Milwaukee



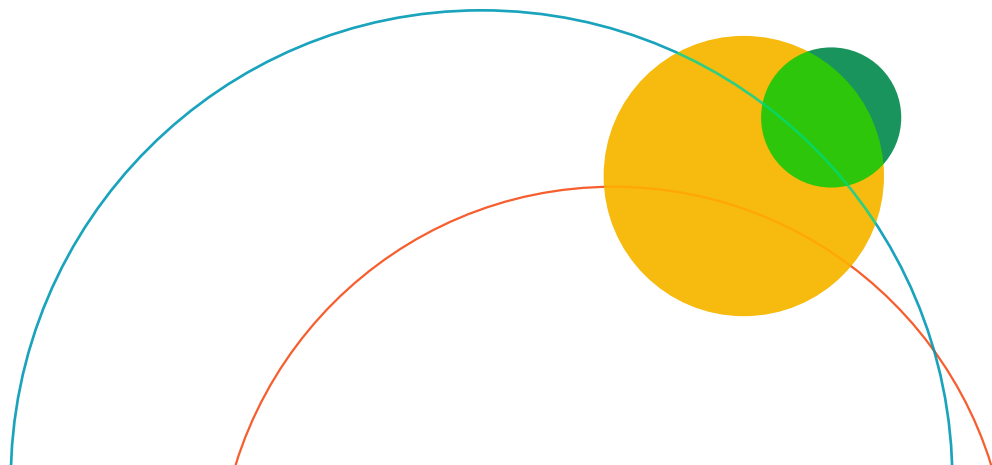
U.S. Census

In addition to the region’s largest concentration of employment, Downtown Milwaukee boasts the region’s largest concentration of college students. Higher education institutions in and around Downtown Milwaukee draw students from around the world, and many of these students choose to remain in Milwaukee, making our colleges a key importer of talent.

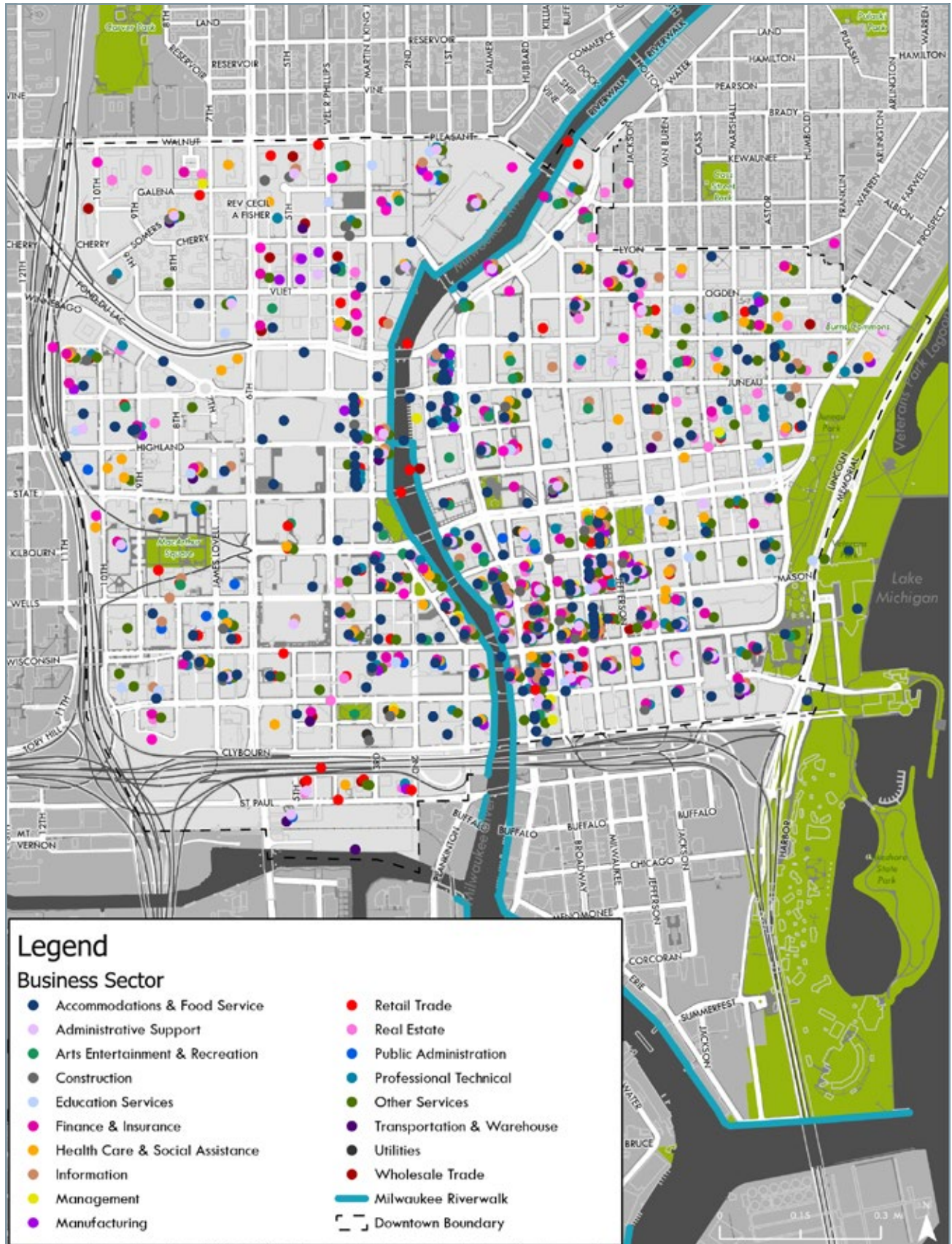
While Downtown continues to create new economic opportunities for residents, they have not been experienced equally. Growth in the office market alone may continue to exclude many Milwaukeeans. A renewed emphasis on creating opportunities for those who face the toughest barriers to success is needed to ensure greater economic mobility for all City residents regardless of ethnic background or economic status.

This includes providing pathways to higher education and employment, being intentional about supporting BIPOC-owned businesses, acknowledging the contributions and talent of our hospitality and service workers, and employing City residents in building the future of Downtown’s skyline.

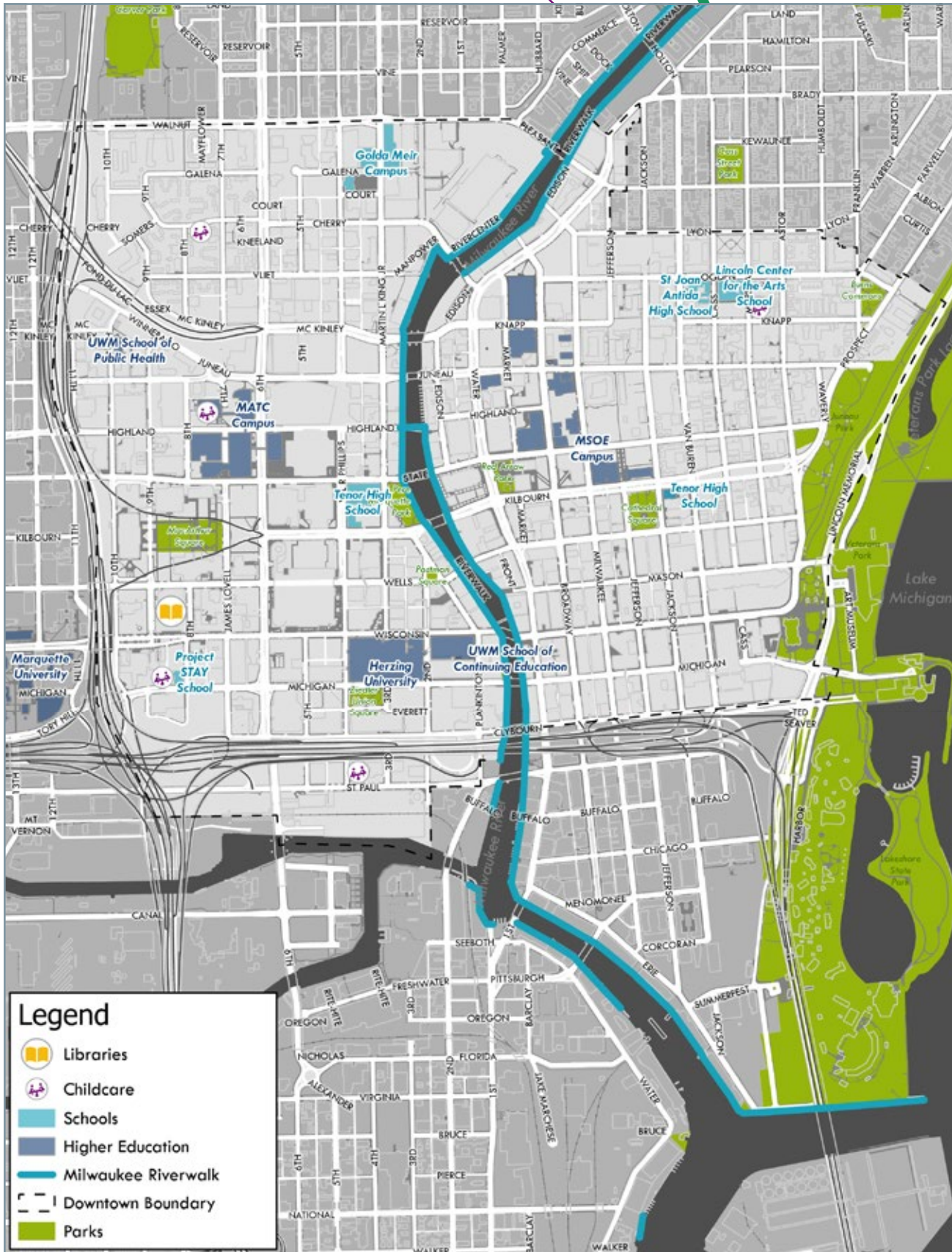
The following recommendations seek to create environments and programs that support an increase of diverse businesses and a talented workforce.



# Businesses by Type in Downtown



# Educational Institutions in Downtown



## Education Partners in Downtown

Downtown's colleges, universities and educational institutions of all sizes are important economic drivers that contribute to the vibrancy of the area. With more than 30,000 student in or in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, educational institutions are major places of employment, importers of students, and the main contributor to the talent pipeline for Milwaukee area companies.

With approximately 4% of the land in the Downtown area dedicated to urban education campuses, they are a major property owner and stakeholder. Their continued investment, increased density, and success in recruiting world-class student bodies is intransitively connected to realizing the goals and vision in this Plan. Therefore, the following policies and strategies aim to support their continued growth and allow our various educational facilities opportunities to prosper.

## Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) Spotlight

In addition to the recent investment over \$100 million in new state of the art facilities, corporate partnerships, and improved public spaces on campus, MSOE is an importer of population and a talented workforce. Leadership states that over 84% of the students that attend MSOE originate from outside of the region and nearly 50% of their graduates choose to stay in the city of Milwaukee. In 2020 – 2021 MSOE students are estimated to have added \$8.4 million in expenditures adding a significant boost to the Milwaukee economy.

## Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) Spotlight

With over 16,000 students taking classes in the most recent academic year, MATC's Downtown Milwaukee campus features the largest student body at a technical college. At over 45 acres, directly to the west of Deer District across 6th Street, MATC is a significant downtown stakeholder and contributor to the pipeline of talent for Milwaukee companies with 76% of 2020-21 graduates working in the MATC district. MATC continues to reinvest in its downtown campus with nearly \$15 million in improvements since 2020.



## Business Growth & Downtown's Dynamic Office Market

Since the adoption of the 2010 Downtown Plan, the private sector delivered approximately 2,500,000 square feet of new office space in several marquee commercial projects.

Considering commercial properties that were either transformed through adaptive reuse into other uses such as multi-family or hotels, the total office market increased by approximately 1.65M square feet, or 10.6% of net new office space bringing the total downtown inventory to nearly 17,500,000 square feet.

The net new office inventory is primarily in the Class A category considering new developments such as 833 East, BMO Tower, The Huron Building and others. As existing office building stock aged, and others were repurposed to new residential or hospitality uses, the Class B and Class C inventories held steady since 2010 with approximately 8.9 million square feet and 400,000 square feet, respectively.

## Downtown Business Summary

Downtown Milwaukee is the economic hub of Wisconsin with a high concentration of businesses and jobs at a professional level.

- Over 43% of all downtown businesses and employees, respectively work in finance, insurance, real estate, and legal and professional services.
- Nearly 9% of all businesses are in the accommodations and food services employing almost 10% of downtown's workers.
- Given the concentration of City, County, and State offices, 13% of all downtown workers are employed in some level of Public Administration.

Downtown Business Summary				
Business Category	Businesses		Employees	
	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	0.2	70	0.1
Mining	0	0.0	2	0.0
Utilities	7	0.3	1,988	3.5
Construction	70	2.6	670	1.2
Manufacturing	35	1.3	1,059	1.9
Wholesale Trade	25	0.9	262	0.5
Retail Trade	148	5.6	1,766	3.1
Transportation & Warehousing	25	0.9	445	0.8
Information	91	3.4	1,831	3.2
Finance & Insurance	202	7.6	10,280	18.2
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	190	7.1	2,339	4.1
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	516	19.4	7,750	13.7
Legal Services	250	9.4	4,028	7.1
Management of Companies & Enterprises	11	0.4	3,055	5.4
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	87	3.3	1,556	2.8
Educational Services	37	1.4	1,919	3.4
Health Care & Social Assistance	158	5.9	3,963	7.0
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	69	2.6	1,159	2.0
Accommodation & Food Services	238	8.9	5,512	9.7
Other Services (except Public Administration)	243	9.1	3,099	5.5
Public Administration	195	7.3	7,354	13.0
Unclassified Establishments	314	11.8	482	0.9
Source: Data Axle (2022)	<b>2,662</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56,559</b>	<b>100</b>



## Remote Work & a Connected Downtown

The COVID-19 global pandemic and the resulting shift of many office workers to hybrid or full-time work-from-home arrangements has had significant impacts on downtowns across the country. As this plan was being drafted, local estimates indicate that the number employees working in-person Downtown each day is approximately 60% of pre-pandemic volume. At the same time, a number of major corporations have recently completed or announced major projects to locate or expand their office presence in Downtown Milwaukee in order to attract talent and provide office spaces that foster collaboration, innovation, and connectivity.

While experts are divided on the future of in-office work and the impacts on central business districts, the recommendations in this Plan are designed around principles that are time-tested: Great places that are welcoming to all; that provide economic opportunity, access to arts, culture, and entertainment; and that are safe and enjoyable will attract people to live, to work, to innovate, to create, and to gather.

Connec+ing MKE sets ambitious goals for adding new companies and workers Downtown, while acknowledging the need for a wide-mix of uses Downtown and for Downtown development to be flexible to respond to market demands and to align with the overall goals of growing and connecting Downtown.

The Goals, Big Ideas and supporting projects proposed by this Plan to improve Downtown streets for all users, add new housing options, create vibrant retail and entertainment districts, develop world-class parks and gathering spaces to foster shared experiences, and provide seamless connections to adjacent neighborhoods are ALL economic development and talent attraction strategies — and will ensure that businesses and workers continue to choose to work, invest, live and grow Downtown.



### Recommendation 8

**Reinforce Downtown as the premier business center for the state of Wisconsin and one of the top employment centers in the Midwest.**

#### Target

Increase the number of Downtown based employees from 60,000 to 100,000 by 2040.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Create, attract and retain a wide range of employment opportunities in Downtown from entry-level and service sector jobs to those requiring more advanced skills.
- B** Attract major employers, such as Fortune 500 headquarters, 500+ employee companies and/or companies from outside of the State of Wisconsin to Downtown.
- C** Form a downtown business attraction and expansion coalition comprised of public, non-profit, and private sector partners to actively pursue companies of all sizes that would benefit from a Downtown Milwaukee location.
- D** Work with economic development organizations and stakeholders to market Downtown Milwaukee as the state’s premiere center for business growth and development.
- E** Work with the companies that have pledged more than 7,000 new jobs to the greater downtown area between 2020 and 2023 to further build momentum and continue to attract more jobs downtown from companies of all sizes.
- F** Ensure that broadband access is fully accessible in Downtown.

### Recommendation 9

**Foster local innovation and entrepreneurship to increase the number and diversity of Downtown businesses.**

#### Target

Increase the number of Downtown based businesses from 2,400 to 4,000 by 2040.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Support the creation and expansion of Downtown businesses of all sizes, from small start-ups to large corporations, and in a variety of business sectors.
- B** Launch a citywide Mayor’s Start-up Competition, and explore additional ways to foster local entrepreneurship and business development.
- C** Identify programs to encourage a larger presence of BIPOC owned businesses in Downtown, and be proactive in attracting, retaining, and growing small businesses owned by people of color and women.
- D** Explore, identify and support programs that connect new and existing businesses with access to capital or debt reduction, and build better connections between the venture investment community and businesses owned by underrepresented groups.
- E** Expand funding for Commercial Corridor Revitalization Grants to support new and existing businesses improve their facilities and help to bring vacant commercial space to market. Identify partners to supplement these programs with private funding.
- F** Support the provision of co-working spaces, business incubators, and other shared, non-traditional workspaces throughout Downtown.
- G** Leverage the presence of major colleges and universities to foster innovation and business growth.



## Recommendation 10

**Attract, retain and grow a diverse and talented workforce.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Provide a vibrant, inclusive, amenity-rich environment in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods to attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce.
- B** Support the growth of Downtown colleges and universities; and increase enrollment, retention and completion of post-secondary education for city residents.
- C** Encourage Downtown colleges and universities to engage in long term planning for their facilities, and align campus plans with the recommendations of this plan.
- D** Foster a strong talent pipeline for employers, and align professional development and certification programs with employer needs and available job openings.
- E** Expand access to internships, job shadowing opportunities, and part-time summer jobs for high school and college students in the city, and consider creating summer internship welcome and thank you events.
- F** Support connections in STEM for middle and high school students and translate those experiences into college and career opportunities.
- G** Continue events that add to the Downtown employee experience, such as BID #21's Employee Appreciation Week.

## Recommendation 11

**Extend economic opportunity in Downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods, and increase access to employment for city residents.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Invest in neighborhoods, districts and corridors throughout the city, and promote areas adjacent to downtown as unique and authentic places with a variety of offerings.
- B** Develop safe, comfortable and convenient connections between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods through investments in enhanced bicycle facilities, public transit, and walkability.
- C** Encourage Downtown employers to provide transit passes and bikeshare memberships as part of their employee benefits package, and decouple parking benefits to promote alternate transportation.
- D** Encourage dense mixed-use development that places housing and employment opportunities in close proximity to one another in order to activate districts throughout the day and night and to support a walk-to-work environment.
- E** Establish events designed to better connect Milwaukee residents, particularly young people of color, with job opportunities in Downtown.
- F** Expand opportunities for local entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services in downtown public spaces.
- G** Focus job creation and retention efforts on creating opportunities for those who face the toughest barriers to success, and prioritize job opportunities that pay family sustaining wages.



# Retail, Services, Food & Nightlife

**Goal:** Create vibrant retail and entertainment districts with streets and public spaces that feature active uses and pedestrian friendly design.

## Background

Downtown Milwaukee is fun! That's a big part of why over 20 million people visit our city each year. From world-class dining and exciting nightlife to the 2021 NBA Champion Milwaukee Bucks, Downtown Milwaukee has something for everyone. These activities add life to our streets and public spaces, and are a critical component of creating vibrant districts.

Downtown Milwaukee has several vibrant retail and nightlife districts with offerings that appeal to a wide variety of people and add life to our streets. The most successful districts are generally fine-grained with narrow lots, many closely spaced destinations, and doors and windows opening up to the street.

As Downtown grows, more opportunities for retail and services are needed to ensure that residents, employees, and visitors have access to their daily needs within walking distance. While current trends in retail present challenges nationally for brick and mortar establishments, Downtown is poised to retain and grow its retail and service offerings due to its strong employment base and growing residential population.

## What We've Heard From You

- Ensure everyone feels welcome
- Encourage diversity of retail & entertainment options intended for a diversity of people
- Create inclusive & activated spaces
- Increase density of retail & entertainment — all price points
- Strengthen defined retail & entertainment areas
- More family restaurants and activities
- Fill downtown retail vacancies
- More activities for all — movies, bowling, theatre, etc.
- Design and activate for pedestrians
- Continue to strengthen the identities of downtown districts



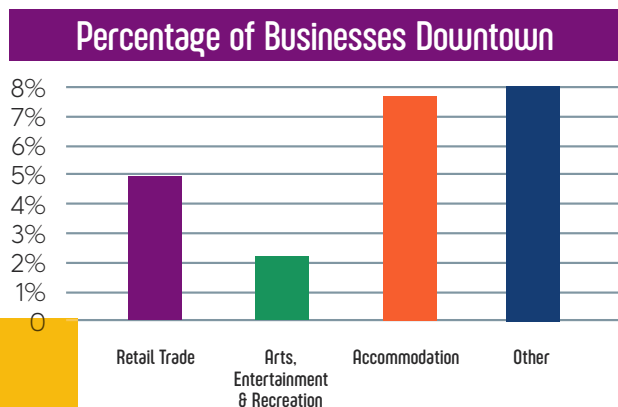
Concurrently, businesses are realizing that to remain competitive they must provide an authentic experience to their customers. Downtown is uniquely positioned to provide this experiential value added through the continued development of walkable, pedestrian-scaled commercial districts and enhancements to the public realm.

Our experience of Downtown places is greatly influenced by the character of development that shapes urban space. Safe streets and high-density development alone, while critical, are not sufficient to create vibrant places. Commercial districts with continuous ground floor storefronts built up to the sidewalk edge and filled with a diversity of businesses are key to creating, expanding, and connecting active places where businesses can thrive. These spaces offer local entrepreneurs a centralized location and access to a global marketplace, and the continued growth of Downtown will provide national retailers the data they need to feel confident investing in Downtown.

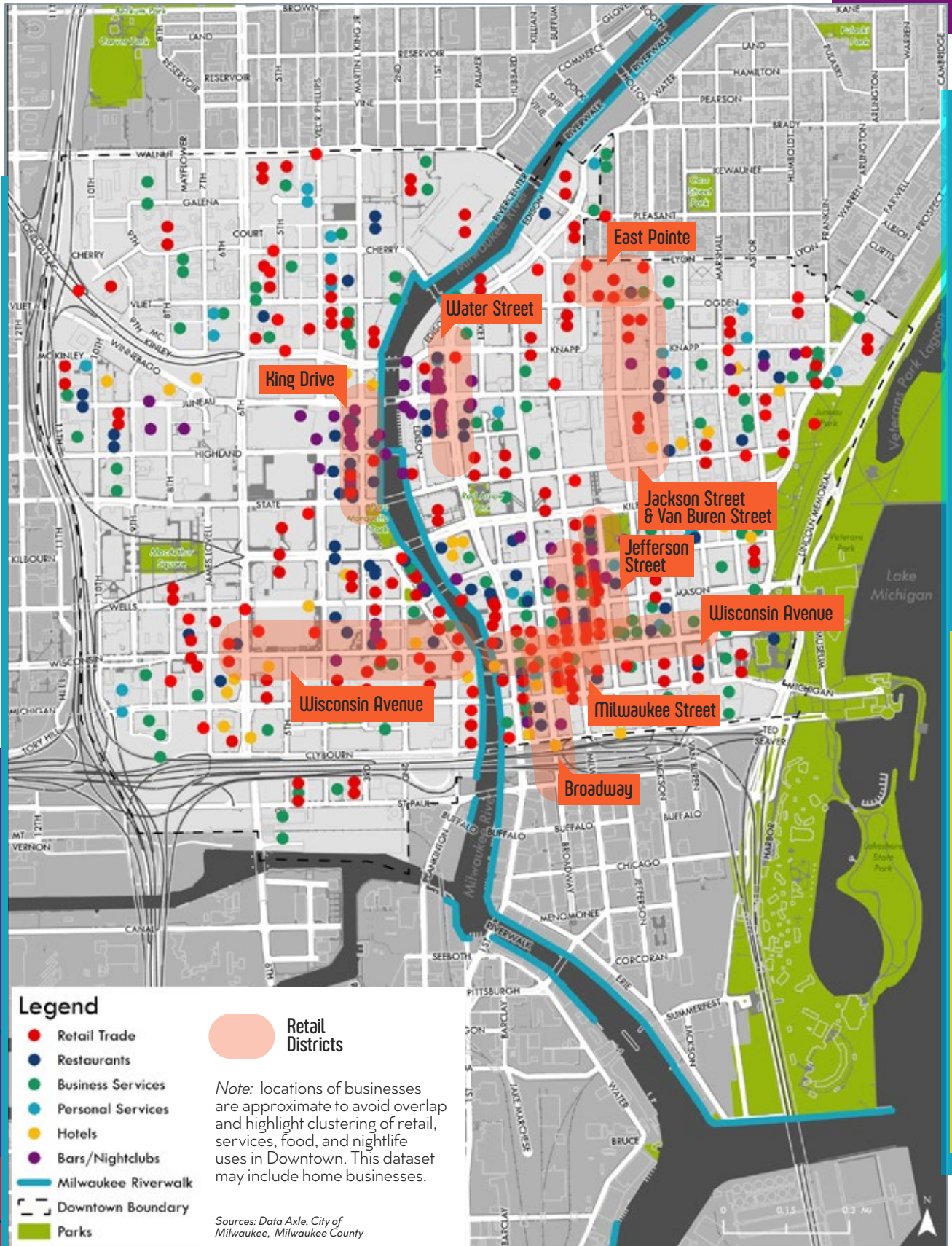
Pedestrian-oriented development and an enhanced public realm are also critical to the success of our social economy. Few places in Milwaukee maintain the density and diversity of Downtown’s food and nightlife offerings. This high concentration of unique social spaces attracts people from across the city and region, and reinforces Downtown’s role as a place to connect. We also need to create more safe spaces and social opportunities for youth to connect, and redesign streets in ways that encourage social interaction.

Connecting MKE envisions a thriving retail environment, with improved coordination among business owners, improvement districts, and the city – including a plan for the management of the nighttime economy and enhancements to streets and public spaces. The following recommendations seek to create vibrant retail and entertainment districts by providing enhanced streets and public spaces that feature active uses and pedestrian friendly façades.

Retail & Other Storefront Activating Business Summary		
Total Number & Percentage of Downtown Wide Businesses in the Retail & Entertainment Industries	667	27.3%
Total Number & Percentage of Downtown Wide Employees in the Retail, Entertainment Industries	11,729	19.6%



# Retail, Services, Food & Nightlife + Key Downtown Districts



## Retail, Services & Nighttime Economy Businesses & Employees

	Business #	Business %	Employee #	Employee %
<b>Retail Trade</b>	144	5.9%	1,725	2.9%
Motor Vehicle Parts and Dealers	8	0.3%	71	0.1%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Store	11	0.5%	98	0.2%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	3	0.1%	13	0.0%
Bldg Material & Garden Equipment & Supplier Dealers	6	0.2%	32	0.1%
Food and Beverage Stores	21	0.9%	482	0.8%
Health and Personal Care Stores	12	0.5%	108	0.2%
Gasoline Stations	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	29	1.2%	141	0.2%
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	11	0.5%	353	0.6%
General Merchandise Stores	3	0.1%	91	0.2%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	29	1.2%	265	0.4%
Non-store Retailers	10	0.4%	67	0.1%
<b>Arts, Entertainment and Recreation</b>	63	2.60%	1,070	1.8%
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	225	9.20%	5,711	9.5%
Accommodation	33	1.40%	2,045	3.4%
Food Services	192	7.90%	3,665	6.1%
<b>Other services (except Public Administration)</b>	235	9.60%	3,223	5.4%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Key Takeaways

- Nearly 10% (9.2%) of all the businesses and employees (9.5%) working in the downtown plan area are in the accommodations and food service industry.
- Over one quarter (27%) of businesses and one fifth (19.6%) of employees in the Downtown Plan area are in the four categories of retail trade, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food services and other services.
- Milwaukee Downtown is home to over 1,000 (1,070) jobs in arts, entertainment and recreation.
- The Downtown Plan area is home to 144 retail businesses concentrated in the East and West Wisconsin Avenue, N. Milwaukee Street, N. Jefferson, N. MLK Jr. Drive, and N. Water Street corridors.

## The Nighttime & Entertainment Sector is a Major Economic Engine in Milwaukee

Nearly 10% (9.2%) of all the businesses and employees (9.5%) working in the downtown plan area are in the accommodations and food service industry, and nearly 12% (11.8%) of all the businesses and over 11% of employees (11.3%) working in the downtown plan area are nighttime economy related sectors, making nightlife related industries the largest category of retail related businesses and employee base by a substantial margin.

A vibrant nighttime economy and a wide variety of entertainment offerings are an important consideration when people are choosing where to live, especially younger generations. This has been further amplified and accelerated during of the COVID-19 pandemic which has accelerated a growth in remote work, allowing people more flexibility in choosing the city in which they want to live while still maintaining their employment, regardless of location. When one can work from anywhere, the “sociability” of the city, which includes a variety of “third spaces” such as parks, arts, culture, entertainment, sports, and nightlife, are more important than ever before in attracting people to urban centers. In a recent survey of millennials living in southeastern Wisconsin, 60% of the respondents cite a variety of entertainment and nightlife options as important in considering whether to live in the City of Milwaukee.





## New Nighttime & Social Economy Developments Bolster the Sector

Downtown Milwaukee’s nighttime economy is the largest cluster of businesses and jobs making it a critical employment sector for Milwaukee residents. The industry is only getting more important with several new large scale entertainment related developments and districts that are currently under construction, or expected to start soon, adding millions of dollars of new investment, thousands of jobs, and additional tourism attractions. These developments will also trigger additional investment by expanding the marketplace, attracting new ancillary development.



### The Iron District

The \$160 million, 11-acre redevelopment in the largely underutilized southwestern quadrant of downtown, will bring the State of Wisconsin’s highest level of professional soccer to the City of Milwaukee. In addition, the District is adding new housing options, a hotel, retail opportunities including several new nightlife options.



### FPC Live

The \$50 million, dual performance venue on the site of the former Bradley Center in the Deer District is expecting 50 shows in the large venue and 85 shows in the smaller venue with a projection of 220,000+ tickets sold in the first year of opening. FPC Live will have nearly 20 full-time and hundreds of part-time jobs and is anticipating a \$12.5 million annual economic impact from the development. The number of shows and economic impact is expected to grow as the venues stabilize.



### Foxtown Landing & MKE Dog Park

Fromm Family Pet Foods and Foxtown Brewing are investing more than \$15 million in a new 30,000 SF brewery, distillery, restaurant, and event space with expansive outdoor seating areas that seamlessly connect to downtown's first dog park. The "Downtown Dog District" is a redevelopment will be a new social hub for downtown's growing population and their pets. The development will include the addition of over 400 feet of public riverwalk and be one of a kind in the region.



### The Milwaukee Theatre District

The Milwaukee Theatre District campaign was launched in late 2022 to promote the 15,000 theater seats in the District as it ranks No. 1 in the United States for the highest number of seats per capita. With a combined 2,100 performances attracting 2 million attendees each year, the Milwaukee Theater District is a core part of Milwaukee's nighttime economy and entertainment industry, which generates an estimated \$400 million in visitor spending annually, according to Tourism Economics. As part of that impact, Milwaukee Theater District venues employ over 1,000 Milwaukeeans and even more volunteers, drawing from all neighborhoods in the City of Milwaukee and larger region.



**MKE THEATER DISTRICT**

**9 WORLD-CLASS THEATERS** | **15,000 SEATS**

**2,000+ PERFORMANCES YEARLY**

**2 MILLION ATTENDEES ANNUALLY**

**ALL CONTRIBUTING TO MILWAUKEE'S \$400M IN ESTIMATED ANNUAL VISITOR ENTERTAINMENT SPENDING\***

## Recommendation 12

**Increase the number and diversity of Downtown retail, dining, and service offerings.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

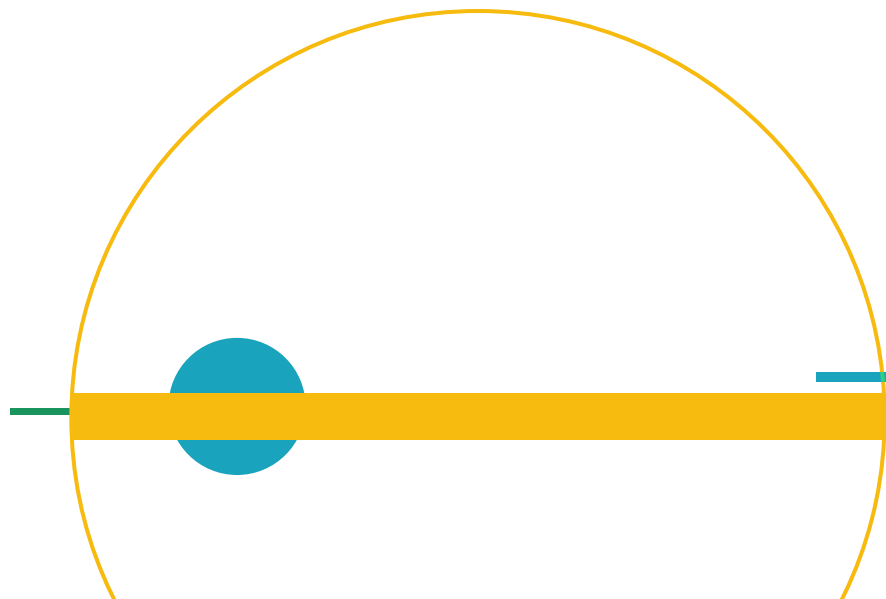
- A** Continue to monitor trends in retail and entertainment, and identify “retail gaps” to focus recruitment efforts. Proactively work to fill retail gaps and capture more spending across all categories. Develop a retail recruitment plan with a focus on diversely-owned (BIPOC) businesses and include a toolbox of incentives.
- B** Establish and reinforce a variety of local business districts throughout downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods so that residents, employees and visitors can access shopping, and services within a 5-minute walk (about 1/4 mile).
- C** Establish strong physical connections between districts, including pedestrian and bike friendly streets, in order to connect the various “5-minute neighborhoods” into “15-minute Downtown” where a wide variety of housing, jobs and services exist so that people can access their day-to-day needs without a personal automobile.
- D** Ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment within commercial districts, with a broad mix of businesses that reflect the diversity of the city as a whole.
- E** Allow for small neighborhood-serving commercial uses in residential areas to further increase walkability and access to services.
- F** Encourage and support businesses that act as “third spaces,” including places like coffee shops and small taverns.
- G** Support the provision of late-night convenience options, and allow extended hours of operation in commercial districts to promote 24-hour activity.

## Recommendation 13

**Prioritize the development of walkable, pedestrian-scaled commercial districts through enhancements to the public realm and by fronting streets and public spaces with active uses and pedestrian friendly façades.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Promote the establishment of defined retail and entertainment districts, each with their own authentic identities and unique mix of offerings.
- B** Require buildings along active commercial streets to provide large transparent storefront windows along the street frontage with regular pedestrian entries, and encourage active uses in the street level area such as retail or restaurants.
- C** Restrict auto-oriented uses such as drive-through restaurants and gas stations.
- D** Prohibit new parking areas along the street frontage.
- E** Focus on developing human scaled places designed to be accessed by foot.
- F** Allow parklets on all streets.



## Recommendation 14

Embrace Downtown as the region's center for nightlife and social gathering, and ensure the proper management of the nighttime economy.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Identify and implement strategies that increase coordination and communication between businesses in the nighttime and culture sector and relevant City departments in order to facilitate safe, accessible and enjoyable places for nightlife. This would benefit nighttime businesses citywide, but have an especially positive impact on Downtown where more than 15% of the city's nighttime businesses are located. Long term, continue to explore the potential creation, funding, and location of an "Office of Nightlife & Culture" with partner agencies to support the social economy and promote safe, accessible and enjoyable places for nightlife.
- B** Improve the public realm within active social districts to enhance the nightlife experience, including new and/or improved gathering spaces, signature streetscaping, and improved pedestrian scale lighting.
- C** Support the coordinated efforts of local businesses and business districts to promote their districts and enhance the nightlife experience through programming and events.
- D** Continue efforts to engage business owners and other stakeholders to develop strategies for addressing public safety and quality of life concerns in and near active social districts.

## Recommendation 15

Develop a high concentration of retail, dining and other active uses in the center of Downtown, and promote the Downtown core as a regional destination for experiential shopping and entertainment.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Build and maintain an authentic, walkable core of active storefronts in the center of Downtown that takes advantage of its unique context rather than trying to imitate suburban retail centers.
- B** Focus destination retail and entertainment uses in the center of Downtown — along Wisconsin Avenue, Water Street, and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, as well as portions of Broadway, Milwaukee Street, and Jefferson Street.
- C** Maintain a list of vacant retail space in the core of Downtown, and proactively work to fill retail vacancies, with a focus on local and diversely-owned businesses.
- D** Restrict blank walls and passive uses along active streets in Downtown, and mitigate gaps in the continuous retail environment by activating blank facades and adding creative interim "pop-up" uses or exhibits in vacant or less-active storefronts.
- E** Encourage large venues and other facilities that may necessitate blank walls to include "liner uses" along the street frontage.
- F** Monitor retail storefront best practices and require new construction to implement minimum ceiling heights to enhance the marketability of new storefront commercial spaces.



# Arts, Culture, Entertainment & Sports

**Goal:** Create more opportunities for shared experiences, and highlight the diverse stories, people, and places that make MKE unique.

## Background

From historic architecture and world class museums, to craft beer and waterfront festivals, we are uniquely MKE. The diversity of people, their stories, and the places and activities we enjoy together are the roots from which our culture grows and our art blossoms. Whether visual or performing, art is the expression of our culture reflected in the spaces we shape and the experiences we share. A vibrant, inclusive, and diverse culture relies on more experiences shared by more people in more spaces.

Over the past decade, Downtown has reaffirmed itself as the neighborhood for everyone — a place where the community congregates during times of tragedy and triumph, a place where our city takes center stage — or court, and remains the culturally rich hub for our region and state.

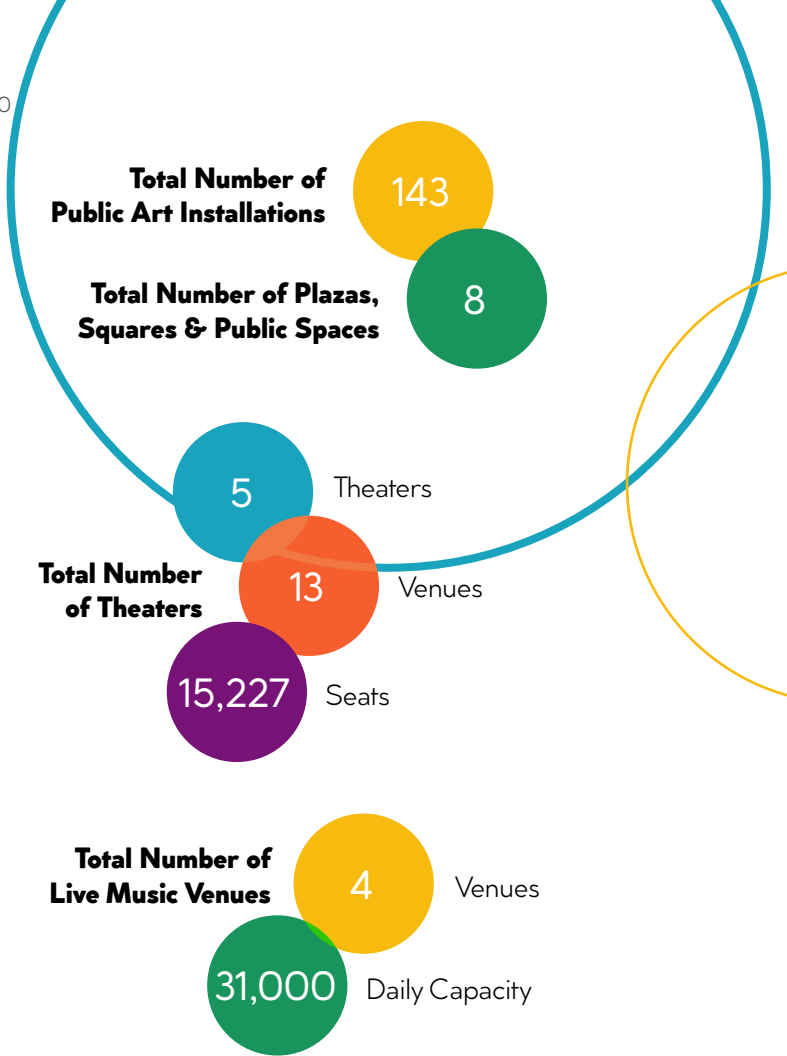
The following recommendations seek to create more opportunities for shared experiences and highlight the diverse stories, people and places that make MKE unique.

## What We've Heard From You

- Bring more people downtown
- More experiences like Jazz in the Park, the Milwaukee Night Market, and live street performances
- Increase public art: sculptures, murals and placemaking efforts
- Increase welcoming and engaging experiences
- Continue to broaden the appeal and diversify downtown arts, culture and sports for all
- Utilize art to activate public spaces and build connections
- Strengthen the identity of the Theater District
- Increase vibrancy and diversity
- Continue to strengthen the identities of downtown districts

With significant investment seen in all arts, culture, and sport sectors, Downtown’s cultural venues have emerged as state-of-the-art facilities with significant investment in the past decade. Catalytic redevelopments of the historic Grand Warner Theater into the Bradley Symphony Center on West Wisconsin Avenue, the demolition of the BMO Harris Bradley Center and construction of the Fiserv Forum, and expansion of the Wisconsin Center have helped Downtown emerge as a competitive destination to attract political conventions, signature sporting events, and national performances.

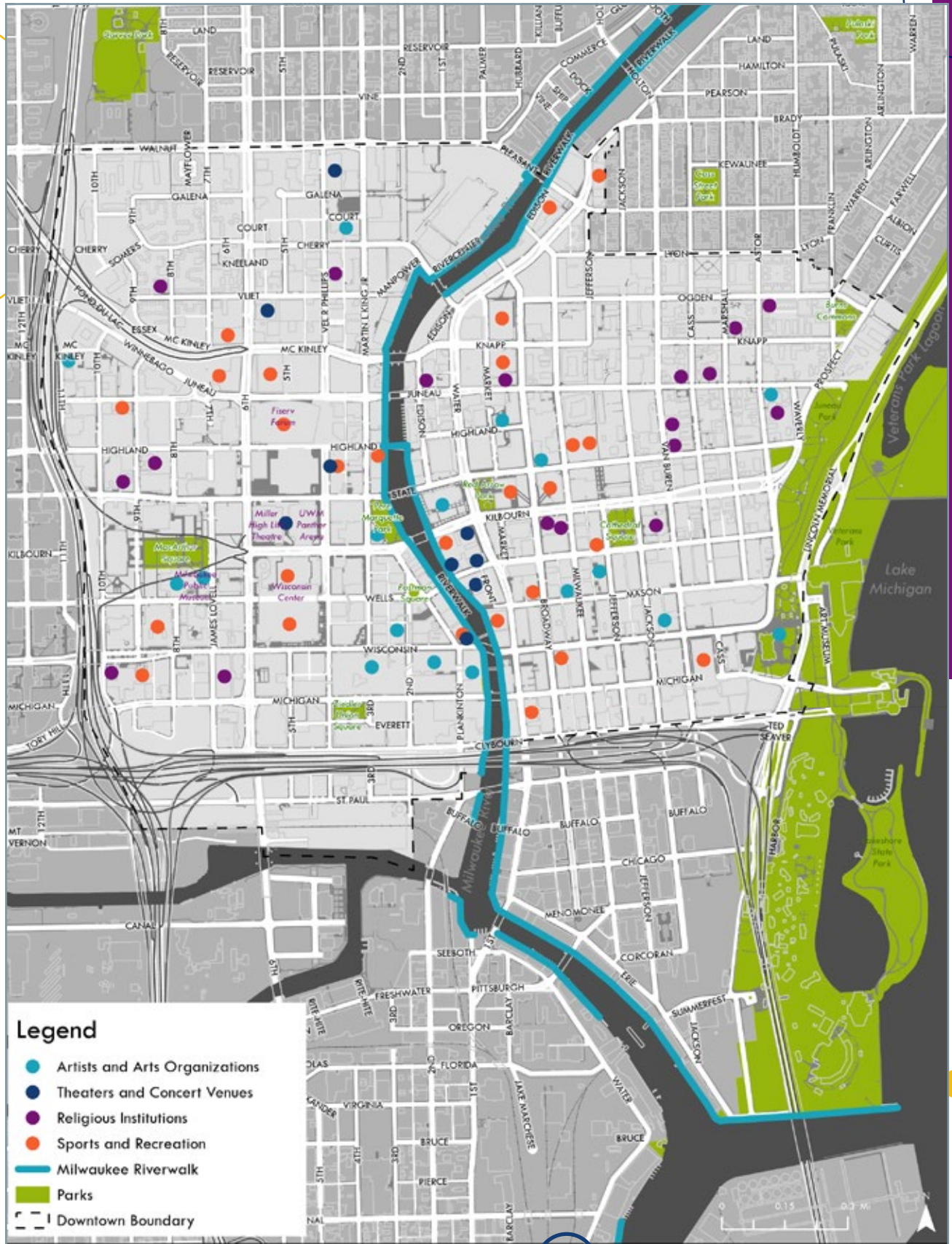
In addition to the significant investment to preserve and enhance downtown’s performing arts venues, including the Marcus Performing Arts Center, Riverside Theater, Pabst Theater, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater, a grassroots coalition formed in 2022 to brand the collective as the “Milwaukee Theater District.” Most recently, plans were unveiled for the new site the Milwaukee Public Museum, at 6th Street and McKinley Avenue, further connecting the Deer District and downtown’s northern-most boundary with the Harambee and Bronzeville neighborhoods.



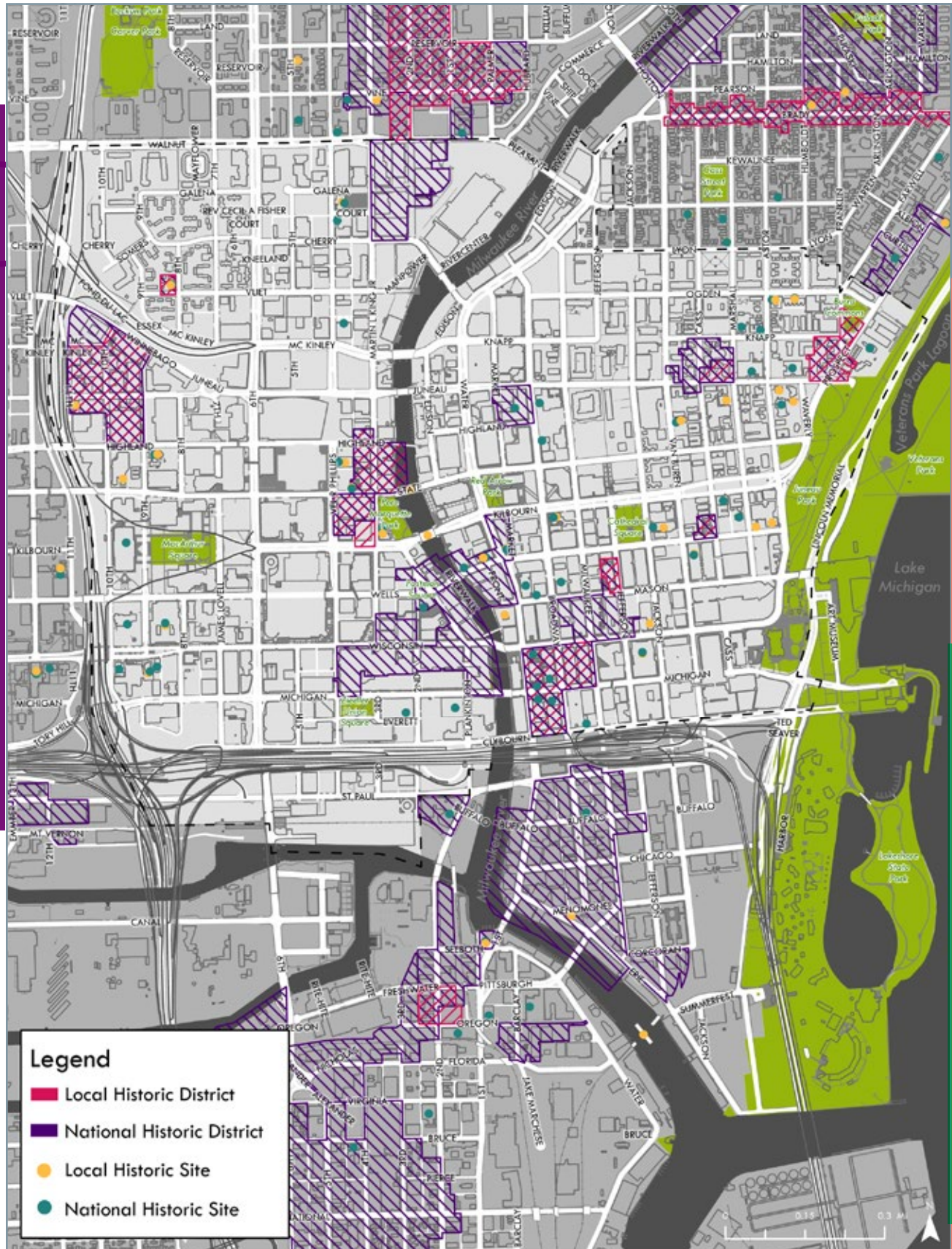
To further strengthen the connections between Downtown’s districts, new murals, sculptures, and activations have popped up in historic ways. Beginning in 2017, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 launched an ambitious downtown mural program, launching the first large-scale murals installed downtown since Richard Haas’ 1981 mural on the now Bradley Symphony Center. Coupled with the birth of Sculpture Milwaukee, an annual rotation of public art installations on Wisconsin Avenue, residents and visitors alike have enjoyed a noticeable uptick in Downtown’s overall vibrancy, in large respect to both the macro and micro-level efforts happening simultaneously in Downtown’s arts, culture, and entertainment sectors.

When envisioning a 21st century, world-class downtown, it’s hard to imagine that place without the robust collection of public art, cultural experiences, performance venues, and sporting arenas around every corner.

# Arts, Culture, Entertainment & Sports Facilities in Downtown



# Local & National Historic Districts & Sites in Downtown





## Recommendation 16

**Reinforce Downtown as the region's center of art, culture, entertainment and sports.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Support new and existing cultural facilities and entertainment venues of all types and sizes throughout downtown.
- B** Support efforts to create a theater district in the core of downtown, centered around the existing cluster of performing arts venues to the east and west of the Downtown Riverwalk.
- C** Support the addition of a professional soccer stadium in the Iron District, and work to develop the surrounding area as a walkable mixed-use district.
- D** Leverage investment in new and proposed cultural facilities — including the Future Museum and the Baird Center — to develop the surrounding areas and improve the adjacent streets and public spaces. Assess the need for additional hotel rooms to attract larger conventions to the City and support the development or expansion of a large convention hotel.
- E** Encourage the Betty Brinn Children's Museum to remain in Downtown, and support a new facility for the museum at its current lakefront location or another location within the Downtown area.

## Recommendation 17

**Expand access to positive shared experiences and build connections between people of different cultures and backgrounds.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Ensure equitable access to cultural amenities and that opportunities are welcoming to all types of people.
- B** Support art, culture, entertainment and sports city-wide, and ensure that existing and future facilities are well connected to all parts of the city through walking, biking and/or transit.
- C** Provide more opportunities for the city's youth to experience Downtown's art, culture, entertainment, and sports.
- D** Expand ethnic and cultural programming, events, and festivals that reflect the Milwaukee community.
- E** Build safe and comfortable connections to creative districts in adjacent neighborhoods.
- F** Foster Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive as one of the nation's premier cultural corridors connecting Wisconsin Avenue to the Bronzeville Arts and Entertainment District.





## Recommendation 18

Promote public art and provide more opportunities for creative expression.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

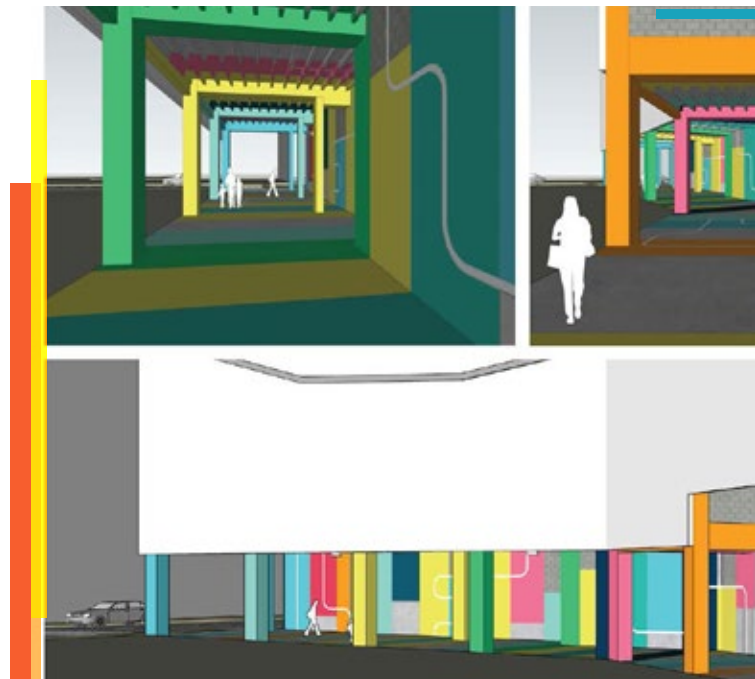
- A** Support a wide range of public art within Downtown. This can include different types of art such as performance art, busking, sculptures, murals and interactive displays; as well as a diversity of artists, from world renowned artists to local school groups.
- B** Use public art to highlight special points-of-interest within the public realm, and add to the unique “sense of place” within downtown districts.
- C** Use public art to fill gaps in the vibrancy of downtown by strategically adding visual interest and mitigating undesirable conditions such as blank walls, large parking facilities, and utilitarian mechanical or electrical equipment.
- D** Identify obstacles to the creation of public art in downtown public spaces, and develop strategies to increase the amount and variety of public art Downtown.
- E** Proactively designate locations for public art when redesigning streets and public spaces.
- F** Explore the feasibility of requiring large developments to designate a portion of their budget for public art, such as a “1%-for-art program.”

## Recommendation 19

Promote social gathering and celebrate the city’s unique history and cultural diversity.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Create more places for people of different backgrounds and cultures to meet and break down racial, economic, and accessibility barriers.
- B** Maintain Downtown’s prominence as the premier location for large public gatherings and events.
- C** Encourage a variety of programming and events 365 days a year that appeal to a diversity of people, including families with children.
- D** Encourage programming events that celebrate the city’s cultural diversity.



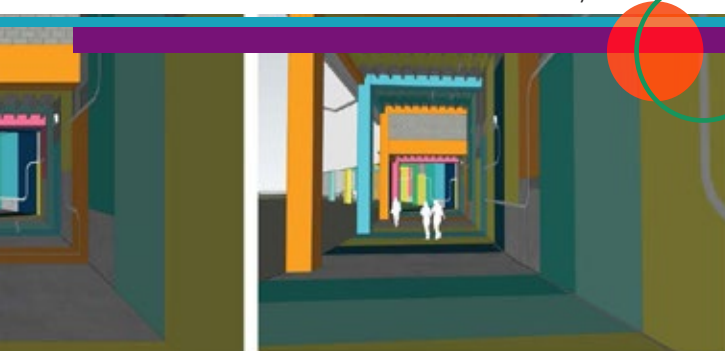


## Recommendation 20

**Preserve and restore Downtown's historic buildings.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Encourage the preservation, restoration, and reuse of historic buildings throughout Downtown.
- B** Identify iconic and/or historic buildings or districts in need of protection, and proactively work to conserve these assets to the built environment.
- C** Encourage exterior lighting that illuminates building façades, and develop a coordinated lighting strategy to highlight Downtown's historic and/or iconic buildings.
- D** Promote arts, literacy, and Westtown as a destination through enhancements of the historic Central Library.



## Recommendation 21

**Connect to the river, and reorient the lakefront as the "front door" to the city.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Continue to improve, expand and invest in the Milwaukee RiverWalk system, and encourage active uses and pedestrian friendly facades along the RiverWalk.
- B** Activate the Downtown RiverWalk with public art and programming, including temporary art installations, sculptures, street busking, murals, and upgrades to lighting on adjacent buildings.
- C** Celebrate, conserve, and develop the human-scaled, walkable, mixed-use districts on the east and west sides of the Milwaukee River. Brand these districts as unique destinations in Downtown.
- D** Build the Lakefront Gateway Plaza, as envisioned by the 2015 design competition. Explore long term solutions for Museum Center Park (former O'Donnell Park) and support changes to the property that include additional cultural amenities, high-quality public spaces, and new development that improves connections to the Lake and showcases Milwaukee as America's Fresh Coast Destination.
- E** Support the growth and development of Summerfest, the many cultural and ethnic festivals and other activities at Henry Maier Festival Park. Encourage continued improvements to the festival park which add public amenities and expand public access.
- F** Celebrate Milwaukee's diversity and champion its identity through a variety of arts and cultural programs, including murals, sculptures, concerts, and markets in public spaces, including sidewalks, streets, and parks.

◀ North 2nd Street Parking Garage Art Alley Schematic Design. Source: TKWA



# Sustainability & Resilience

**Goal: Create an environmentally, socially & economically sustainable + resilient Downtown**

## Background

Milwaukee is committed to a sustainable present and future for Downtown. While the walkable and dense character of Downtown make it the most sustainable neighborhood in the city, there are sustainability needs and opportunities. Stormwater runoff has caused flooding during heavy rainstorms, posing a threat to residents and Lake Michigan. The city is continuing to push towards more sustainable development practices, such as the addition of green roofs and solar energy. The following recommendations seek to create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and resilient Downtown.

## What We've Heard from You

- Prioritize stormwater retention and green infrastructure
- Continue efforts to achieve a net zero downtown
- Increase mixed-use development and density
- Protect the health of the rivers and Lake Michigan
- Utilize sustainability measures that tackle social, economic and environmental benefits
- Implement related City of Milwaukee's Climate & Equity Plan recommendations



## Relevant Plans, Programs & Initiatives

### City of Milwaukee Climate & Equity Plan

Milwaukee’s Climate and Equity plan is a comprehensive plan developed by a City-County Task Force convened in 2019. The plan addresses climate change through the lens of racial equity in Milwaukee. The plan focuses on 10 big ideas around climate and equity that include themes such as energy usage, green jobs, and conservation.

#### 10 Big Ideas:

- 1 Green jobs accelerator
- 2 Healthy home energy upgrades
- 3 New net-zero energy homes
- 4 Commercial building energy benchmarking + building performance standards
- 5 People-centered transportation and urban design
- 6 Electrify transportation
- 7 Greening the electric grid
- 8 Protect and restore nature in the city
- 9 Food waste reduction
- 10 Resilience ambassadors

### City of Milwaukee Green Infrastructure Plan

The goal of Milwaukee’s Green Infrastructure Plan is to create 36 million gallons of stormwater storage by 2030 using green infrastructure in order to adapt to climate change. The plan identifies supporting policies, priority locations for green infrastructure, and identifies resources for funding and processes for City approval.

*Key considerations for downtown include:*

- Stormwater trees, bioswales, soil amendments, and native plants integrated into new complete streets projects, park updates, and other gathering space improvements
- Green roofs
- Additional considerations to limit direct stormwater discharge into the Milwaukee River and the combined sewer

### Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing

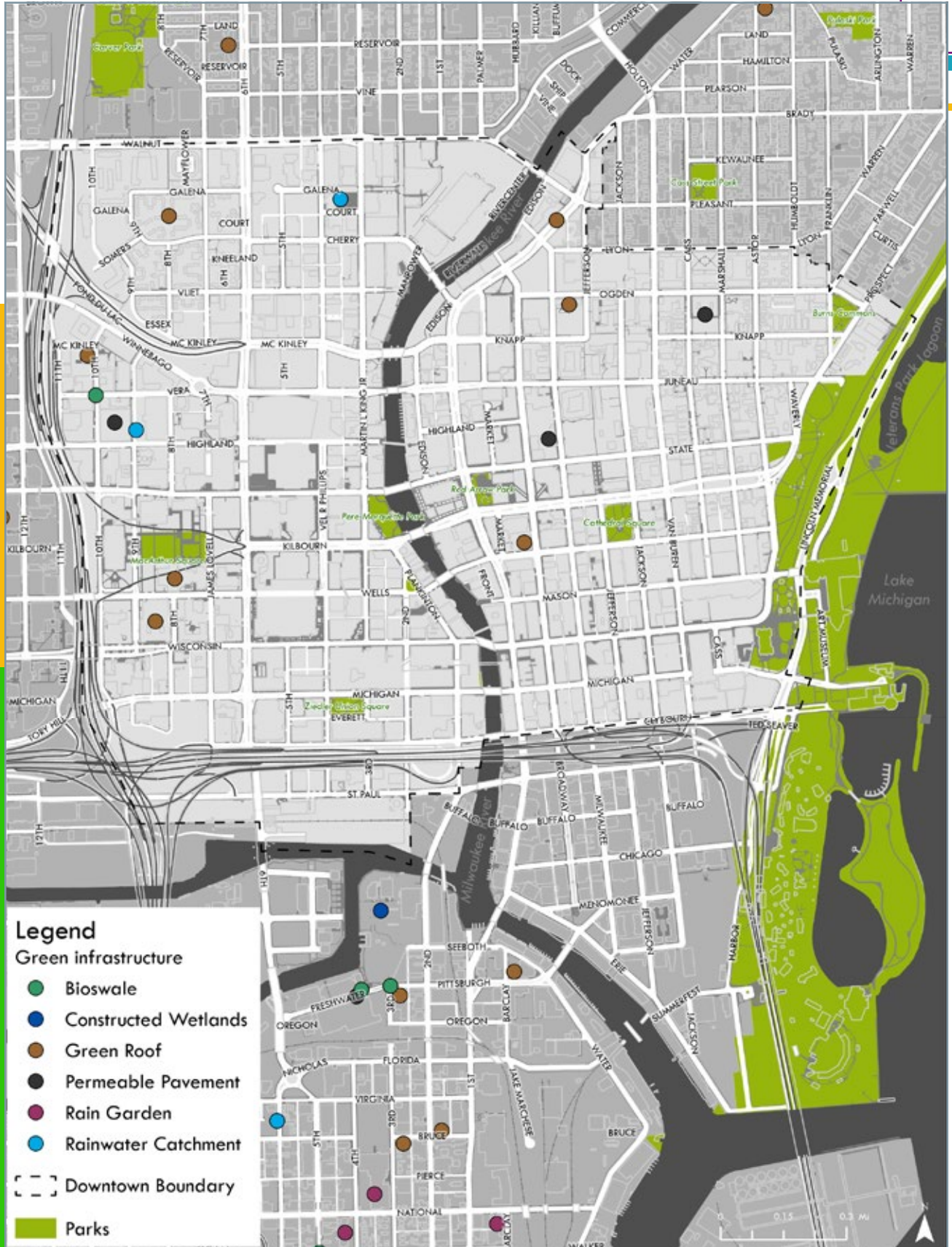
The City of Milwaukee’s Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing program helps commercial property owners affordably finance energy or water efficiency, renewable energy, electric vehicle infrastructure, energy reliability, stormwater controls or “green infrastructure,” and other resiliency upgrades in their buildings. This public-private partnership leverages private capital to supply upfront funding for the improvements and collects payments through a voluntary municipal special charge (City Ordinance 304-26.5). The special charge is attached to the property, not the owner, and is paid back through a direct billing system over time. Projects are designed so that the annual energy and other savings pay for the special charge, providing a net positive cash flow over the life of the upgrades.

### Better Buildings Challenge

The City of Milwaukee became a partner in the U.S. Department of Energy’s Better Buildings Challenge in 2012, pledging to reduce the energy use of the City’s building portfolio 20 percent by 2020. The City developed a Showcase Project with the Milwaukee Central Library and created a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program as an implementation model for other cities to replicate.

The Better Buildings Challenge - Milwaukee provides participants with the above comprehensive services necessary to make your building better from start to finish. Begin by taking the pledge today, then utilize the BBC-MKE services along the clockwise route outlined below to smoothly implement energy efficiency and successfully achieve your energy use reduction goals.

# Green Infrastructure in Downtown



## Recommendation 22

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and transportation.

### Target

Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Continue to strengthen Downtown as a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood where people can live, work, and play without need for a personal automobile.
- B** Provide safe and attractive transit connections, and focus high-density mixed-use development around investments in public transit.
- C** Support efforts to transition the regional electric grid to renewable energy including solar and wind power.
- D** Encourage rooftop solar installations and other renewable energy sources in downtown developments.
- E** Encourage energy efficiency upgrades in new and existing downtown buildings, and develop a benchmark for building performance standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- F** Preserve and adaptively reuse existing buildings and infrastructure to reduce waste and emissions from demolition and construction.
- G** Electrify transportation, and promote walking, biking and transit.
- H** Provide for electric vehicle charging in downtown parking structures and within the public way.
- I** Implement the City's 2023 Climate & Equity Plan recommendations.

## Recommendation 23

Reduce the amount of rainfall that enters the combined sewer system, and eliminate sewage overflows into Milwaukee's Rivers and Lake Michigan.

### Target

Capture the first ½ inch of rainfall across Downtown Milwaukee by 2040 – approximately 13 million gallons.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Encourage new bio-retention facilities and other green infrastructure elements within the public right-of-way and on public and private property throughout Downtown.
- B** Reduce the amount of impervious surface in Downtown and encourage green roofs or other rooftop bioretention facilities for new and existing buildings.
- C** Identify areas within Downtown where green infrastructure should be prioritized, and proactively work to identify potential projects in these areas.
- D** Include green infrastructure elements such as permeable paving and bio-retention in all street reconstructions.
- E** Continue to partner with MMSD and other organizations to secure funding for green infrastructure projects.
- F** Implement the City's 2019 Green Infrastructure Plan in public and private projects Downtown.



## Recommendation 24

Increase the property tax base in Downtown to support services citywide.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

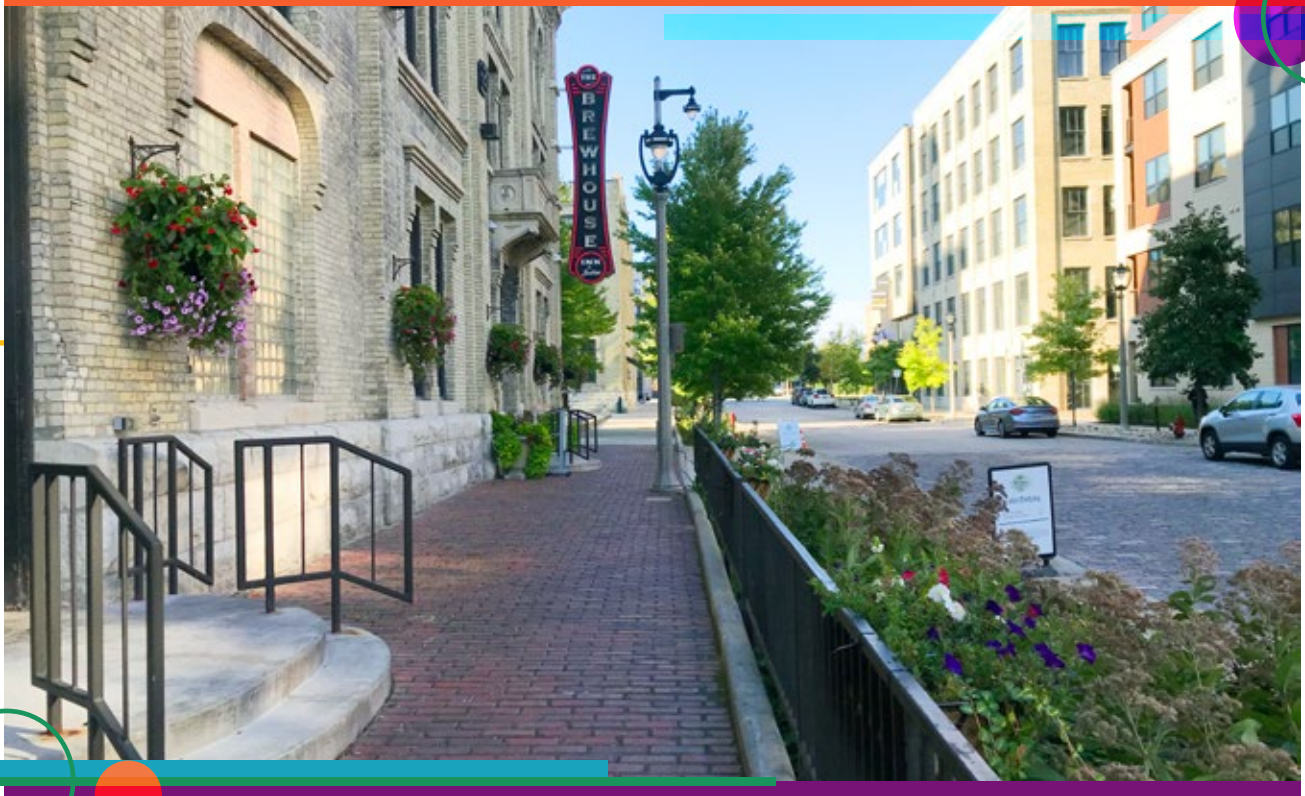
- A** Aggressively promote high-density development throughout the Downtown area.
- B** Reduce the amount of land consumed by tax-exempt uses, and encourage payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) where appropriate.
- C** Utilize available development tools to promote development and advance the recommendations of this plan.

## Recommendation 25

Promote public health and safety, and eliminate racial disparities.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Proactively work to address equity and public safety concerns in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- B** Continue to address the physical, social and environmental factors that influence public health and safety, and support efforts to increase public health outcomes for city residents.
- C** Work to end racial inequality in all areas, including education, criminal justice, environmental justice, public health, housing, transportation and economic opportunity.
- D** Use a racial equity framework that clearly articulates racial equity, implicit and explicit bias and individual, institutional, and structural racism; and evaluate all potential policies and programs through a racial equity lens.





# Transportation & Mobility

**Goal:** Redesign our streets to support walkability, and expand options for the safe, comfortable and enjoyable movement of people.

## Background

Downtown has an abundance of transportation options, from a dense network of local bus routes and a modern streetcar, to bike facilities and shared mobility options, there are many ways to get around Downtown Milwaukee, and connect to and from the surrounding neighborhoods. Connecting more people to more places will require additional investments in public transit and a people-centered approach to street design to strengthen all modes of transportation.

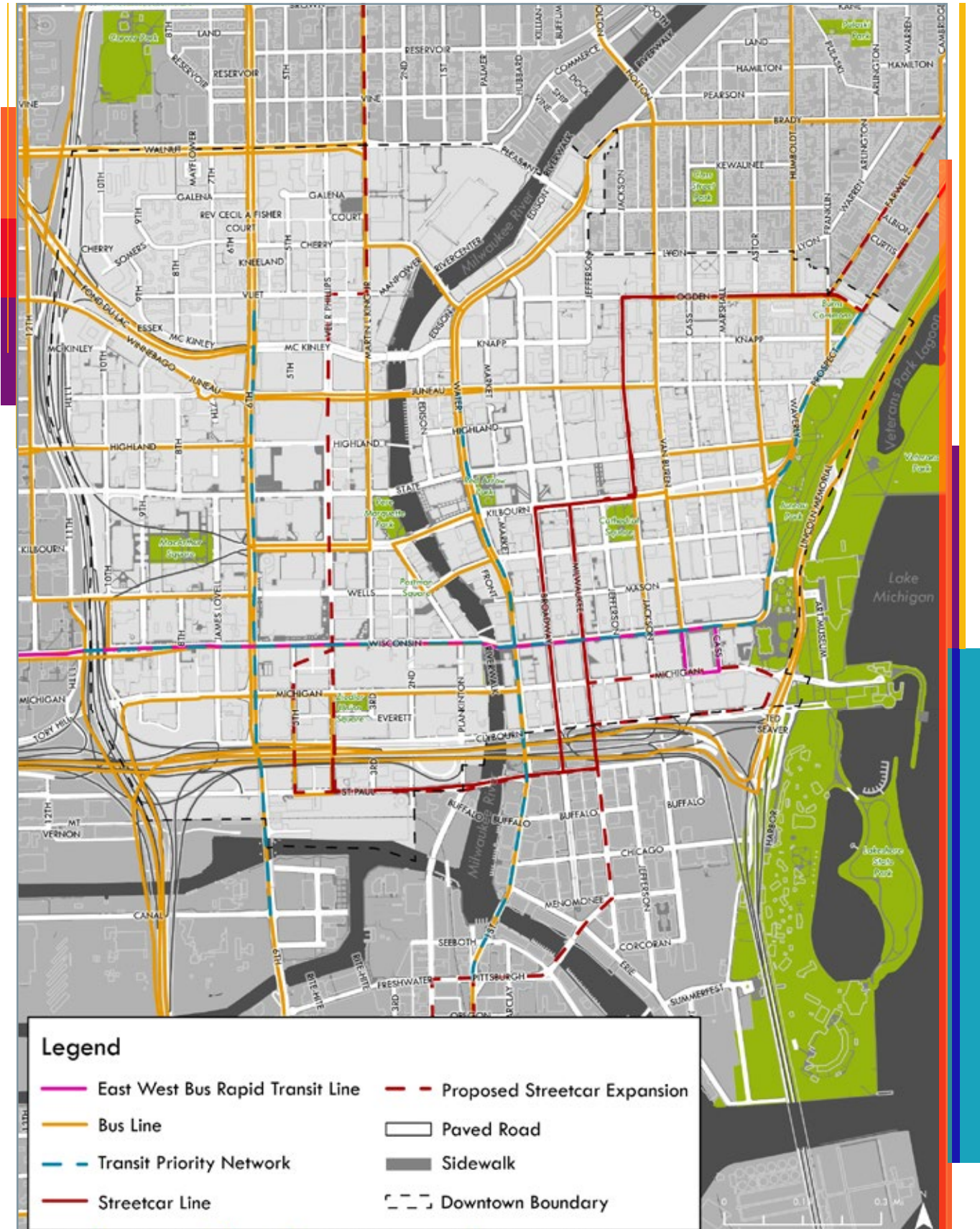
The following recommendations seek to redesign our streets to support walkability, and expand options for the safe, comfortable, and enjoyable movement of people. In addition, this chapter includes specific project proposals organized around the big ideas of improving streets to support all users, expanding and enhancing transit, and reconnecting places divided by human-made barriers. These project ideas are based on public input received throughout the planning process and are intended to serve as a basis for future engagement and analysis of potential alternatives.

## What We've Heard From You

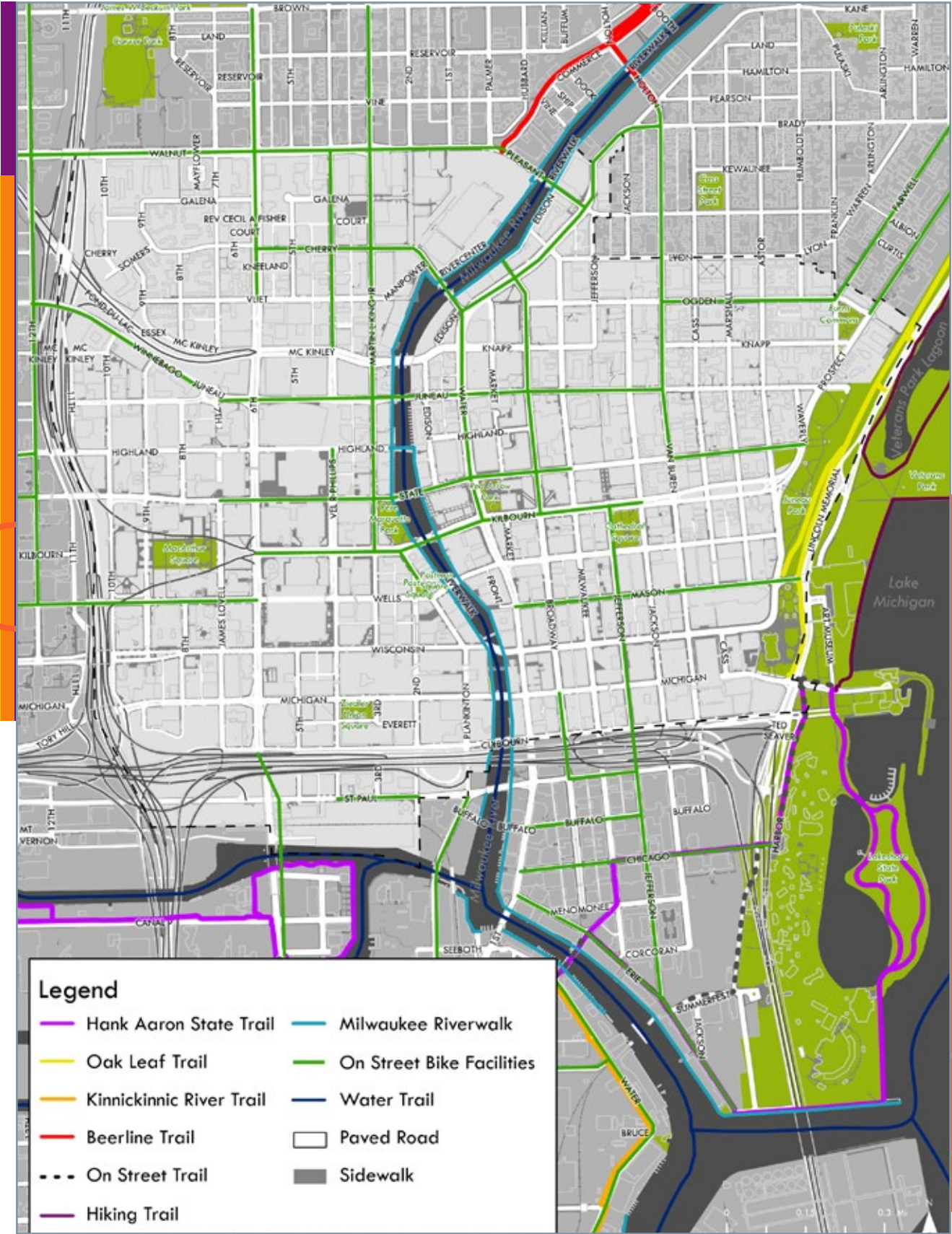
- Improve streets, with more space for people and less space for motor vehicles
- Create more safe, comfortable, and interesting places to walk
- Enhance bike facilities that serve users of all ages and abilities
- Improve transit infrastructure and user experience
- Extend The Hop to adjacent neighborhoods
- Expand bus access and amenities
- Improve wayfinding signage for parking in downtown
- Plan for electric and driverless vehicles



# Transit in Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods



# Bike Lanes & Trails in Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods

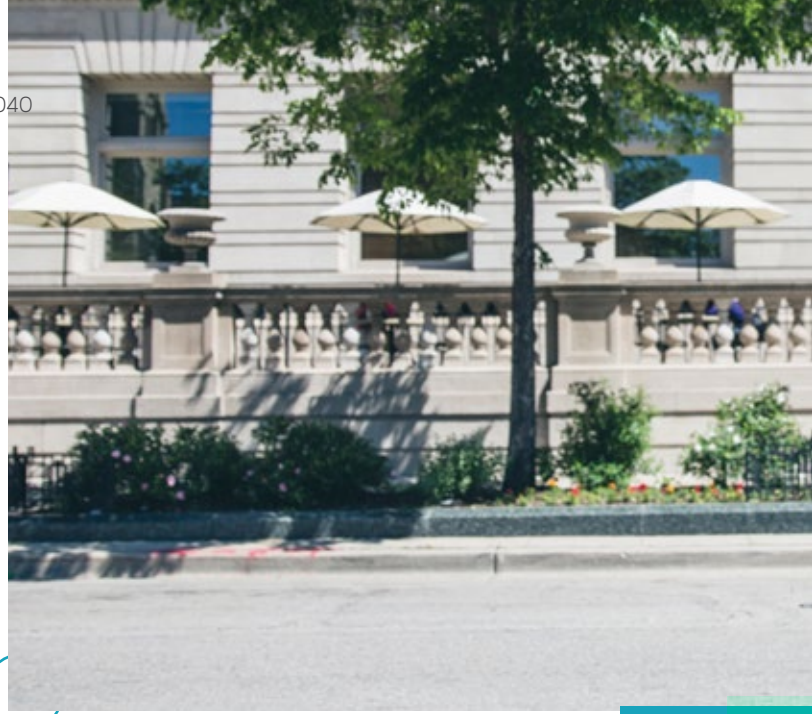


## Recommendation 26

### Create the most walkable Downtown in the Midwest.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Systematically and proactively install pedestrian safety improvements throughout Downtown, starting with streets identified in the City’s pedestrian plan as part of the high injury network.
- B** Ensure that the public way is accessible for persons of all ages and abilities, and implement ADA compliant curb ramps at all crosswalks.
- C** Ensure that pedestrian signals provide enough time for people walking to cross the street.
- D** Plant more street trees to form a canopy along Downtown streets whenever possible.
- E** Increase seating for people in the public way in the form of benches, parklets, pocket parks, and other features.
- F** Enhance pedestrian wayfinding signs in areas of high pedestrian traffic, particularly tourist areas, to guide people to parks, museums, business districts, and other destinations.
- G** Integrate more art into pedestrian spaces, including intersections and crosswalks where appropriate, and work with community groups such as the City of Milwaukee Arts Board to identify opportunities for art in public and pedestrian spaces.
- H** Implement “enhanced pedestrian design” on key corridors and intersections.
- I** Create and improve quality connections to areas with many attractions — including the lakefront, County parks, parkway and trail systems, and commercial districts.
- J** Implement the Milwaukee Pedestrian Plan, the Complete Streets Policy and the future Mobility Plan.
- K** Discourage street and alley vacations which eliminate public space, create large blocks, and limit walkability.



## Recommendation 27

### Increase bicycle ridership and build a bike network that is safe and inviting for all.


#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Systematically and proactively install or enhance bike facilities on all arterial and collector streets in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Bike facilities should be separated from vehicle traffic wherever possible.
- B** Add permanent separated bike facilities whenever an arterial or collector street is resurfaced or reconstructed. Exceptions may be appropriate on streets where expanded sidewalks or shared street designs are preferred over separate bike accommodations, and where traffic speed is limited to 15 miles per hour.
- C** Use rapid implementation strategies to quickly add bike facilities on streets that are not planned for reconstruction or resurfacing.
- D** Develop a connected network of separated enhanced bike facilities that are safe and inviting for users of ages and abilities. Provide at least two north-south and two east west separated and enhanced bike facilities that connect adjacent neighborhoods to key destinations.

## Recommendation 28

**Enhance the transit experience, and expand transit options to adjacent neighborhoods.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- 
- 
- E** Extend the regional trail system into the heart of Downtown - including the Oak Leaf, Hank Aaron, and Beerline Trails - by enhancing and branding new and existing bike routes as trail extensions.
  - F** Provide safe and inviting bike connections between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods by adding protected bike lanes on key corridors.
  - G** Support the expansion of bike share and dockless scooters in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
  - H** Update the City of Milwaukee Bike Plan, Milwaukee by Bike, to reflect innovations in bikeway design and the importance of providing an all ages and abilities network.
  - I** Ensure adequate bike parking throughout the Downtown Area.
  - A** Update “The Hop Streetcar Investment Guide” to promote the economic development potential along and within walking distance of The Hop Streetcar.
  - B** Expand the Milwaukee Streetcar (“The Hop”) to surrounding neighborhoods. Three priority extensions are to Bronzeville, Walkers Point, and the East Side.
  - C** Implement changes to streets and bus stops that improve the convenience and attractiveness of local bus routes.
  - D** Support additional Bus Rapid Transit (“BRT”) projects that work to connect downtown to neighborhoods and employment centers throughout the metro area.
  - E** Reinforce the Milwaukee Intermodal Station as a regional transit hub, and support investments in regional transit systems including commuter and high-speed rail.
  - F** Ensure that all transit stops are accessible to people with disabilities.
  - G** Increase frequency and speed of Hiawatha and Empire Builder Amtrak routes to better connect Downtown to Chicago and the Twin Cities.
  - H** Build KRM commuter rail to connect Downtown to southern communities within the region.
  - I** Construct Amtrak rail connection between Downtown and Madison.
- 

## Recommendation 29

**Prioritize slow motor vehicle speeds on all streets.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

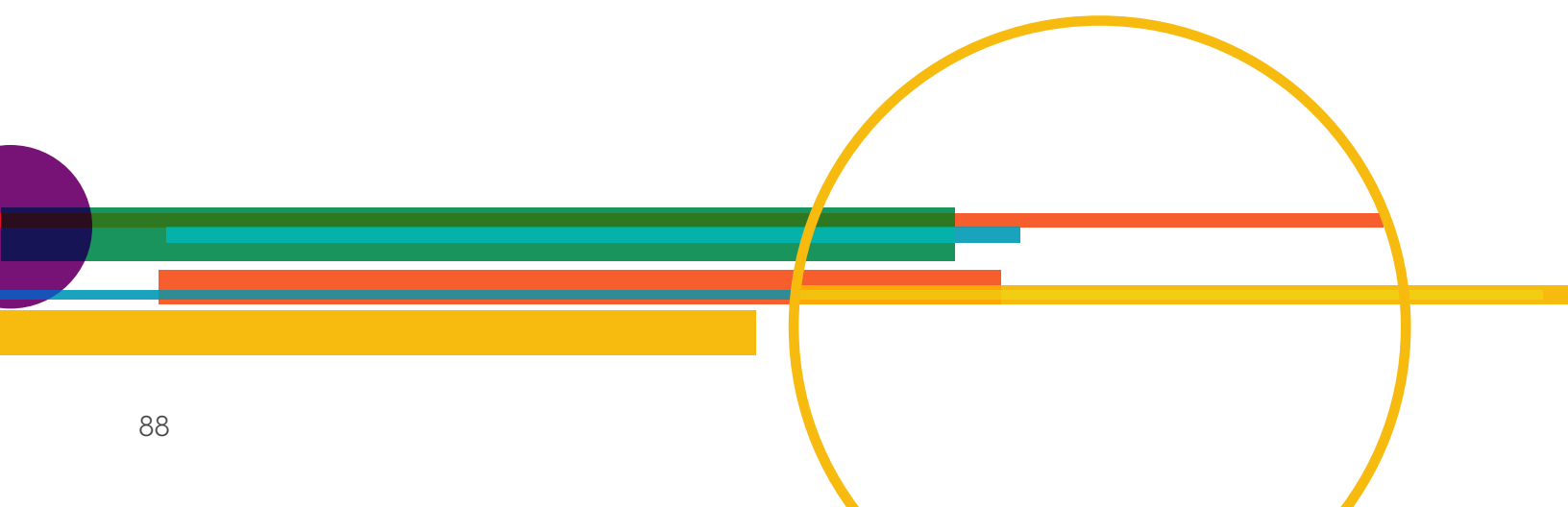
- A** Retrofit Downtown streets by implementing traffic calming measures intended to reduce the speed of motor vehicles throughout the Downtown Area, especially in areas of high pedestrian activity and on streets identified as being part of a high injury network.
- B** When repaving or reconstructing streets, implement geometric design changes intended to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety.
- C** Prioritize reducing vehicle speed over congestion mitigation.
- D** Reduce or eliminate the number of streets with more than one through-lane in each direction.
- E** Eliminate or reduce left turn lanes where possible, and limit the size of turn lane tapers. Streets with less than 10,000 annual average daily traffic (“AADT”) may not warrant left turn lanes.
- F** Consider an area-wide speed limit of 20 miles per hour, with lower speed limits on active or shared streets, and support lower speed limits by implementing street designs that discourage speeding.

## Recommendation 30

**Manage the curb, and adapt Downtown streets to accommodate new trends and technologies.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Work with adjacent property owners to optimize curb side space for a variety of uses including parking, loading, green infrastructure, bike and transit facilities, parklets, and expanded sidewalk areas.
- B** Embrace new transportation technologies, including electric and autonomous vehicles, while balancing the needs of new technologies with other uses of the public way.
- C** Support taxi and ride-share services by providing safe places to load and unload passengers in active commercial districts and near major destinations.
- D** Ensure that small delivery trucks can access their delivery points and provide space along the curb to facilitate unloading where appropriate.
- E** Implement mobility hubs to provide multimodal options and seamless connections between modes, including bike parking, micromobility parking (such as scooters), and transit integration.





## Recommendation 31

### Increase the efficiency of existing parking assets.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Improve the visitor experience of parking in Downtown by:
- Maintain and enhance on-street and off-street facilities;
  - Improving wayfinding signage that directs visitors to off-street parking facilities;
  - Implementing new technology that makes parking more efficient; and
  - Improving the pedestrian environment and multi-modal connections between large parking facilities and major destinations.
- B** Include defined on-street parking spaces as an integral element of the streetscape on both sides of most streets.
- C** Balance the number of on-street parking spaces with other potential uses of the curb zone including bus stops, bus bulbs, loading areas, deliveries, passenger drop-off locations, parklets, curb extensions, expanded sidewalks or tree lawns, festival/market vendor stalls, bike and scooter parking, and stormwater management.
- D** When reallocating street space to enhance other mobility options, prioritize eliminating motor-vehicle travel lanes before considering removing the parking lane/curb zone, which creates a hard buffer for pedestrians and provides a flexible space to support adjacent land uses in a variety of ways.
- E** Set vehicular parking rates that are based on occupancy rates to balance the demand and supply of on-street parking spaces. The variable pricing system should optimize access by establishing pricing that would encourage the availability of one or two open spaces per block, effectively reducing or eliminating parking shortages. Demand-based parking pricing will provide the additional benefit of reducing vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions as less traffic will be attributed to the search for parking in Downtown.
- F** Maximize the usage of existing off-street parking facilities through variable market-based pricing and by encouraging shared parking between nearby uses that may generate peak demand at different times.
- G** Maintain the policy of not requiring off-street parking for new development in most Downtown zoning districts, and consider eliminating parking requirements from the zoning code where they may impose a minimum parking requirement in Downtown.
- H** Use revenue generated from City-owned parking assets to advance the City's racial equity goals, with consideration of pedestrian safety improvements on the City's pedestrian high-injury network in neighborhoods of color.

# Big Idea: Improve Streets to Support All Users

**A connected Downtown** is welcoming and accessible to those arriving by foot, transit and bicycle, and prioritizes the experience of individuals who are walking, bicycling, and using transit while Downtown. Downtown streets should be designed to provide enjoyable experiences for those residents, workers and visitors in order to create a walkable and vibrant Downtown.

The safety and comfort of all users of Downtown's streets was a top priority for many participants in the planning process. Design changes to streets that enhance walkability, encourage bicycle use and improve transit remain one of the most impactful ways to advance many of the goals in this Plan.

The projects identified would implement this vision of a connected Downtown, creating an environment where people can easily get around Downtown and connect seamlessly to adjacent neighborhoods. These priority projects would create transit-priority streets for an improved experience for transit users, build a bike network Downtown that is accessible to users of all ages and abilities and connected to the regional trail network, and create pedestrian destination streets that encourage walking, gathering, and support area businesses.

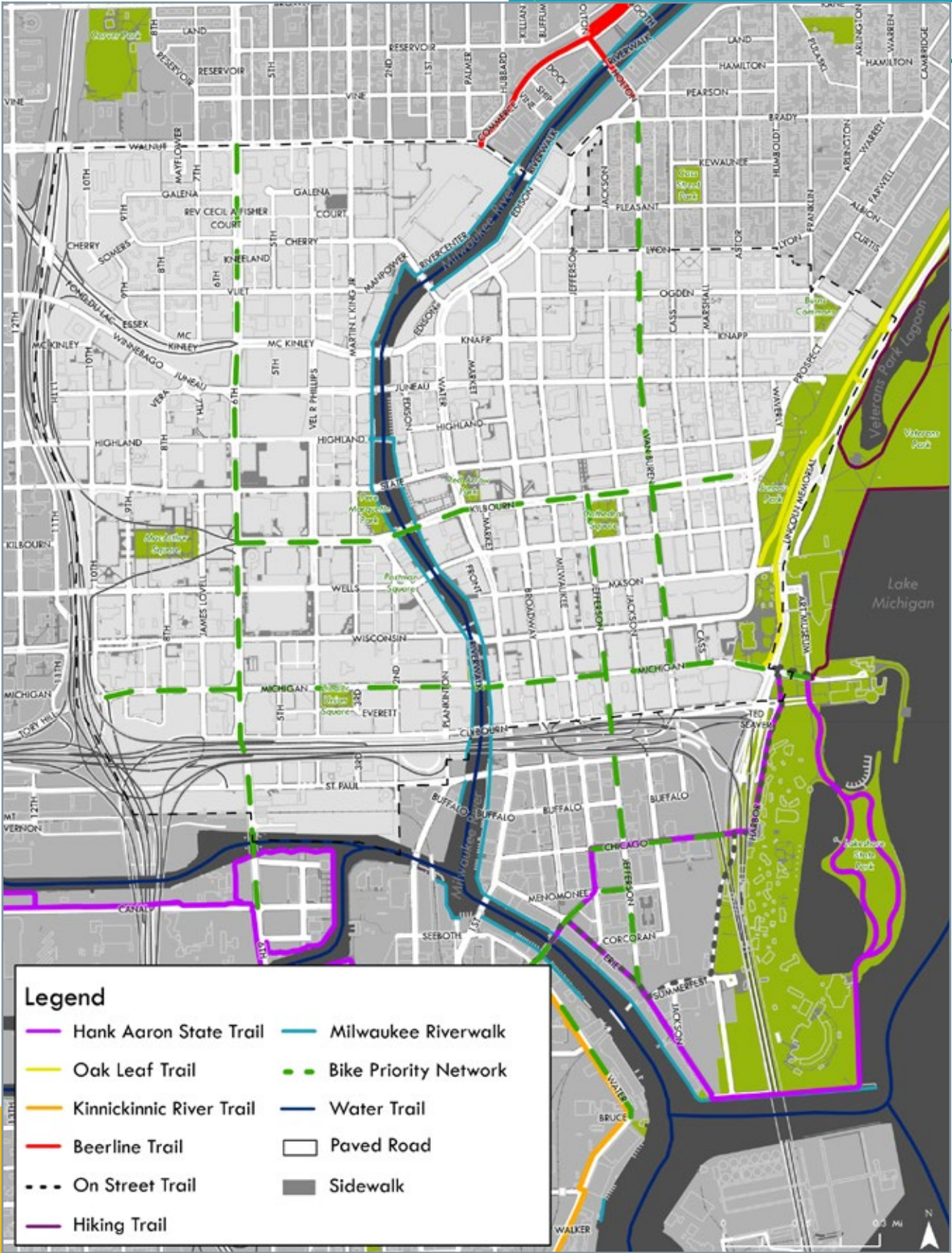
The following projects represent opportunities for improving various Downtown Streets as they are resurfaced or reconstructed, or as funding becomes available. Street segments were selected based on public input during the planning process and include all segments on the High Injury Network identified in the 2019 Milwaukee Pedestrian Plan.

Each project requires additional public input to determine the most appropriate improvements, and a thorough analysis to determine the feasibility and potential impact of various alternatives.

Projects focus on improving safety and mobility by implementing complete street design strategies. Additional projects focused on creating "enhanced pedestrian design" for specific streets can be found in *Chapter 8: Streets & Public Spaces*.

Complete street design principles are appropriate on all streets in Downtown, and omission of a particular street segment or design consideration does not indicate that improvements are not needed or desired.

# Bike Priority Network & Existing Trails



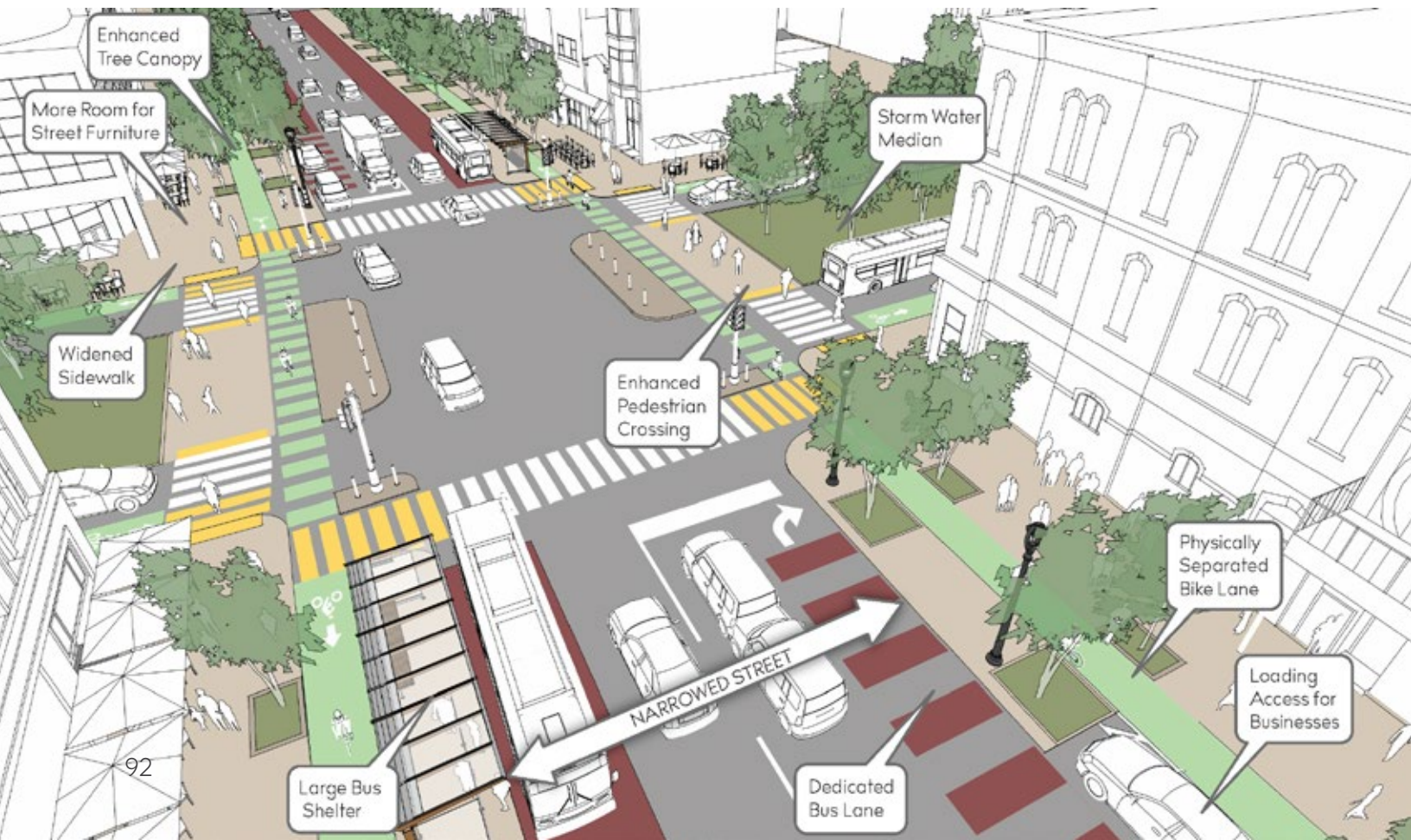
# Catalytic Project

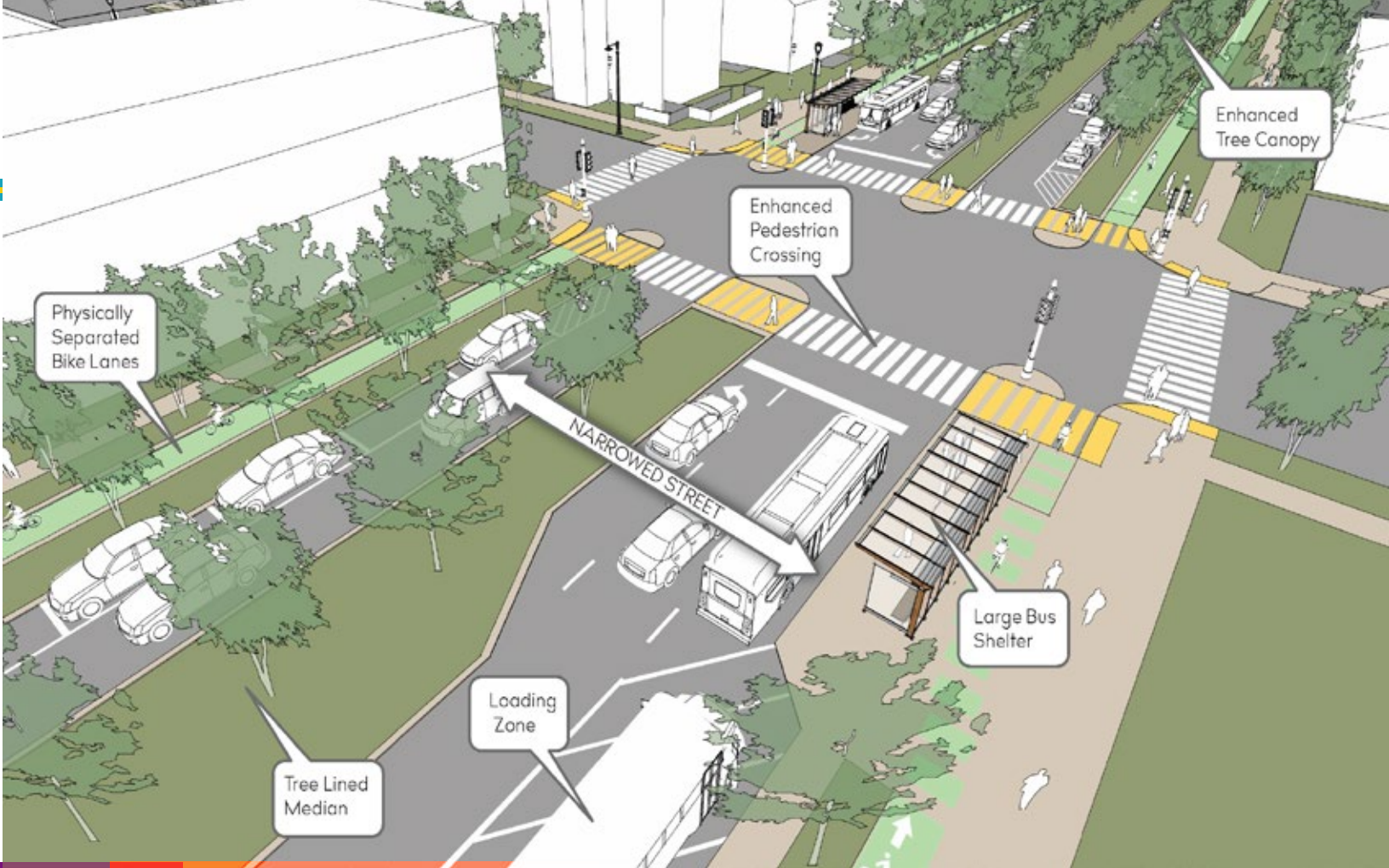
## A Water Street Complete Street

Redesign N. Water Street as a priority transit and pedestrian street. Reduce the number of motor-vehicle lanes and consider curb extensions, enhanced streetscaping, transit lanes and enhanced transit stops. North of Kilbourn Avenue include extra wide sidewalks for social gathering and enhanced bicycle lanes. Water Street was identified in the City’s Pedestrian Plan as one of the ten most dangerous corridors for pedestrians in the City of Milwaukee, and the most dangerous in the Downtown Area.

The improvements proposed through this catalytic project would reduce the number of motor-vehicle lanes and add safety improvements for transit riders and people walking and on bicycles. The added sidewalk space would provide an improved experience for all users and visitors to this area. Street improvements will also help spur development along the Water Street corridor, which includes a number of priority redevelopment sites with the potential to add significant new development to the area. This catalytic project would make Red Arrow Park more accessible, better connect pedestrians to a variety of destinations including the Riverwalk, City Hall Square, the North End neighborhood, and Wisconsin Avenue, and support the Water Street Entertainment District.

- ▼ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. Water Street looking south near E. Juneau Avenue. Source: TKWA & team





▲ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. 6th Street looking north near W. Vliet Street. Source: TKWA & team

## Catalytic Project

### B 6th Street Complete Street

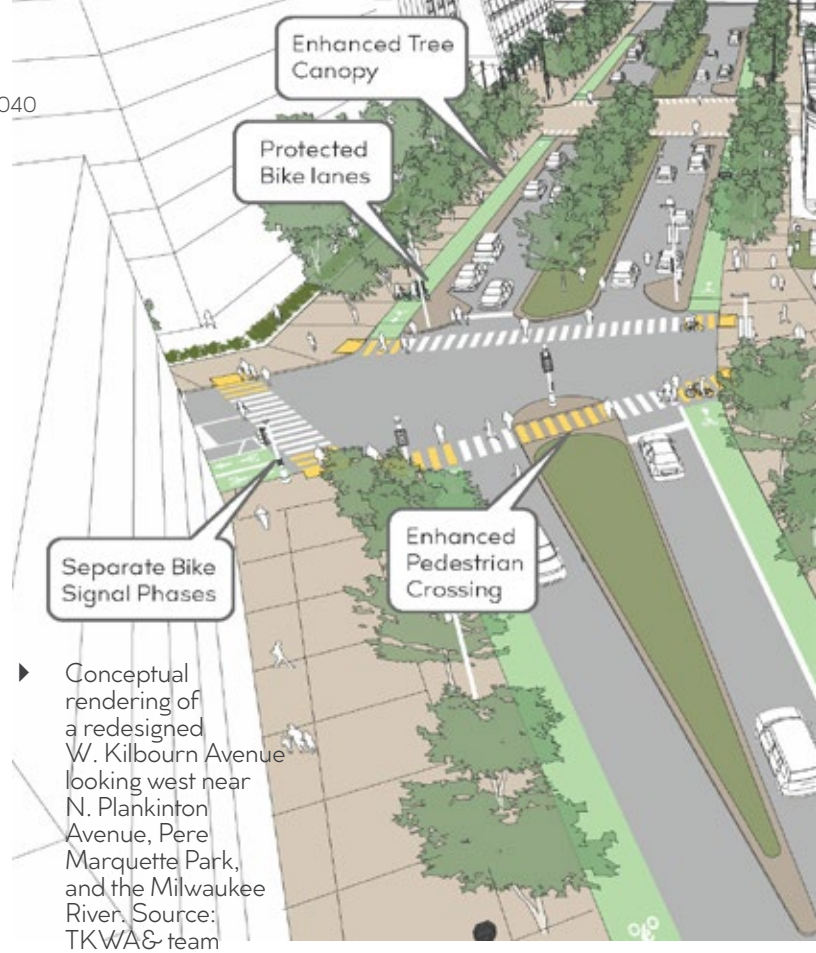
Redesign N. 6th St as a priority transit street and enhanced bikeway. This would include reducing the number of motor vehicle lanes and removing right turn bypasses while increasing the tree canopy throughout the corridor. Transit lanes and enhanced transit stops could also be considered in addition to fully separated bike lanes. Create an accessible connection to St. Paul Avenue.

As part of a series of destructive urban renewal projects, N. 6th Street was widened in the 1960s. This resulted a street that prioritized car traffic over the experiences of people who live, walk, work, and shop along the corridor.

Redesigning 6th Street will better connect both north and south side neighborhoods to downtown via improved transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access. It will build on the momentum of the Future Museum being constructed on 6th and McKinley by making it a more accessible destination for residents of the city and the region and will spur adjacent private development. An improved 6th Street would embody the vision of a Connected Downtown, linking Bronzeville, Halyard Park, Hillside, MATC, the Brewery District, the Deer District, the Convention Center, West Wisconsin Avenue, the Iron District and Walker's Point via a street that is truly designed for all users.

## Additional Priority Projects

The additional corridors described below were selected based on public comments received during the planning process. Each project requires additional public input to determine the most appropriate improvements, and a thorough analysis to determine the feasibility and potential impact of various alternatives. Significant changes to the downtown street network—including changes that are more significant than those described below—would need a detailed analysis that considers the movement of people (whether walking, rolling, taking transit, or by car), goods, adjacent activity (both existing and future potential), and the potential for repurposing of portions or all of some streets for other public uses. Completing this type of transportation planning effort across the entirety of downtown at once is beyond the scope of this effort.



### East-West Corridors

#### C Kilbourn Avenue

Redesign Kilbourn Avenue as the spine of Downtown public space network. Reduce the number of motor vehicle lanes and construct fully separated bike lanes, Curb extensions, enhanced streetscape and additional landscaped areas. Expand the median on West Kilbourn to allow for additional trees and construct new tree lawns between the separated bike lane and the curb lane. Redesign the intersection of Prospect and Kilbourn to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

#### D Wisconsin Avenue

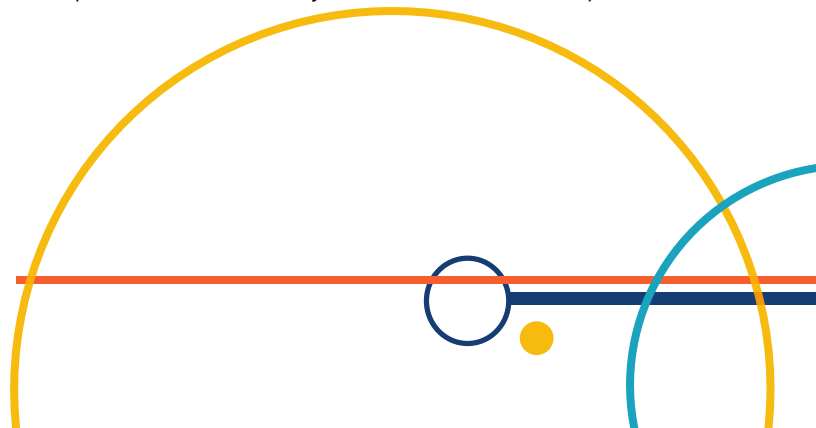
Redesign East and West Wisconsin Avenue as the city’s premier transit and pedestrian street. Implement transit lanes and enhanced transit stations and revisit the streetscape design to adapt to changes in the public way and enhance the pedestrian experience

#### E Michigan Street

Redesign East and West Michigan Street as an enhanced bikeway. Implement a road diet to reduce the number of motor vehicle lanes and add separated bike lanes from the near west side to the Lakefront.

#### F Clybourn Street

Improve Clybourn Street, focusing on slowing motor vehicle traffic and enhancing the pedestrian environment. Enhanced bike lanes and shrinking pedestrian crossing distances should be considered, and sidewalks added on both sides of the street. Consider extending the boulevard section of Clybourn east of Van Buren as a replacement of the adjacent elevated freeway.





### **G Mason Street**

As a low-volume street located only east of the river, Mason Street provides an opportunity for separated bike lanes to connect to Veterans Park, eliminating motor vehicle travel in one direction, removing parking, and other urban environment enhancements that would prioritize pedestrian enjoyment of the street. Consider a two-way cycle track on the south side of the street connecting to Veteran's Park. Enhance streetscaping between the Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River.

### **H Wells Street**

Reconstruct E. Wells Street between Broadway and Van Buren St with expanded sidewalk zones, curb extensions, protected bike lanes, and additional tree plantings. Consider wider sidewalks, curb extensions and additional tree planting between N. Broadway and N. Vel R. Phillips Avenue. Add pedestrian and bike safety features west of Vel R. Phillips Avenue to connect to Marquette University and the Near West Side.

### **I Juneau Avenue**

Reduce the number of motor vehicle travel lanes, shrink pedestrian crossing distances, and consider enhanced bike lanes, enhanced streetscape, enhanced transit stops and expanded pedestrian space between King Drive and Market Street. Consider curb extensions, enhanced transit stops and enhanced bike lanes between Market Street and Van Buren Street. Consider enhanced bike lanes on W. Winnebago Street between N. 6th Street and N. 12th Street to connect to the Near West Side and Lindsay Heights neighborhoods.

### **J State Street**

Reduce the number of motor-vehicle lanes and add bike lanes where lacking. Consider enhanced bike lanes west of Broadway connecting to the Near West Side and enhanced streetscaping between Broadway and Vel R. Phillips Avenue.

### **K Walnut Street/Pleasant Street**

Reduce the number of motor vehicle travel lanes, shrink pedestrian crossing distances, and add protected bike lanes connecting areas to the west to Downtown.

### **L McKinley Avenue/Knapp Street**

Improve pedestrian crossings with curb extensions and median extensions. Consider replacing parking lanes with protected bike lanes from Broadway to 6th Street.

### **M Highland Avenue**

Reduce the number of motor vehicle lanes and shrink pedestrian crossing distances on W. Highland Avenue from 6th to 9th through the MATC campus. Consider enhanced bike lanes west of N. 6th Street to connect to the Near West Side.

## Additional Priority Projects

### North-South Corridors West side of Downtown

- N Plankinton Avenue**  
Reduce the number of motor-vehicle travel lanes, and consider separated and/or enhanced bike lanes from S. 2nd Street in Walkers Point to W. Kilbourn Avenue, consider a two-way cycle track on the east side of the street to add comfort and avoid the freeway ramps between Clybourn Street and St. Paul Avenue.
- O King Drive**  
Redesign King Drive as a premiere pedestrian corridor with expanded sidewalk zones, curb extensions, and enhanced streetscape. Add streetcar service from the Deer District to Bronzeville.
- P Vel R. Phillips Avenue**  
Redesign N. Vel R. Phillips Avenue as a signature street connecting Vel Phillips Plaza with the Deer District. Add streetcar service from St Paul Avenue to Highland Avenue.

### North-South Corridors East side of Downtown

- Q Van Buren Street**  
Redesign Van Buren Street as a priority transit street and enhanced bikeway. Reduce the number of motor vehicle lanes and add separated bike lanes, curb extensions, bus bulbs, and enhanced transit stops. Consider adding a tree lawn between the sidewalk and the roadway north of Kilbourn Avenue.
- R Jefferson Street**  
Redesign Jefferson Street from Wisconsin Avenue to Kilbourn Avenue as a pedestrian priority street with a plaza-like “shared space” design. Include expanded sidewalk areas and enhanced streetscaping. Consider raised intersections or curbless street design, and replacing certain traffic signals with 4-way stops. South of Mason Street, install separated bike lanes to connect into the Third Ward, with consideration of a 2-way cycle track on the east side of the street. Maintain curb lanes where possible, particularly on the west side of the street where significant hotel drop offs occur.
- S Milwaukee Street**  
Install pedestrian safety improvements and consider bike improvements south of Kilbourn Avenue. Implement a road diet and consider bike lanes north of Kilbourn Ave. Consider a mid-block crossing on Milwaukee St between State and Juneau Avenues.
- T Broadway**  
Install pedestrian safety improvements and consider bike improvements south of Kilbourn Avenue. Consider a road diet and protected bike lanes north of Kilbourn Avenue.





▲ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive looking north near W. State Street. Source: TKWA & team

▼ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. Jefferson Street looking north near E. Wells Street & Cathedral Square Park. Source: TKWA & team



# Big Idea: Expand & Enhance Transit

**A connected Downtown** provides transit options to connect to adjacent neighborhoods and to key destinations within the regional economy. Increased bus service and an improved experience for riders Downtown links residents to jobs and reduces the need for Downtown visitors to rely on private automobiles. The Hop has demonstrated the ability of the streetcar system to spur economic development, and planned extensions will bring this momentum and increased connectivity to residents and businesses in adjacent neighborhoods. New or improved intercity rail connections to Chicago, Madison, Minneapolis, Racine and Kenosha provide direct linkages to workers and businesses in growth sectors in the global economy.

These recommended projects would create an improved and more balanced transit system that will advance Milwaukee's equity, environmental sustainability, and economic development goals.

Since The Hop was approved in 2015, The Hop has attracted over \$1.7 billion in new investment that has resulted in 2.7 million square feet of new or renovated commercial space, over 1,000 apartment units, and more than 360 hotel rooms directly along the Mainline and Lakefront routes that are recently completed, under construction, or expected to start soon. When considering additional investments within walking distance of the starter routes, there has been nearly \$1.3 billion in additional new commitments that has added another 1.8 million square feet of new or renovated commercial space, over 3,650 and 800 more apartments and hotel rooms, respectively, that are complete, under construction, or proposed. The property values within walking distance of The Hop routes have risen by 65.6% since approval in 2015.

## Catalytic Project

### Extend the Streetcar

The vision for the streetcar has always been to extend the system into the surrounding neighborhoods, providing enhanced connectivity and boosting economic growth throughout the Greater Downtown area. Efforts to expand The Hop are ongoing and have focused on future connections to King Drive and the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District north of Downtown and the Walker's Point neighborhood south of Downtown.

This catalytic project proposes that the City pursue these planned and future streetcar extensions, and work aggressively to secure funding and support for the following projects.

The Hop provides a reliable, high-quality means of connecting people and places within Downtown in a way that is convenient, comfortable, and enjoyable for area residents, employees and visitors. The Hop has also shown its value as a catalyst for economic development, with dozens of large new developments rising along the route representing billions in new investment.

The Equitable Growth Through Transit Oriented Development Plan provides a framework for investment in the King Drive and Walker's Point neighborhoods that builds physical and economic connections, enhances places based on local character and distinctiveness and benefits existing residents through equitable and inclusive strategies.



Map of Proposed Streetcar Extensions. Source: City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

### Additional Priority Projects

- A Westown Streetcar Extension**  
Extend the Streetcar from the Intermodal Station to West Wisconsin Avenue and the Deer District.
- B Bronzeville Streetcar Extension**  
Extend the Streetcar along King Drive to the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District.
- C Walkers Point Streetcar Extension**  
Extend the Streetcar through the Third Ward and into the Walkers Point Neighborhood.
- D East Side Streetcar Extension**  
Extend the streetcar along Prospect and Farwell Avenues from Burns Commons to the East Side Business Improvement District.

- E Enhance Transit User Experience for Local Bus Routes**  
Implement changes to streets and bus stops that improve the convenience and attractiveness of local bus routes, including accessibility improvements.
- F Support the Expansion of Bus Rapid Transit (“BRT”)**  
Connect Downtown to neighborhoods and employment centers throughout the metro area.
- G Increase Amtrak Frequency**  
Improve Amtrak Hiawatha and Empire Builder Amtrak routes to better connect Downtown to Chicago and the Twin Cities.
- H Expand Amtrak between Milwaukee and Madison**  
Construct Amtrak rail connection between Downtown and Madison.
- I Build the KRM (Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee)**  
Implement commuter rail to better connect Downtown to southern communities within the region.

# Big Idea: Reconnect Places Divided by Human-made Barriers

**A connected Downtown** evolves constantly, including re-examining past decisions and striving to reconnect places that may have been divided by the creation of human-made barriers. The creation of the Riverwalk and the removal of the Park East Freeway show the transformative potential that comes from reconnecting people to the city’s waterways and for reimagining how land devoted to transportation infrastructure may be repurposed for people, jobs, homes, and open space.

These priority projects listed below would create new connections between Downtown and the lakefront, remove barriers between Downtown and the Historic Third Ward, bridge a divide to the Hillside neighborhood, and better connect Downtown to the Near West Side.

## Catalytic Project

### A I-794 Corridor & Clybourn Street

The I-794 Lake Interchange cuts through the heart of Downtown Milwaukee and serves as a barrier between the East Town neighborhood, the Historic Third Ward, and the Lakefront – three of the region’s most desirable areas. The location and design of this freeway spur is in conflict with the overarching goal of a Connected Downtown and should be reimagined.

Connecting MKE calls for exploring the eventual removal of the I-794 Lake Interchange and replacing it with a traditional connected grid of comfortable multi-modal streets, public spaces, and high-density mixed-use development.

The State of Wisconsin is currently undertaking efforts to study alternatives for this segment of I-794. The alternative that is selected through that ongoing process should be the one that best advances overall Connecting MKE goals, including safety and connectivity for all users.

If full removal is not feasible via this current project, any interim alternative should prioritize modernization of the infrastructure to reduce the footprint, activation of the public spaces and streets under the bridges, improvements to the ramp connections, and increased safety for pedestrian crossings.

A redevelopment plan should be created for any new development parcels and public spaces resulting from changes to I-794 to ensure that future development advances the goals of the Downtown Plan and is carried out in a strategic and coordinated manner.





- ▲ Conceptual rendering of an improved MacArthur Square with new development and an extended street grid at the existing Milwaukee Public Museum Site. Source: TKWA & team

- ▲ Conceptual rendering of the Lakefront Gateway Plaza. Priorities include connecting Downtown to the lakefront, including a pedestrian bridge that crosses Lincoln Memorial Drive. Source: GRAEF

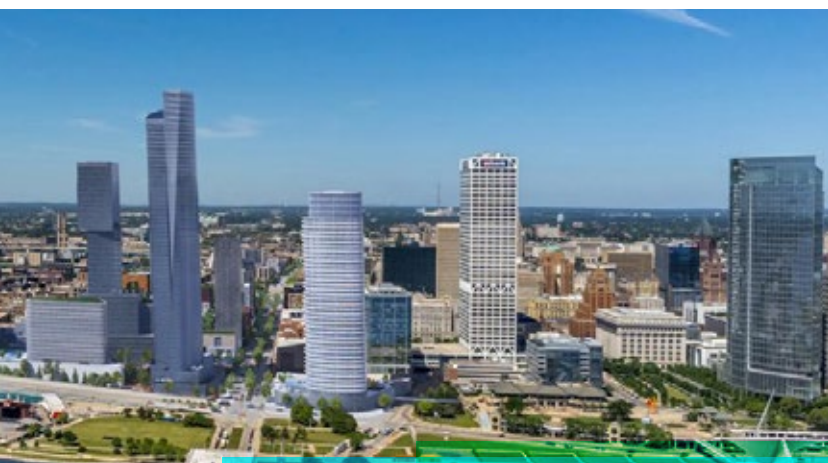
## Additional Priority Projects

- B Connect Hillside & the Brewery District**  
Construct a signature pedestrian bridge across Fond du Lac Avenue from the Hillside Neighborhood to the Brewery District.

- C Connect to Lake Michigan**  
Improve connections to the lakefront, including improved pedestrian crossings at Lincoln Memorial Drive, a pedestrian bridge connection to the proposed Lakefront Gateway Plaza, and updates to the Museum Center Park Parking Structure to reduce barriers between downtown and the lakefront.

- D Connect to MacArthur Square**  
Extend the street grid into the area north of W. Wells Street and west of N. 6th Street. Provide ADA compliant pedestrian access near the terminus of Kilbourn Avenue between James Lovell and 6th Street. Consider a high quality public space to bridge the 6th and Kilbourn ramps and transition the public realm up to MacArthur Square.

- E Connect to the Near West Side & Bridge I-43**  
Improve connections to Marquette University and the Near West Side by improving pedestrian experience crossing I-43. Consider a freeway cap between Wells Street and Wisconsin Avenue and between W. Highland Avenue and W. Winnebago Street.



- ◀ Conceptual rendering of new development facilitated by the removal of the I-794 Lake Interchange. Source: Taylor Korslin



# Streets & Public Space

**Goal:** Invest in the public realm by improving streets, parks, and other public spaces in ways that encourage a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient MKE.

## Background

Downtown Milwaukee is experienced through its public spaces. Downtown's streets, parks and other public spaces shape the city's image and create the framework for urban life to occur.

Milwaukee has lagged behind other similar cities in redesigning and rebuilding its public realm in a way that promotes safe and memorable experiences, builds resilience, and connects people to the city and to each other. High quality public spaces are critical to creating a walkable and vibrant Downtown.

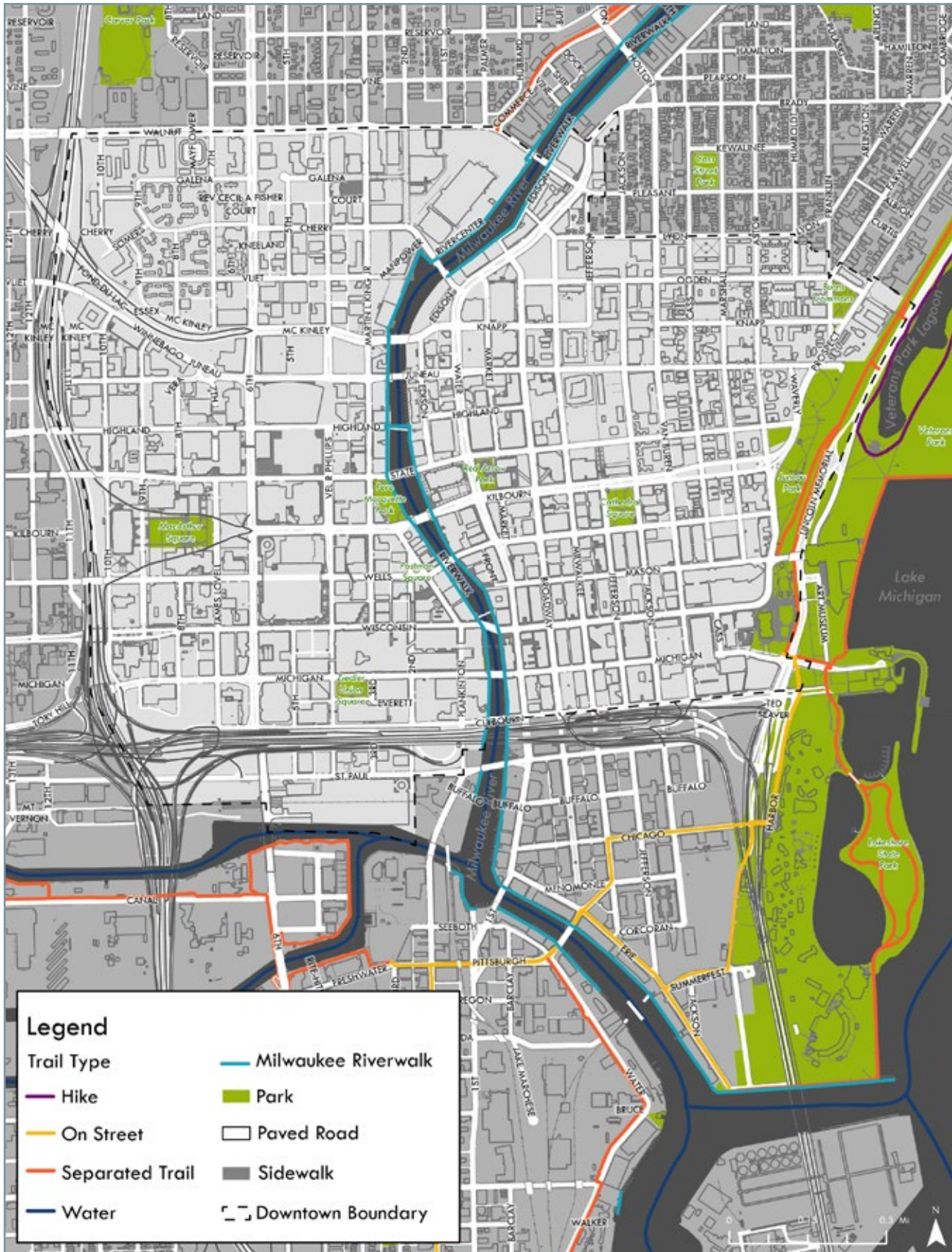
The following recommendations seek to facilitate investment in the public realm by improving streets, parks, and other public spaces in ways that create a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient MKE. In addition, this chapter includes specific project proposals organized around the big ideas of redesigning streets as public spaces and investing in our parks and gathering spaces.

These project ideas are based on public input received throughout the planning process and are intended to serve as a basis for future engagement and analysis of potential alternatives.

## What We've Heard From You

- Create more spaces that feel welcoming and safe for all
- Redesign streets as welcoming and active public spaces
- Make downtown more inviting and safe to increase people walking around
- Create more spaces for families
- Provide more opportunities for social gathering
- Increase green infrastructure and multimodal transportation
- Prioritize public health and safety for pedestrians
- Increase and broaden the appeal of activation & programming in downtown public spaces
- Create more fun spaces without obligation (not having to spend money)
- Public restrooms access
- Continue to build on wayfinding signage throughout downtown
- Improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and lakefront
- Provide free Wi-Fi in public spaces
- Continue to make spaces accessible for all

# Streets & Public Spaces in Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods





## Recommendation 32

### Design streets as public spaces.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Encourage well-organized streetscapes that successfully integrate paving patterns, curb extensions, tree planting, pedestrian lighting, bike parking, street furniture, transit waiting areas, and on-street parking and loading.
- B** Maximize the amount of space dedicated to pedestrians as a proportion of the overall right-of-way, and allow for sidewalk extensions into the curb lane where appropriate.
- C** Encourage businesses to expand their operations into the public way through street furniture, public art, sidewalk cafes, outdoor displays, parklets, and customized streetscape elements.
- D** Identify street segments for “enhanced pedestrian design” to enhance the experience of Downtown districts.
- E** Reinvigorate alleyways into multi-use, vibrant public spaces that serve as both functional and inviting spaces for pedestrians through public art, lighting, and programming enhancements.



## Recommendation 33

### Invest in our parks, and expand efforts to activate and manage key public spaces.

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Create a “public space management organization” and identify sustainable funding opportunities for the management and activation of public spaces. Collaborate with Milwaukee Downtown, Inc. to explore options for creating such an organization.
- B** Develop a long-term vision for the improvement of parks and public spaces throughout Downtown. Identify capital projects that advance individual park plans, and work to secure funding for such improvements.
- C** Support neighborhood efforts to organize and strengthen “friends-of-the-parks” groups to advocate for improvements to parks.
- D** Leverage new development to provide funding for park improvements.
- E** Encourage private sector and philanthropic support for enhancements to parks and public spaces, and consider the potential benefits of allowing advertising and/or naming rights within the public realm.
- F** Promote commercial uses in the parks, and add food and beverage service to activate parks and provide funding.
- G** Add public restrooms to the parks, and develop a strategy for maintenance of restrooms.
- H** Support and encourage a variety of activities in public spaces including festivals, concerts, farmers markets, and other experiences.

## Recommendation 34

**Provide the amenities needed to support enjoyment of the public realm, and ensure that streets and public spaces are welcoming and accessible to all.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Ensure that all streets and public spaces are accessible to persons with disabilities, and consider all types of users when designing improvements to the public realm. Focus on equitable urban design when considering changes to public spaces.
- B** Provide accessible public restrooms in various locations Downtown, preferably in parks - with at least one public restroom on each side of the Milwaukee River.
- C** Introduce or expand food and beverage offerings in parks and public spaces – including beer gardens and small retail/restaurant kiosks.
- D** Provide free Wi-Fi in parks and other public spaces.
- E** Provide a variety of seating options within the public realm.
- F** Provide additional playgrounds within Downtown and integrate playscapes and small opportunities for play into the design of the public realm.
- G** Continue to improve way-finding signage throughout downtown, especially in areas that attract many visitors. Integrate accessibility considerations into wayfinding signage.
- H** Identify additional locations for dog runs in public spaces and consider the needs of people with pets when designing streets and public spaces.
- I** Increase the presence of waste receptacles – including landfill, recycling and compost.
- J** Include water features in downtown public spaces to highlight Milwaukee as a “water-centric city”.
- K** Provide adequate places within the public realm for organized protest, and ensure people are able to voice their beliefs in a safe and engaging manner.
- L** Ensure a robust and inclusive public engagement process whenever changes are proposed to streets and public spaces.



### Recommendation 35

**Increase the tree canopy Downtown, and encourage sustainable landscape design within the public realm.**

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Include space for extensive tree planting within the public way whenever a street is reconstructed. Utilize tree box outs, terraces, and boulevards to increase the number of planting locations.
- B** Consider the impacts to existing and potential street trees when planning multimodal improvements, and ensure the public is aware of the trade-offs between tree coverage and mobility.
- C** Identify tree planting locations throughout Downtown and work to expedite the work needed to increase the tree canopy
- D** Address the problem of hollow walks, and utilize medians and curb extensions to create alternate tree planting locations.
- E** Increase the presence of green infrastructure throughout downtown.

### Recommendation 36

**Foster an authentic “sense of place” within Downtown districts, and implement creative placemaking strategies to activate Downtown streets and public spaces.**

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Create more places for people of different backgrounds and cultures to meet and break down racial, economic, accessibility, and other social barriers.

### Recommendation 37

**Enhance connectivity between downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods that are physically separated by highways, high volume surface streets, and other human-made or natural barriers.**

#### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Work with applicable stakeholder groups to identify key corridors and intersections for streetscape improvements, public art, enhanced lighting features and other interventions that add public amenities and promote walkability and connectivity to overcome real and perceived barriers created by road infrastructure.
- B** As funding opportunities come available through nearby development investments or by other mechanisms, implement the preferred strategies to enhance connectivity between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.



# Big Idea: Redesign Streets as Public Spaces

A **connected Downtown** is safe, fun, and easy to navigate for all. Public input throughout the planning process has been resounding that residents and visitors want to see changes to Downtown streets to make them safer and more enjoyable for people to walk Downtown and want to see Downtown streets redesigned and repurposed as vibrant and social public spaces.

Streets are the most important and abundant public spaces in Downtown Milwaukee, and the design of Downtown streets is a critical factor in the quality and identity of Downtown places. In addition to providing for movement and access, Downtown streets serve as the primary places for public life.

Well-designed streets can also serve as an important economic development tool, supporting higher property values and increased revenue for adjacent businesses.

The recommended projects provide both transformational and tactical opportunities to create new and improved spaces for outdoor strolling, dining, socializing, and gathering Downtown, while also advancing City goals to reduce speeding and create safer, pedestrian friendly streets. Implementing these projects will reinforce the other Big Ideas of the Plan, linking public improvements with private developments to create a network of captivating and engaging public spaces throughout Downtown.

Each project requires additional public input to determine the most appropriate improvements, and a thorough design study to determine the feasibility and potential impact of various design solutions.

A high-quality public realm is important throughout Downtown, and omission of a particular area does not indicate that improvements are not needed or desired.

► Conceptual rendering of the Water Street Entertainment District. Source: TKWA & team



## Catalytic Project

### A Water Street Entertainment District

Transform the public realm within the Water Street entertainment district with expanded sidewalk areas, improved lighting, green infrastructure, and signature streetscaping.

A redesigned North Water Street could reduce the number of motor-vehicle lanes and add safety improvements for transit riders and people walking and on bicycles. The added sidewalk space would provide an improved experience for all users and visitors to this area. Street improvements will also help spur development along the Water Street corridor, which includes a number of priority redevelopment sites with the potential to add significant new development.

This catalytic project would make Red Arrow Park more accessible, better connect pedestrians to a variety of destinations including the Riverwalk, City Hall Square, the North End neighborhood, and Wisconsin Avenue, and support the Water Street Entertainment District.





## Additional Priority Projects

### B City Hall Square

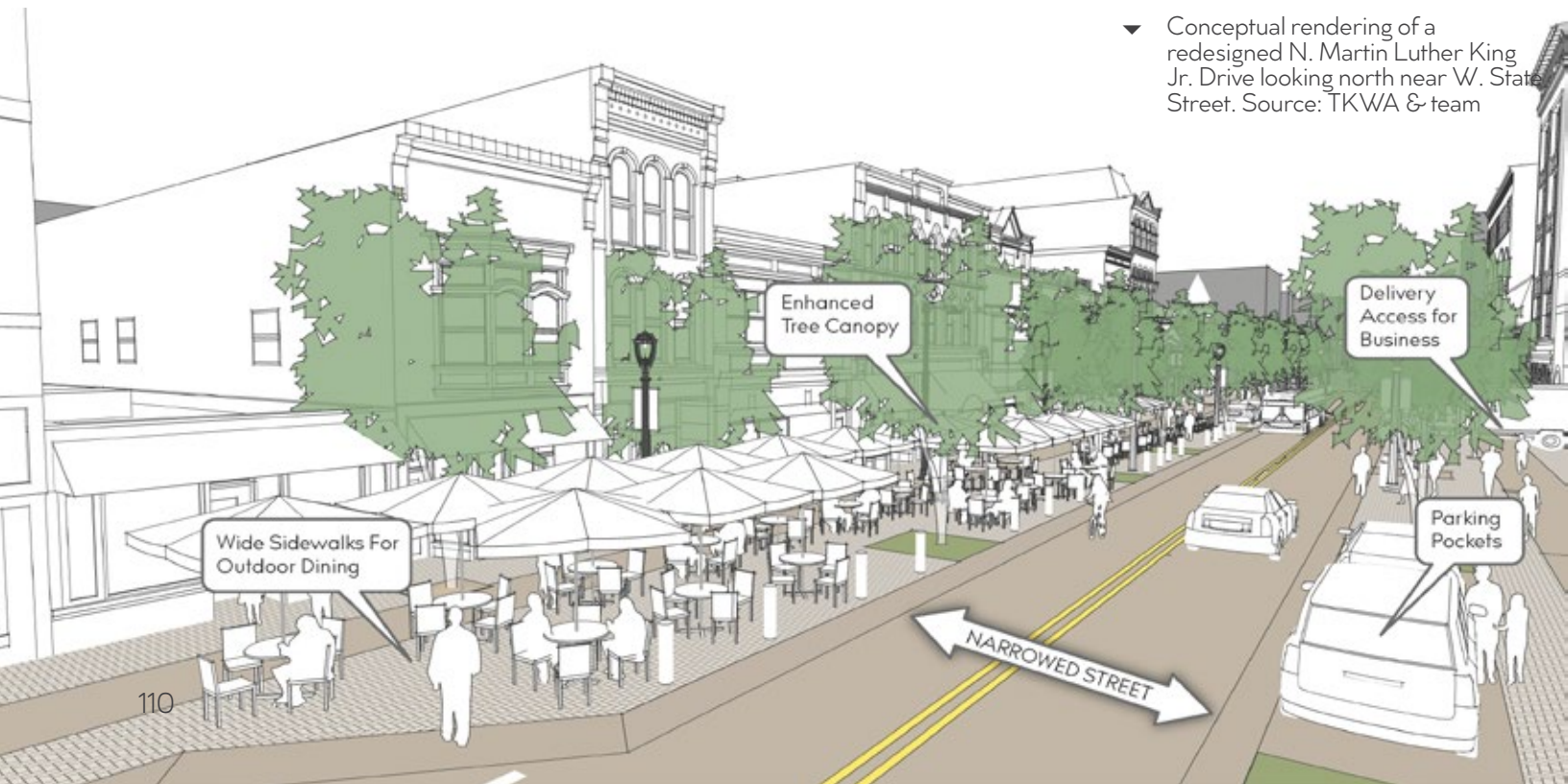
Reclaim pedestrian space near Water, Wells, and Market streets by narrowing roadways, expanding sidewalk zones and creating signature gathering spaces.

### C King Drive

Implement enhanced streetscaping along King Drive to support active sidewalks throughout the Old World Third Street Entertainment District and to connect Downtown with the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District.

▲ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned public realm and new development near N. Water, N. Market, and E. Wells Streets looking north. Source: TKWA & team.

▼ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive looking north near W. State Street. Source: TKWA & team





### D Jefferson Street

Create a pedestrian priority street to maximize pedestrian space between Wisconsin Avenue and Cathedral Square.

▲ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned N. Jefferson Street looking north near E. Wells Street & Cathedral Square Park. Source: TKWA & team.

### E Wisconsin Avenue

Improve streetscaping and pedestrian activation along Wisconsin Avenue to reinforce the street as Wisconsin's main street.

### F Vel R. Phillips Avenue

Design Vel R. Phillips Avenue with new streetscaping and public spaces that reinforce the connection from Vel R. Phillips plaza to the Deer District.



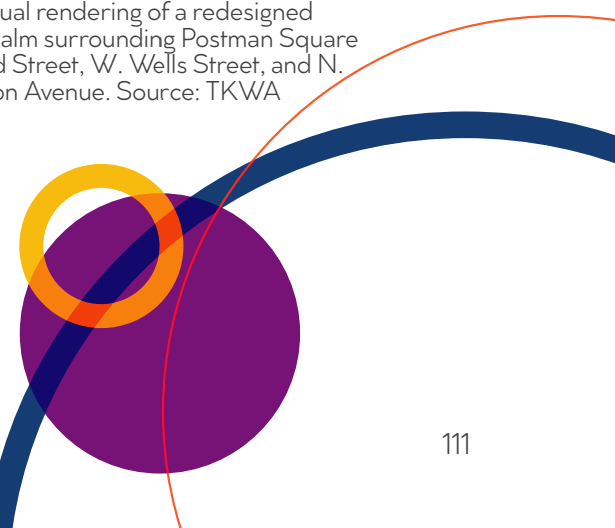
### G Postman Square

Continue to improve streets around the triangle space at N. 2nd Street, W. Wells Street, and N. Plankinton Avenue. Consider a narrow curbless shared street or pedestrian mall on N 2nd between Wells and Plankinton.

▲ Conceptual rendering of a redesigned public realm surrounding Postman Square at N. 2nd Street, W. Wells Street, and N. Plankinton Avenue. Source: TKWA

### H Highland Avenue Stub

Improve the section of Highland Avenue between King Drive and the Riverwalk as an active pedestrian plaza space.



# Big Idea: Invest in Parks & Gathering Spaces

**A connected Downtown** has places for people to gather, celebrate, protest, and reflect. Downtown Milwaukee has a network of existing parks that can serve this purpose and the projects identified below take public input received during the planning process to recommend improvements to existing parks and gathering spaces to achieve this vision of world-class public spaces that bring together residents, workers, and visitors in Downtown.

These recommendations would add programming and amenities to Downtown parks and create improved destinations for Milwaukeeans of all ages, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Projects in this section also highlight the opportunities to grow the network of Downtown public spaces by adding new parks and gathering spaces at strategic locations within Downtown, while recognizing the need to identify a sustainable mechanism to bring increased programming, maintenance, and improvements to Downtown Parks in a manner that does not divert resources from the rest of the city.

## Catalytic Projects

### **A** Place Management Organization for Parks & Public Spaces

Create a “place management organization,” and identify sustainable funding opportunities for the management and activation of public spaces. Collaborate with Milwaukee Downtown, Inc. to explore options for creating such an organization.

Milwaukee is not alone when it comes addressing the fiscal challenges for the local park systems. Cities across the country are turning to innovative funding and management structures to support the construction, maintenance, and programming of their downtown public parks, including:

- Creating special tax districts, such as a neighborhood improvement district;
- Establishing public-private partnerships, such as foundations, alliances, “friends of” groups, and conservancies;

- Fostering revenue-generating activities in the park, such as concessions, food kiosks, and rentals;
- Providing corporate sponsorships and naming rights for various elements in the park; and
- Park dedication fees and/or development impact fees for new development.

After initial upfront investments are made in parks, the most successful urban parks remain active with an abundance of free activities available simultaneously, and in doing so, generate revenue that support ongoing maintenance and operations. Successful parks that practice this cyclical revenue model include Bryant Park, Greeley Square Park, and Harold Square in New York City, Campus Martius Park in Detroit, and Dilworth Park in Center City in Philadelphia.





- ▲ Conceptual rendering of the Lakefront Gateway Plaza. Priorities include connecting Downtown to the lakefront, including a pedestrian bridge that crosses Lincoln Memorial Drive. Source: GRAEF

## B Lakefront Gateway & Connections

Build the proposed Lakefront Gateway Plaza in the area bound by Lincoln Memorial Drive, Art Museum Drive, Michigan Street, and Clybourn Street. The Plaza should include pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown and the Lakefront.

In addition to the plaza itself, efforts to better connect Downtown to the Lakefront should remain a priority. This includes several supporting projects found in other chapters including pedestrian safety improvements along and across Lincoln Memorial Drive, enhanced bike accommodations, and improvements to Museum Center Park.

In 2015, a national design competition was held with the vision of creating a world-class public space to anchor Milwaukee's Downtown Lakefront. The winning design team proposed a dynamic free flowing design featuring a pedestrian bridge over Lincoln Memorial Drive, a water feature, and a commercial space to help activate the plaza.

While the design was met with great enthusiasm, there has been limited progress on securing funding for the project. This plan reaffirms the importance of this public space and the need to continue to look for funding solutions to build the plaza.



- ▲ Conceptual rendering of Pere Marquette Park at the RiverWalk highlighting a vision of new food and beverage service. Source: TKWA & team

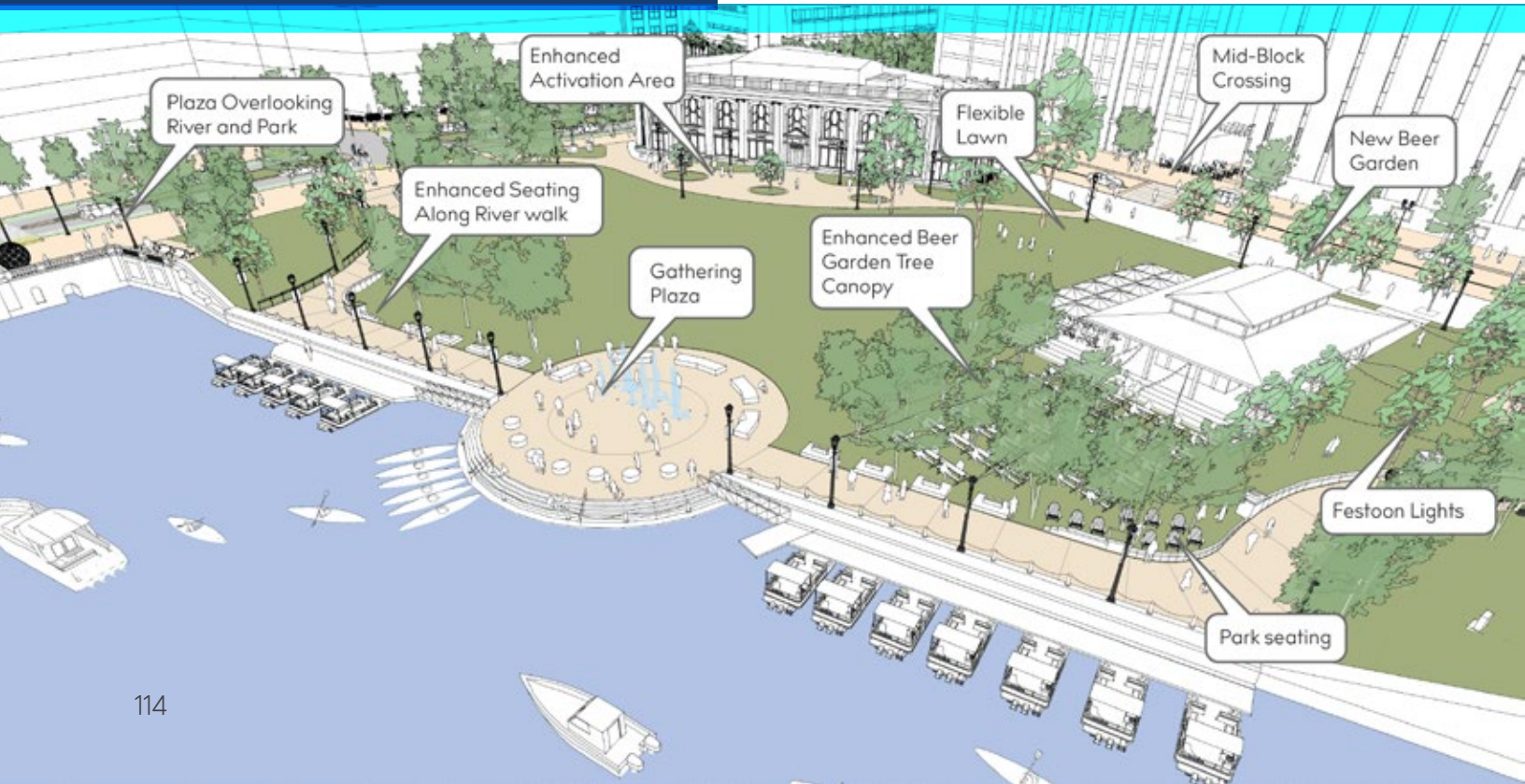


- ▼ Conceptual rendering of Pere Marquette Park. Source: TKWA & team

## Additional Priority Projects

### C Pere Marquette Park

Improve Pere Marquette Park as an active public space with an improved Riverwalk, play areas, public restrooms and food and beverage service. Look for opportunities to leverage the existing Milwaukee County Historical Society facilities and operations to increase regular activation.





Conceptual rendering of Cathedral Square from Kilbourn Avenue, Source: TKWA & team, Friends of Cathedral Square

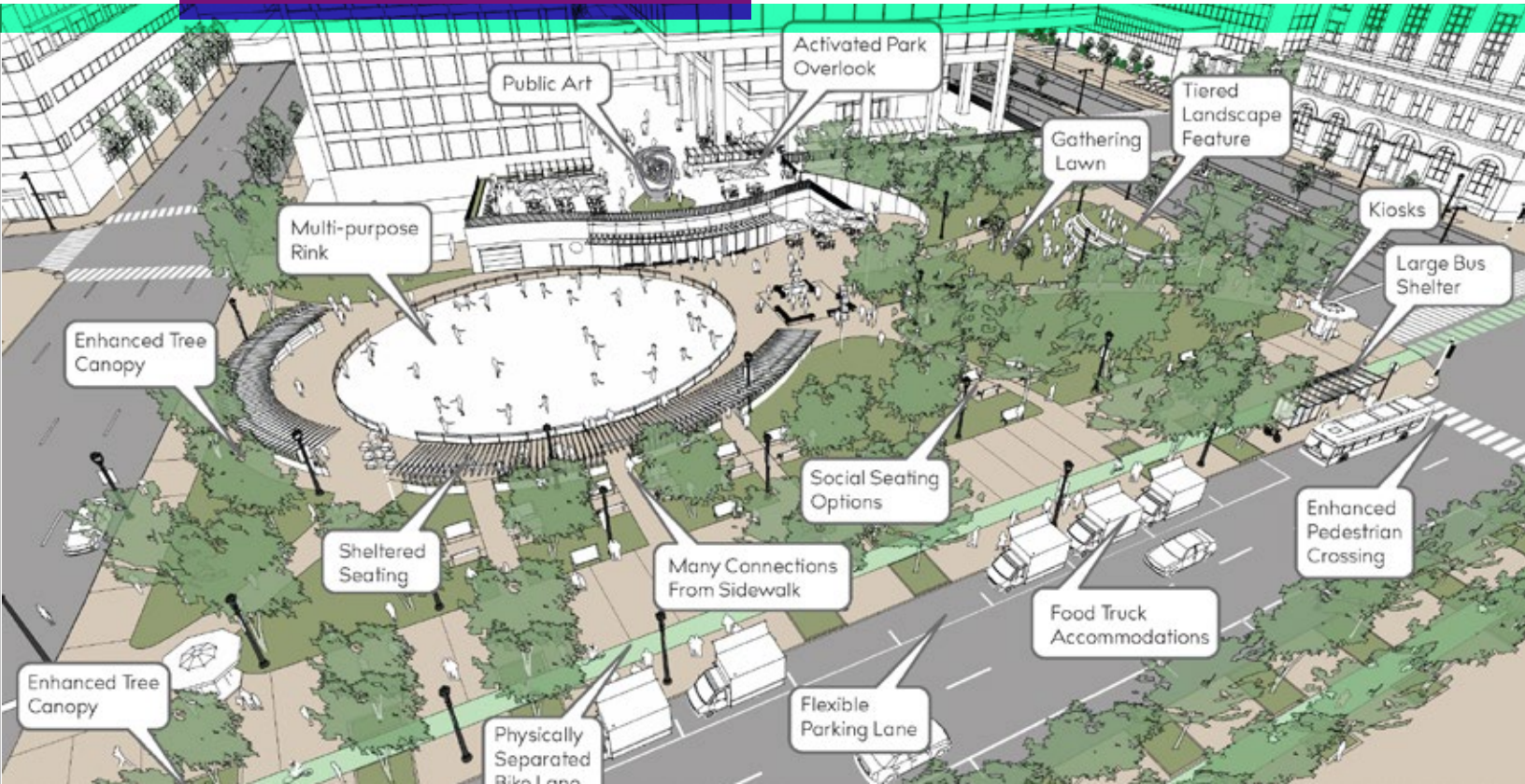
## D Cathedral Square

Improve Cathedral Square as an active gathering place with regular events and enhanced amenities including a permanent stage, a water feature, public restrooms and food and beverage service.

## E Red Arrow Park

Improve Red Arrow Park as an active public space with year-round programming, improved park edges more seating, places for protests and performances, and a large sculpture on the upper terrace.

Conceptual rendering of Red Arrow Park. Source: TKWA & team



### F Zeidler Union Square

Leverage existing partnerships and surrounding investments to program, improve and maintain amenities at Zeidler Union Square and strengthen pedestrian and biking connections to Wisconsin Avenue and the Station District.

### G Juneau Park

Continue to improve and program Juneau Park, and enhance the physical and visual connection to Lake Michigan

### H MacArthur Square

Improve MacArthur Square by redesigning the roof deck in a way that allows for regular programming and builds new connections to the space.

### I Burns Commons

Activate Burns Commons with regular programming and consider creating an active gathering space adjacent to the streetcar station.

### J Museum Center Park

Develop a long-term vision for the future of Museum Center Park (former O'Donnell Park) to include high-quality public spaces, improved pedestrian connections to the lakefront, and new development that adds density and activity to the area.

### K Schlitz Park Riverwalk

Improve the water's edge at Schlitz park by replacing surface parking with new active public spaces and development.



Conceptual rendering of an improved MacArthur Square looking southwest. Source: TKWA & team



▲ Rendering of the proposed Downtown Dog Park underneath I-794. Source: GRAEF

### L Downtown Dog Park

Construct Downtown’s first public dog park amenity and Riverwalk connections along the west of the Milwaukee River between Clybourn Street and St. Paul Avenue.

### M Vel R. Phillips Plaza

Build the proposed Vel R. Phillips Plaza, at the corner of Vel R. Phillips and Wisconsin Avenues, as an active public plaza with connections to the Streetcar and Wisconsin Avenue bus service.



▲ Conceptual rendering of the proposed Vel Phillips Plaza on W. Wisconsin Avenue. Source: Saiki Design



# Land Use & Development

**Goal:** Create more opportunities for public and private investment in the built environment.

## Background

MKE was built by Milwaukeeans. The physical characteristics that make Downtown vibrant and walkable are the product of decisions made by many people over time about where to live, work and play, what to improve or destroy, and how to use the spaces we claim. Walkable, vibrant, and diverse places are most likely to occur when more people have more opportunities to shape and activate more spaces.

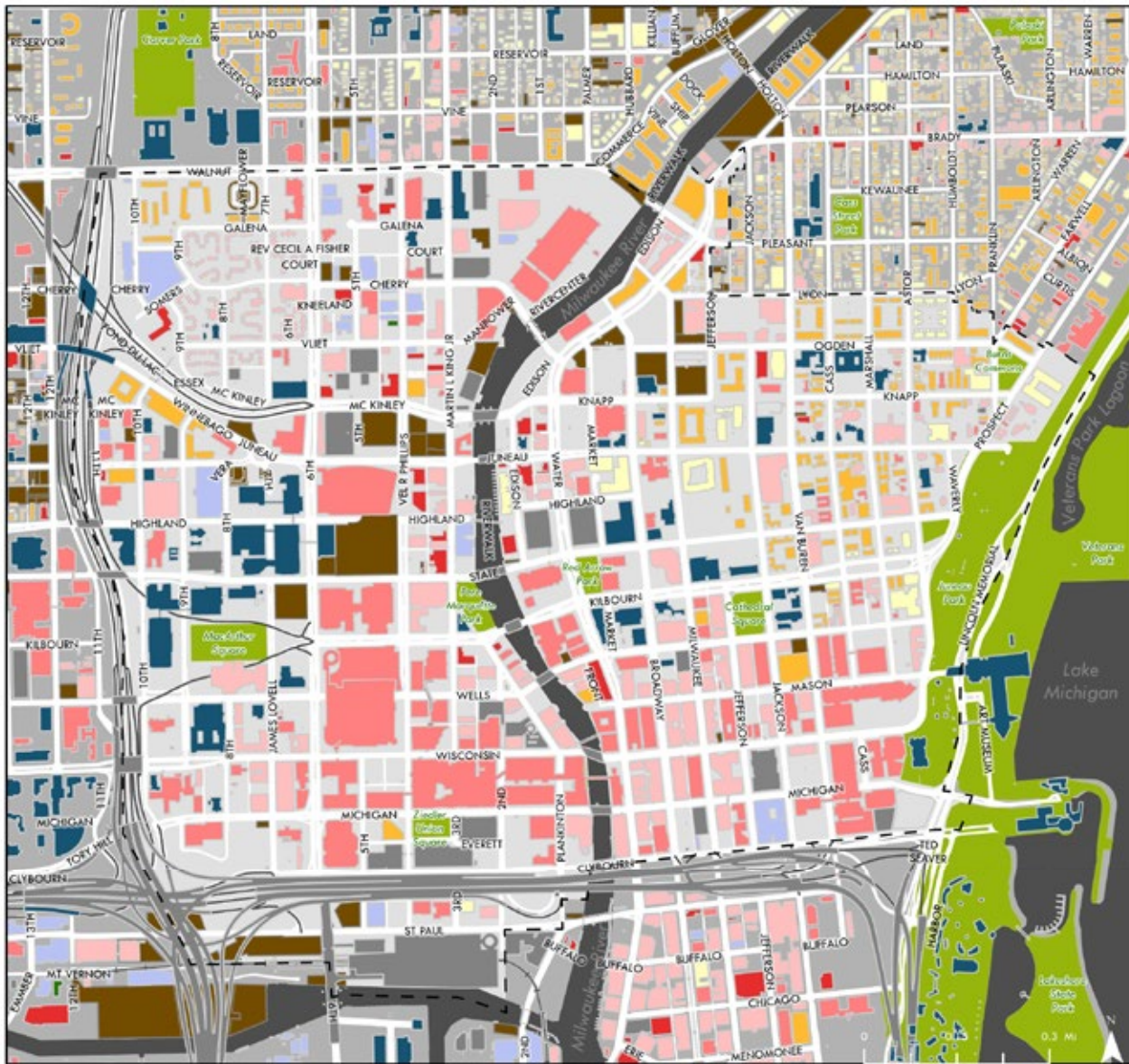
Downtown has over 100 acres of land susceptible to redevelopment, including both public and private land. The continued growth and development of Downtown Milwaukee will help to bolster our economy, activate our streets and public spaces, and generate revenue for infrastructure and public services city-wide. Connecting MKE envisions new development on underutilized land throughout downtown, and supports policies that add to the density and diversity of land uses and building types.

The following recommendations seek to create more opportunities for public and private investment in the built environment. In addition, this chapter includes specific priority development areas and sites under the big idea of growing Downtown.

## What We've Heard From You

- Preference for smaller parcels and pedestrian oriented buildings with a diverse mix of activities
- More vibrancy throughout Downtown
- Better connections and walkability
- Redevelop parking lots and other underutilized land
- More active spaces for people
- More unique architecture and ground floor spaces

# Current Land Use in Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods

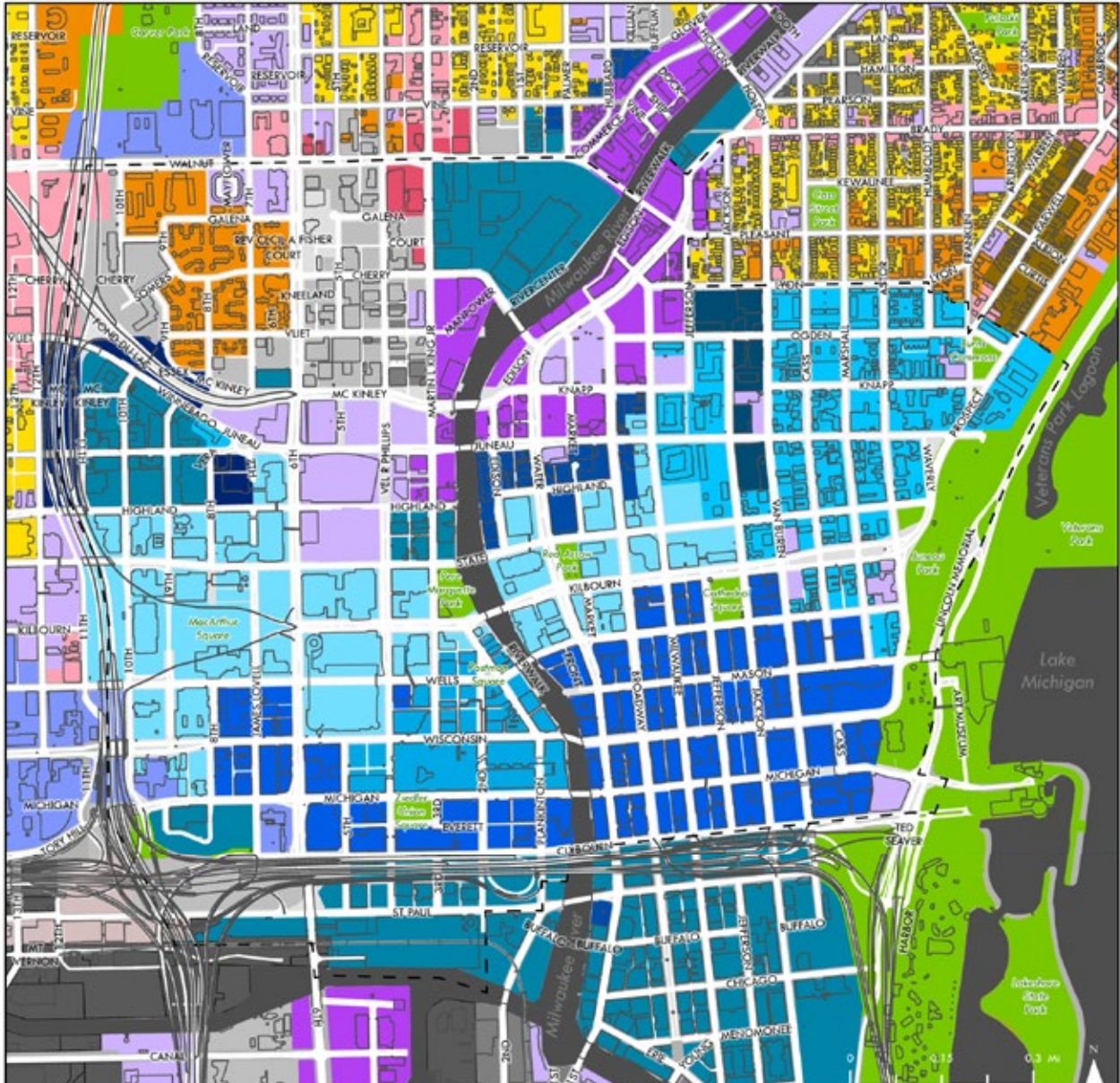


## Land Use Category

- Residential: Single-Family
- Residential: Two-Family
- Residential: Multi-Family
- Mixed Use: Commercial and Residential
- Commercial: Services
- Commercial: Retail and Wholesale Trade
- Manufacturing
- Public and Institutional
- Transportation and Utilities
- Public Park
- Vacant Lot
- Downtown Boundary



# Zoning Districts in Downtown & Adjacent Neighborhoods



**Zoning Category**

 Residential - Single-Family	 Central Business District - Residential and Specialty Use	 Industrial - Heavy
 Residential - Two-Family	 Central Business District - Warehousing and Light Manufacturing	 Special - Parks
 Residential - Multi-Family	 Commercial - Neighborhood Shopping	 Special - Institutional
 Residential - Residence and Office	 Commercial - Local Business	 Special - Planned Development
 Central Business District - Civic Activity	 Commercial - Commercial Service	 Special - Redevelopment District
 Central Business District - High-Density Residential	 Commercial - Regional Business	 Downtown Boundary
 Central Business District - Major Retail	 Industrial - Commercial	
 Central Business District - Mixed Activity	 Industrial - Office	
 Central Business District - Neighborhood Retail	 Industrial - Light	
 Central Business District - Office and Service	 Industrial - Mixed	

## Recommendation 38

**Encourage a diversity of compatible land uses and building types that contribute to cohesive districts and corridors.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Require active uses along the ground floor of buildings fronting active streets.
- B** Encourage a mix of building age type and use, and repurpose old buildings whenever possible.
- C** Support the designation of historic buildings throughout Downtown. Consider further historic preservation study of Westown, Yankee Hill and around the Marquette and Aurora Sinai campuses.
- D** Encourage existing underutilized commercial buildings to be reused for housing.
- E** Assess the use standards in the zoning code and recommend changes to reduce the number of cases referred to the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- F** Encourage more housing, office, retail, and entertainment throughout downtown.
- G** Differentiate commercial and residential areas to inform appropriate land uses and the level of activation required at the ground floor. Larger commercial uses which generate excessive noise at late hours should be limited in predominately residential areas, such as the Yankee Hill neighborhood.
- H** Redevelop surface parking lots to fill gaps in the built environment, and reduce the amount of land used for surface lots.
- I** Encourage residential development in all downtown districts, and rezone areas that currently restrict housing development, including the Haymarket District.

## Recommendation 39

**Encourage buildings to engage the public realm and promote walkability.**

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

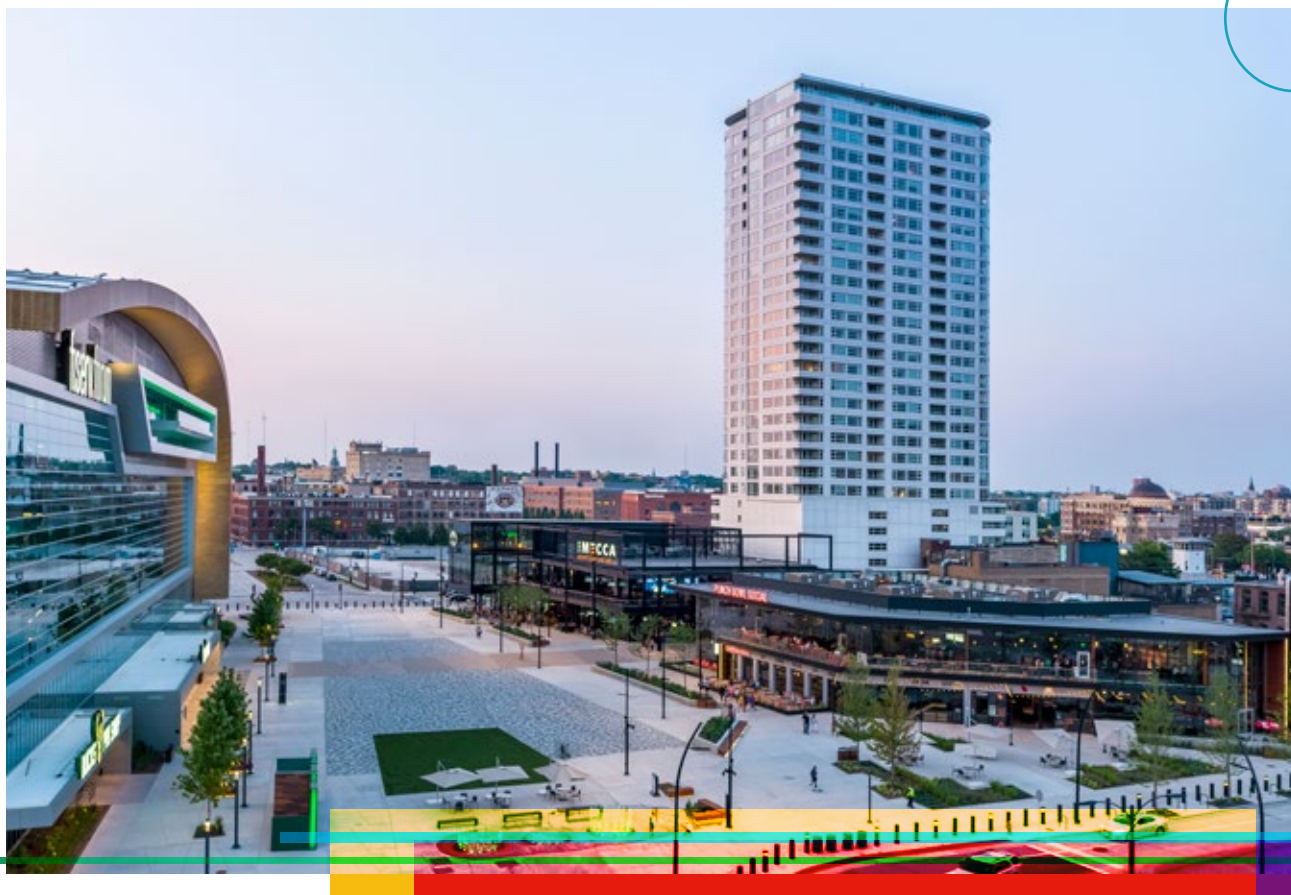
- A** Require buildings within active commercial districts to include large storefront windows and regular pedestrian entries on the ground floor fronting streets and other public spaces, and restrict blank walls along active streets.
- B** Assess glazing standards in the City's zoning code to ensure that regulations are consistent with the City's goals for street activation. Commercial areas within the downtown should have the highest activation requirements.
- C** Locate buildings to define the edges of streets and public spaces.
- D** Assess the need for build-out requirements within downtown, similar to other commercial districts, and maintain the ability for development to have no minimum setbacks.
- E** Ensure that buildings have attractive well-designed facades fronting the public realm.
- F** Prohibit new surface parking lots along streets and public spaces and require new development to mitigate the impact of parking areas on the public realm by lining parking areas with active uses and engaging building facades.
- G** In cases where new or existing surface parking lots may be approved they should be short term approvals. Parking areas should be setback at least 10-feet from the sidewalk, enhanced landscaping, screening should be required between the parking lot and the street, and special features should be included at corners.

## Recommendation 40

Promote high density development and discourage development that is significantly less dense than the surrounding context.

### Supporting Policies & Strategies

- A** Eliminate maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements that limit building density and encourage large building setbacks.
  - B** Increase minimum heights downtown where the surrounding context would support.
  - C** Maintain a policy of no maximum height limits in most of downtown.
  - D** Maintain a policy of no limit on the number of dwelling units.
  - E** Maintain a policy of no parking requirements in most of downtown.
  - F** Identify areas where new development should be at a higher density than the surrounding, older context.
- G** Redevelop surface parking lots for productive uses. The City should utilize a variety of tools to reduce the amount of publicly and privately owned surface parking lots downtown. Existing surface parking lots should be redeveloped to create new jobs, homes, storefronts, and gathering spaces whenever possible. The continued operation of surface parking lots downtown is not consistent with the goals of the Downtown Plan and diminishes the use, value, and enjoyment of nearby areas.



# Big Idea: Grow Downtown

**A connected Downtown** is vibrant day and night, 7 days a week and encourages a wide mix of uses. Milwaukee has a competitive advantage by already having a larger share of residential uses Downtown than many peer cities. Encouraging new housing development at all price points Downtown to complement office, commercial, civic, and entertainment uses will bring new residents to support Downtown businesses and entertainment venues, reinforce efforts to bring improved transit options and public spaces Downtown, and grow the workforce for Downtown businesses.

The development sites listed represent some of the highest potential sites for new private development that will grow the Downtown and could facilitate a mix of uses that will add new homes, jobs, and businesses to Downtown. These priority sites, including surface parking lots and publicly controlled land and buildings, should be prioritized for new high-density, mixed-use development that will grow Downtown. A vibrant and equitable downtown includes housing options for a wide range of residents and a number of the sites listed below are publicly owned, providing additional options to incentivize mixed-income development Downtown.

## Catalytic Projects

### A Water Street Entertainment District: Performing Arts Center Parking Garage

Replace the parking structure for the Marcus Center with new high-density mixed-use development that adds density and vibrancy to the district. Encourage the development of other underutilized sites in the area including surface parking lots along Water Street and the RiverWalk.

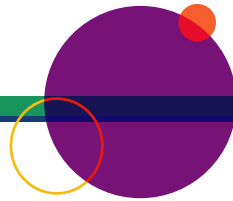
### B MacArthur Square & Library District

Redevelop the existing Milwaukee Public Museum Site with high-density mixed-use development that includes affordable housing and neighborhood supporting commercial uses on the ground floor. Extend the street grid north of Wells Street to connect to MacArthur Square. Support additional infill development on surface parking lots in the area, and the reuse or redevelopment of the State-owned office building at 6th and Wells Streets.

Working with the Milwaukee Public Library Foundation and other partners, support a catalytic renovation of the historic Central Library to reinforce it as a visitor destination, including a state-of-the-art Conference and Event Center, and expand and develop its Business Commons into a full-service co-working/collaboration space.



▲ Conceptual rendering of potential redevelopment at the Marcus Performing Art Center Parking Structure site. Source: TKWA & team.



▼ Conceptual rendering showing potential development at the existing museum site north of W Wells St along with an improved MacArthur Square and new connections to the surrounding street grid. Source: TKWA & team



## Catalytic Projects (continued)

### C Haymarket District

Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized properties throughout the Haymarket district, with an emphasis on high and medium density residential uses. Rezone industrial properties in the area to allow for mixed activity.

Encourage new mixed-use development along King Drive between Juneau and Cherry Streets to create a new walkable commercial node between Bronzeville and the Old World Third Street Entertainment District.

The Haymarket District, north of the Deer District and south of the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District has significant potential for new development. The area is currently underutilized and represents a gap in activity between adjacent areas. Recent and proposed projects like the Fiserv Forum and the Future Museum have led to renewed development interest in the area.

Residential uses are currently prohibited in much of the district, which has generally retained its light industrial zoning classification. To reach its full potential as a unique Downtown neighborhood, the Haymarket area should be rezoned to allow for a mix of uses. This could allow existing businesses to remain while facilitating a gradual transition into a mixed-use neighborhood. Similar approaches have allowed former industrial areas like Walker’s Point and the Historic Third Ward to transition into vibrant places with a diverse mix of activities.

- ▼ Conceptual rendering of new development along N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive near W Vliet Street. Source: TKWA & team.



## Additional Priority Projects: East Side of Downtown

### D Jefferson & Mason

Encourage new high-density development on the surface parking lot at Mason and Jefferson streets, including active uses at the ground level.

### E Convent Hill South

Build the proposed mixed-income high-rise development on the large vacant lot at Jefferson and Knapp streets.

### F East Point/Juneau Station

Encourage the redevelopment of low-density parcels in the Jackson and Van Buren corridor. Rezone the neighborhood shopping corridor, or adopt changes to the C9C zoning district to allow for more density.

### G Yankee Hill

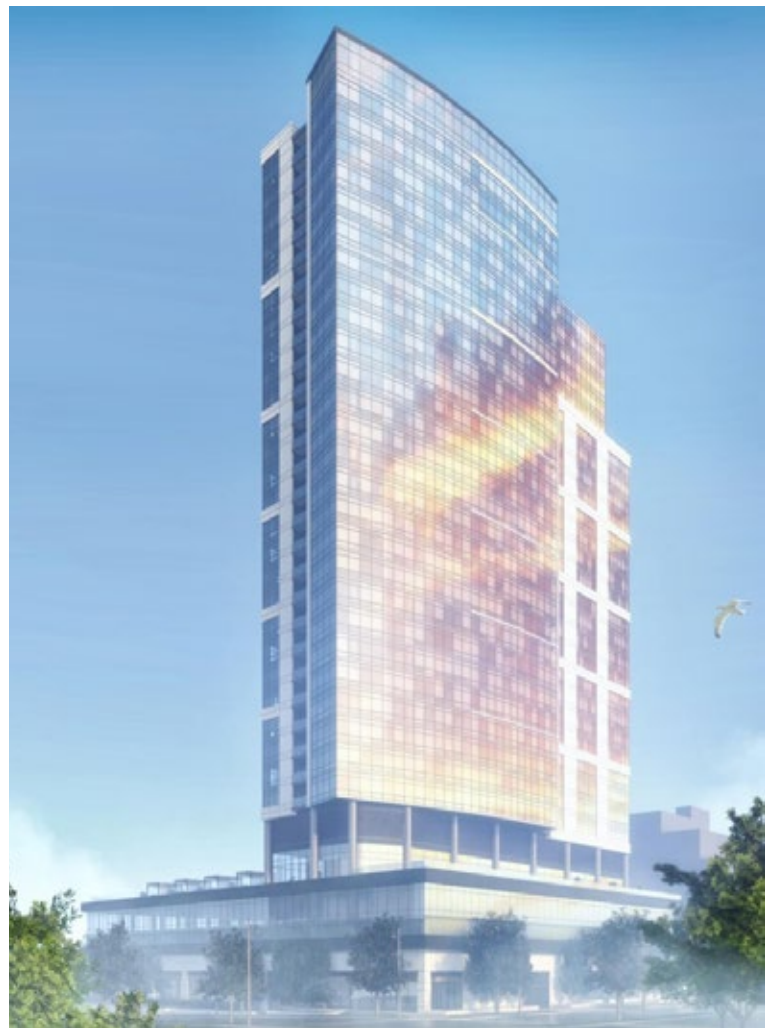
Support context sensitive development in the Yankee Hill neighborhood, and look for opportunities to add new density while preserving the historic character of the area.

### H North End

Encourage the development of remaining vacant and underutilized land in the area.

### I Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE)

Support the continued development of the MSOE campus on institution owned land while strengthening the public realm connections to the larger downtown neighborhood.



▲ Rendering of an approved mixed-income high-rise formerly known as Convent Hill South at Jefferson and Knapp Streets. Source: Korb + Associates Architects

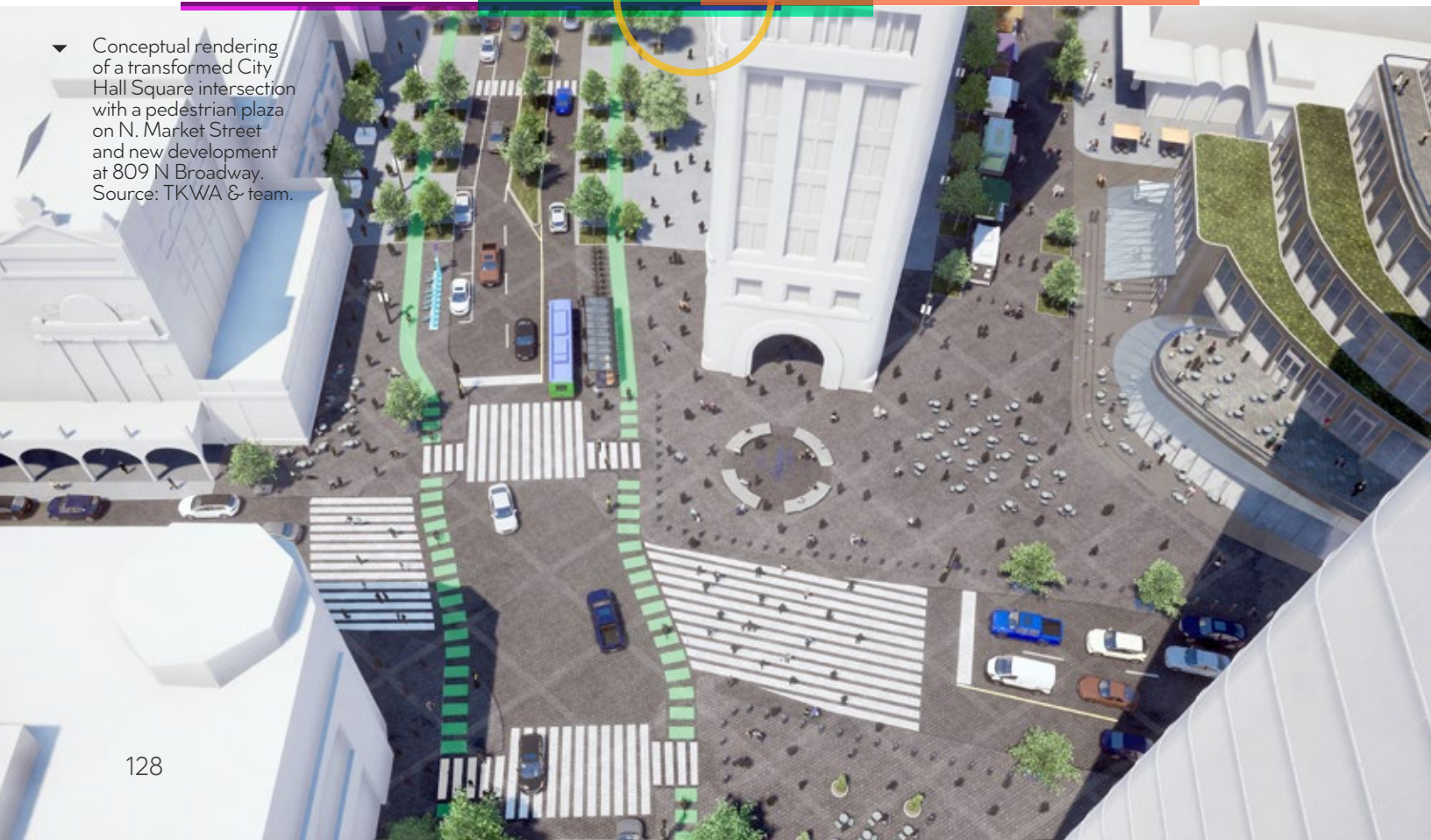
## J City Hall Square

Replace the City-owned office building at Wells Street and Broadway with a new mixed-use transit-oriented development. Conduct a space planning study of the City Hall Complex, and include City office space as needed following the model used for various Milwaukee Public Library branches. Expand the site to include the vacant land at Market and Wells streets, with an active use along Market Street. Further increase density in the area by supporting the reuse of existing buildings in the area including the modern high-rise at Water Street and Mason Street, the iconic Wisconsin Telephone Company building near Broadway and Mason Street, and the office building at 100 East Wisconsin Avenue.



- ▶ Top & bottom: Renderings illustrating development potential on underutilized land north of E. Clybourn Street. Source: UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning 2023 Urban Design Studio

- ▼ Conceptual rendering of a transformed City Hall Square intersection with a pedestrian plaza on N. Market Street and new development at 809 N Broadway. Source: TKWA & team.







▲ Conceptual rendering of new development with improved streetscape at Broadway and Clybourn. Source: TKWA & team

### **K** Northwestern Mutual

Support the continued development of the Northwestern Mutual campus, including underutilized sites along W Wells Street

### **L** East Michigan/Clybourn Corridor

Encourage new high-density, mixed-use development of underutilized land, including surface parking lots and older parking structures in the area between Wisconsin Avenue and the Historic Third Ward.

### **M** I-794 Corridor

Encourage high-density development on the state-owned parcel at Clybourn and Lincoln Memorial, and encourage alternatives for the freeway infrastructure that create new development sites between Clybourn and St. Paul Avenues.

### **N** Museum Center Park

Re-envision Museum Center Park (former O'Donnell Park) and support changes to the property that include high-quality public spaces, improved pedestrian connections to the lakefront, and new development that adds density and activity to the area.



◀ Skyline rendering of the Couture high rise (under construction) and potential new development at 815 E. Clybourn Street. Source: Rinka+ Architects

## Additional Priority Projects: West Side of Downtown

### **O** Vel R. Phillips & Wisconsin

Redevelop the City/Redevelopment Authority “RACM”-owned site at Vel R. Phillips and Wisconsin Avenues with a signature transit-oriented development including active uses fronting the proposed Vel R. Phillips Plaza.

### **P** Hillside Terrace

Support the proposed redevelopment of Hillside Terrace as a new high-density mixed-income neighborhood with significant public space amenities and improved connections to adjacent districts.

### **Q** Wells & Plankinton

Encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots surrounding the triangle known as Postman Square.

### **R** Turner Block

Encourage new development on the surface parking lots adjacent to the iconic Turner Hall.

### **S** Old World Third Entertainment District

Encourage new development on surface parking lots along King Drive, including lots surrounding Pere Marquette Park.

### **T** Schlitz Park

Encourage higher density infill development that is contextually fitting on surface parking and other underutilized areas at Schlitz Park.

### **U** Civic Center & MATC

Support the continued development of the MATC campus. Encourage new development at the surface parking lot on 6th and State, and the adaptive reuse of the Milwaukee County Safety Building. Work to locate a new justice center in the area, potentially immediately south of the Milwaukee Police Department building in MacArthur Square.

### **V** Deer District

Support the planned re-development of the Deer District with high-density mixed-use development.

▼ Conceptual rendering of new development at Vel R. Phillips and Wisconsin Avenues





▲ Rendering of a proposed professional soccer stadium in the Iron District at N. James Lovell and Michigan Streets. Source: Kahler Slater Architects.

## W Station District

Encourage the redevelopment of the central post office site as a high-density mixed use neighborhood with Riverwalk. Encourage development of other underutilized sites in the area including the State-owned parcel at 5th Street and St Paul Avenue.

## X Iron District

Support the proposed development of the Iron District, including the provision of a new professional soccer stadium, concert venue, and affordable housing. Encourage high-density development with active public spaces in the block bound by 6th, James Lovell, Michigan Street, and Clybourn Street.

▼ Rendering of potential development at the Deer District. Source: Eppstein Uhen Architects







# Catalytic Projects



Grow the Downtown population to 40,000 residents by 2040

Add ~15,000 housing units Downtown by 2040  
20% of Units Affordable

Grow Downtown jobs to 100,000 by 2040





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# Implementation

The previous chapters describe a collective vision for the future of Downtown Milwaukee. The recommendations and big ideas outlined in this document are based on input from thousands of Milwaukeeans and seek to invite residents, businesses, and public officials to imagine what's possible. Completion of the plan is just the first step. Making the vision a reality will require the sustained efforts of many stakeholders, including agencies from all levels of government, and dedicated partners in the private and non-profit sectors. The following tables outline many of the key action items identified in the plan along with the corresponding recommendation or big idea, lead agencies, and time frame.

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Planning & Zoning	5, 12, 13, 26, 38	Assess Downtown zoning district use standards (MCO 295-703) and recommend changes to promote use diversity and reduce the number of cases referred to the Board of Zoning Appeals.	DCD	Short
	1, 3, 5, 13, 15, 22, 23, 24, 26, 36, 39, 40	Assess Downtown zoning district design standards (MCO 295-705) and recommend changes to promote active streets and high-density development.	DCD	Short
	1, 38	Rezone industrial parcels in the Haymarket District to allow for residential uses.	DCD	Short
Housing Affordability	2, 25	Continue to develop and refine programs to encourage the development of new affordable housing.	DCD	Ongoing
	6, 25	Continue to monitor displacement indicators, and provide support for residents in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods that may become at risk of displacement.	DCD	Ongoing

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Economic Opportunity	8, 24	Create a Downtown business attraction and expansion coalition to attract new employers to Downtown.	BID21	Ongoing
	9, 25	Identify programs and initiatives to encourage a larger presence of BIPOC owned businesses in Downtown.	Local Chambers of Commerce, BIDs, Commercial Brokers & DCD	Ongoing
	11, 25	Establish events designed to better connect Milwaukee residents, particularly young people of color, with job opportunities in Downtown.	Local Chambers of Commerce, Downtown Businesses & BIDs	Ongoing
	28	Promote the economic development potential along and within walking distance of The Hop Streetcar. Update “The Streetcar Investment Guide.”	BID21, City	Ongoing
Sustainability & Resilience	23	Identify areas within Downtown where green infrastructure should be prioritized, and proactively work to identify potential projects in these areas.	DPW	Ongoing
	22	Develop a benchmark for building performance standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	ECO & All	Short
	22, 23, 25	Implement the City's Green Infrastructure Plan and Climate & Equity Plan.	ECO & Partners	Ongoing
	25	Proactively work to address equity and public safety concerns in Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.	All	Ongoing

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Vibrancy & Activation	12, 15, 25	Develop a retail recruitment plan, including diversely-owned (BIPOC) businesses and include a toolbox of incentives.	BID21 & Commercial Brokers	Ongoing
	14, 25	Engage business owners and other stakeholders to develop strategies for addressing public safety and quality of life concerns in and near active social districts, and continue to explore the potential creation, funding, and location of an “Office of Nightlife & Culture.”	BID21 & Visit Milwaukee	Short
	18, 36	Develop strategies to encourage more public art in Downtown public spaces.	BID21	Ongoing
	19	Develop strategies to encourage more programming and events in Downtown public spaces.	BIDs	Ongoing
Historic Preservation	20, 22, 36, 38	Support the designation of historic buildings throughout Downtown. Consider further historic preservation study of Westtown, Yankee Hill and around the Marquette and Aurora Sinai campuses.	HPC	Medium

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Mobility & Streets	22, 25, 26	Systematically and proactively install pedestrian safety improvements throughout Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.	DPW	Ongoing
	22, 25, 27	Systematically and proactively install or enhance bike facilities throughout Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.	DPW	Ongoing
	23, 26, 35	Increase the tree canopy along Downtown streets.	DPW	Short & Ongoing
	25, 28, 34	Ensure that all transit stations are accessible to people with disabilities.	DPW, MCTS	Short & Ongoing
	25, 26, 34	Ensure that the public way is accessible for persons of all ages and abilities, and implement ADA compliant curb ramps at all crosswalks.	DPW	Short & Ongoing
	5, 27, 36	Extend the Oak Leaf, Hank Aaron, and Beerline trails into the heart of Downtown.	DPW, Milwaukee County	Short & Medium
	22, 28	Implement changes to streets and transit stations that improve the convenience and attractiveness of transit routes.	DPW, MCTS	Short & Ongoing
	22, 28	Expand the Milwaukee Streetcar ("The Hop") to surrounding neighborhoods.	DPW	Medium
	26, 29	Implement traffic calming measures intended to reduce the speed of motor vehicles throughout the Downtown Area.	DPW	Short, Medium, Long
	29	Reduce or eliminate the number of streets with more than one through-lane in each direction.	DPW	Short & Medium
	31	Implement variable price parking for on- and off- street parking facilities.	DPW	Short
	5, 10, 26, 32, 36	Identify street segments for "enhanced pedestrian design" to improve the pedestrian experience of Downtown districts.	DPW, DCD, BID21	Short

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Parks & Gathering Spaces	33	Convene stakeholders to explore the creation of a "place management organization for parks and public spaces" and identify sustainable funding opportunities for Downtown parks.	BID21, MCP	Short
	33	Develop a long-term vision for the improvement of Downtown Parks and identify a variety of capital resources that advance individual park plans.	MCP, BID 21, Downtown stakeholders	Ongoing
	33, 34	Activate Downtown parks with a variety of activities including festivals, concerts, farmers markets, and other experiences.	BID21, Downtown Park partners	Ongoing
	33	Add public restrooms in Downtown parks.	MCP & Partners (TBD)	Ongoing
Neighborhood Connections	37	Work with applicable stakeholders to identify improvements in the public realm that will add connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.	DPW, DCD, BIDs & Neighborhood Partners	Short & Ongoing

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
<b>Improve Streets to Support All Users</b>	<b>B</b>	6th Street Complete Street	DPW	Short
	<b>H</b>	Wells Street	DPW	Short
	<b>K</b>	Walnut Street	DPW	Short
	<b>Q</b>	Van Buren Street	DPW	Short
	<b>A</b>	Water Street Complete Street	DPW	Medium
	<b>C</b>	Kilbourn Avenue	DPW	Medium
	<b>E</b>	Michigan Street	DPW	Medium
	<b>L</b>	McKinley Avenue	DPW	Medium
	<b>M</b>	Highland Avenue	DPW	Medium
	<b>O</b>	King Drive	DPW	Medium
<b>R</b>	Jefferson Street	DPW	Medium	
<b>Expand &amp; Enhance Transit</b>	<b>A</b>	Westown Streetcar Extension (to Deer District)	DPW, FTA	Short
	<b>B</b>	Bronzeville Streetcar Extension	DPW, FTA	Medium
	<b>C</b>	Walker's Point Streetcar Extension	DPW, FTA	Medium
	<b>D</b>	East Side Streetcar Extension	DPW, FTA	Long
	<b>E</b>	Implement changes to streets and transit stations that improve the convenience and attractiveness of local transit routes.	DPW, MCTS	Ongoing
<b>Reconnect Places Divided by Human-made Barriers</b>	<b>A</b>	Rethink 794	WisDOT	Short
	<b>C</b>	Connect to the Lakefront	Various	Medium
	<b>D</b>	Connect to MacArthur Square	DPW, County, MATC, Various	Short & Medium

Category	Corresponding Recommendations	Implementation Item	Lead & Supporting Agencies	Time Frame
Redesign Streets as Public Spaces	A	Water Street Entertainment District	DPW	Medium
	B	City Hall Square streetscape	DPW	Medium
	C	King Drive streetscape	DPW, BID8	Medium
	D	Jefferson Street streetscape	DPW	Short
	E	Wisconsin Avenue Streetscape	DPW, BID21	Long
	F	Vel R. Phillips Avenue streetscape	DPW	Short
	G	Postman Square streetscape	DPW & Partners	Medium
Invest in Parks & Gathering Spaces	A	Public Space Management Organization	County, BID21	Short
	B	Lakefront Gateway & Connections	Multiple Partners	Medium
	C	Pere Marquette Park	County	Medium
	D	Cathedral Square	County	Medium
	E	Red Arrow Park	County	Medium
	H	MacArthur Square	City	Short
	L	Downtown Dog Park	BID21, BID2 + other strategic partners	Short
	M	Vel R. Phillips Plaza	City	Short
Grow Downtown	A	Water Street Performing Arts Center Parking Garage Redevelopment	DCD	Short
	B	Former Milwaukee Public Museum (MacArthur Square)	County	Medium
	B	6th Street & State Street (MacArthur Square)	County	Medium
	B	State Office Building (MacArthur Square)	State	Medium
	C	Haymarket District	Multiple Partners	Medium
	O	Vel R. Phillips & Wisconsin Avenue	DCD	Short
	E	Convent Hill South	HACM	Medium
	L	815 E. Clybourn Street (Lakefront Gateway)	State	Medium
	W	5th Street & St. Paul Avenue (Station District)	State	Medium
	J	809 Broadway (City Hall Square)	DCD	Long
	P	Hillside Terrace	HACM	Long



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DOWNTOWN PLAN 2040