Downtown

A Plan for the Area

Chapter Three - Land Use Strategies and Policies
Looking southwest from East Mason St. and North Jefferson St.
Chapter 3
Land Use Strategies and Policies

Introduction

Land use strategies and objectives incorporate four prominent themes that arose repeatedly during the Downtown planning process: A Distinct Center; Sense of Place; Connectivity; and Density. Downtown land use policies will revolve around these main ideas. Specifically, focus on strengthening the center of Downtown and on key connections to and from the center of Downtown. Place an emphasis on Downtown’s unique identity and places; and, increase the residential and employment density throughout the entire Downtown.

Downtown land use policies and strategies will be based upon creating:

1. A Distinct Downtown Center
2. A Sense of Place
3. A Connected Downtown
4. Density and Intensity

Woven throughout these themes are additional embedded goals. Driving demand generators and new investment to key locations and corridors will help focus efforts of the plan. Recommendations for updating the regulatory framework are key to the success of these concepts. Allowing modernity to coexist with the historical context of Downtown will give Downtown a richer texture. Expanding social, economic and environmentally sustainable practices throughout Downtown will allow the area to flourish in the years to come.
The Downtown Center is the area recognizable as a “downtown”, with tall, closely set buildings and older, traditional buildings located along front property lines adjacent to sidewalks. It is an area where larger setbacks and excessive unplanned open space seem out of character. The Center also contains the highest number of historic and visually identifiable iconic buildings.

Historically, Downtown had a more compact center than it does today. Over the past 50 years changing land use patterns, declining industries, freeway construction, and gradual redevelopment of adjacent areas has allowed Downtown to expand but it has also lessened the density of the traditional downtown core.

Today’s “downtown” is much larger in land area due to successful re-development efforts but this has also “watered-down” the traditional downtown core. A significant amount of stakeholder input has strongly recommended a renewed focus on the traditional core rippling outwards with strong connections to and from active adjacent districts.

In addition to the traditional center, utilizing the Milwaukee River corridor continues to be key. Relating redevelopment efforts to Wisconsin Avenue, whether they are projects directly on Wisconsin, or strong connections “TO” Wisconsin Avenue, are priorities. Improvements to the center of Downtown have the ability to create an outward “ripple effect”, helping to make all the surrounding districts healthier.
A Distinct Downtown Center

Source: Downtown BID 21 Market Study

Impeccable historic buildings create a well defined street wall.

North Jefferson St. between East Mason St. and East Wisconsin Ave. looking south. Impeccable historic buildings create a well defined street wall.

Source: Downtown BID 21 Market Study
Vision: The heart of downtown. Urban, bustling, and busy, downtown Milwaukee contains a distinct and definable downtown core that contains a vibrant and walk-able hub of shops, restaurants, and pedestrian amenities in a real-life setting that together forms a center of gravity with a regional and statewide draw.

Intent:
- Create a walkable core in the center of Downtown with thru-traffic flowing around the core perimeter.
- Focus development efforts on the center of Downtown in order to avoid a doughnut-hole pattern of development Downtown.
- Support and grow a retail hub in the center of Downtown that takes advantage of the various urban amenities and qualities not found in the suburbs.
- Support, preserve and re-use distinctive and iconic buildings located in the Downtown center.
- Improve the pedestrian realm.
Center Focus with River Connection

This diagram shows the concept of a distinct center focus in Downtown, with Wisconsin Avenue as the spine of that central focus. The Milwaukee River corridor focus serves to connect the Schlitz Park, Park East and upper Water Street on the north to the Third Ward and Walkers Point on the south.
In the early years, Downtown was a more compact downtown, surrounded by industrial areas. All roads led to the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Most of the traditional downtown office employment was focused in a small area of the current area known as Downtown. From Clybourn on the south, to Kilbourn on the North, and from Cass on the east to about 9th on the west, was the focus of the "downtown core". Three large department stores, numerous theaters and number of grand hotels were all tightly knit into this focused area. A civic area, comprised of public buildings, including the county courthouse, public safety, library and original arenas, was located to the north and west of the main downtown core. Milwaukee’s downtown’s boundaries and form were much this way for many decades from the 1960’s back well into the 19th century.

But much change to the form of Downtown arrived in the 1960’s. New city-wide and suburban expansion, urban struggles of the decade, along with general changing national attitudes meant a great deal of change to the form of downtown Milwaukee.

In the 1960’s decline, freeways were one of the first major changes to Downtown. While giving good access to a more distant traveler, they also began to divide and decentralize Downtown. Along with the changes created by the freeway was the decision to move the Train Station out of the central core to an area south of the new elevated highway into a then industrialized area. The civic center area took on a new form in the method of a pedestrian only plaza over a central parking garage with expressway ramps.
In the following decade of the 1970’s, the diminishing manufacturing jobs, and the gradual closing of breweries, leather related businesses, and numerous other industries left the former central core sitting in an area surrounded by empty or nearly empty industrial buildings.

By the early 1980’s interest in the redevelopment of the Blatz brewery area along with a planned new sports arena, the Bradley Center, pushed development north of Downtown’s traditional boundaries. To the south, manufacturing and warehouse uses started to make way for new housing and mixed use development in the Third Ward. By the end of the decade the redevelopment of Schlitz Park had extended Downtown northward.

Planning in the 1990’s saw aggressive changes to remake the Milwaukee River with block by block installation of a riverwalk. Planning had begun on the removal of the Park East freeway west of Jefferson Street, while in the corridor east of Jefferson a new neighborhood of townhouses, condos and neighborhood serving retail filled the corridor.

In the 2000’s there was a realization of the Park East removal plan, a successful launch of the Pabst Brewery redevelopment, and the redevelopment of the Beerline even further up-river than the Schlitz Brewery (now office park). To the south of Downtown, the Historic Third Ward flourished into a much larger mixed use district pulling development interest even further south into the area to become known as the Fifth Ward.

In summary, downtown has expanded a great deal over the past 50 years due to changing uses and many positive redevelopments surrounding downtown. An understanding of this occurrence points to the need to re-focus on the center to ensure the original center remains healthy.
Policies and Strategies (Distinct Downtown Center):

- Focus development efforts on the center of Downtown.
- Target the Downtown Center for priority streetscaping.
- Encourage and support the preservation of historic or iconic buildings with conversion of upper floors for residential or commercial uses and adopt parking policies that better utilize such sites.
- Utilize city resources and policies for retail projects located in the Downtown Center district as detailed in the BID 21 retail study.
- Support efforts to re-orient ground floor retail in the Shops of Grand Avenue onto Wisconsin Avenue.
- Ensure that retail uses on the edges of Downtown complement rather than dilute efforts to strengthen the commercial vibrancy and density in the center of the Downtown.
- Within the Downtown Plan boundaries, limit ground floor retail requirements to the Downtown Center and specifically those streets as detailed in the BID 21 retail study. Where retail is not present other means of high quality street level activation is required.
- Further concentrate retail by allowing ground floor space in non-commercial developments, such as parking decks, to activate the pedestrian zone by means other than retail uses, when outside the Downtown Center.
- Support a renovated Bradley Center or ensure that a new multi-purpose arena with supporting retail and entertainment development remains Downtown.
- Recognize the need for and support an expanded convention center up to and along Kilbourn Avenue.
Form (Distinct Downtown Center):

- Provide a high level of exterior activation and treatment to all visible building frontages.
- New developments in the Downtown Center should use quality, high level building materials. For example, where brick veneer or pre-cast may be an acceptable ground level façade cladding in some other location, a material such as granite or other high quality stone should be used in the Downtown Center.
- Concentrate on rebuilding the “street-wall”, especially on key pedestrian activity streets.
- Animate building walls with either activation or high quality wall design and articulation.
- New or expanded surface parking lots are generally not recommended in the Downtown Center.
- Examine using design guidelines for the Downtown Center particularly Wisconsin Avenue.

East Mason St. looking west from North Milwaukee St.

Hilton Hotel facade wall with high quality granite cladding

North Water St. looking south from Kilbourn Ave.
Good form and design creates value. Poor form and design detracts from value. It is human nature to avoid places that are unattractive. A downtown that is attractive, recognizable, and memorable gives visitors reasons to come and linger downtown rather than one-stop shop.

A sense of place can be established at varying scale or sizes. At the largest scale a downtown has a regional or even national identity. At a more local context a sense of place is established with what is commonly known as “place-making” which is critical to the continued success of cities and urban neighborhoods. Three elements, identity, programming and enclosure are key to create a “place”.

While enhancing existing places Downtown is important, one must not look past the opportunity to create new “places” throughout Downtown. These additional places can help stitch together the fabric of Downtown. A number of areas should be a prime target for creating a new sense of place.

New or enhanced places include the Broadway corridor, areas surrounding the Intermodal Station, the 4th Street corridor at Wisconsin and near Zeidler Square, Wells Street, from “Postman Square” to City Hall Square to Cathedral Square, and the East Michigan Street corridor. These locations already have a number of ingredients for place-making, such as good street enclosure and historic or iconic buildings that present opportunities to improve these places through infill and revitalization.

Identity can take a physical form, such as a relationship to a historic building, prominent civic sites, public art, or a unique building design. Programming comes from building and spatial design that supports active uses. Enclosure is the primary tool to create the form needed for place-making.
Downtown Milwaukee is an authentic place. The convergence of streets, intersections, and spaces caused by the river has created a pattern and layout that is unique to Milwaukee. Add to that the numerous buildings that respond to the block patterns as well as the rich historic building stock and Milwaukee has a feel all its own. Understanding and building upon this unique context is vital to allowing Downtown to stand apart from many other nondescript or cookie-cutter places.

**Vision:** Downtown Milwaukee is the economic and cultural center of Wisconsin and one of the most enjoyable, attractive, and vibrant downtowns in the Midwest. It’s orientation on place-making creates a downtown environment that draws new residents, visitors, creative employees, and businesses alike.
Intent (Sense of Place):

- Downtown Milwaukee should have a distinct character and feel specific to our city.
- Downtown should be a sought-after destination for both local residents as well as out-of-town visitors.
- Downtown is the center, where not only a sense of place exists, but a “sense of occasion” is strongly reinforced.
- Improve the quality of connecting spaces and create a world-class waterfront “place”.
- Maintain, complement, and enhance prominent vistas in the Downtown.
- Create and improve plazas, parks, open spaces, and other public sites Downtown.
- Reduce the number and impact of blank walks and empty spaces downtown.
- Support entertainment uses that complement the Bradley Center and the convention center.
- Recognize the civic and economic significance of public art Downtown.
Policies and Strategies (Sense of Place):

- Downtown improvements and redevelopments should feel uniquely “Milwaukee” and not try to mimic current national trends.
- Build a sustained retail environment in the center of Downtown that creates a regional and state-wide draw.
- Maintain Downtown’s prominence as the main location for large public gatherings and events.
- Support new special events that raise the profile of Downtown as the region’s center of activity.
- Examine a reconfiguration of the lakefront connected roadways in order to expand or improve civic, recreational, and development opportunities.
- Establish a street hierarchy system.
- Develop design guidelines for street improvements.
- Integrate passive and interactive digital media into the public realm.
- Encourage new entertainment uses to complement the existing corridor of large venue sites by locating primarily along Old World Third and 4th Street south of Juneau.
- Promote the addition of playgrounds or other interactive play environments into public and private settings in order to support and attract families with children or grandparents residing or visiting Downtown.
- Support the development of a public art plan.
- Promote and strategically locate public art with current and future attractions and developments.
- Continue to support outdoor dining, sidewalk café’s and kiosks, and similar street level activity by creating and supporting polices that make the creation, expansion, and growth of such activities less onerous and expensive.
- Increase the Downtown tree canopy coverage in the pedestrian realm.
- Develop design guidelines for Downtown retail storefronts.
- Develop design guidelines for structured parking Downtown.
Form (Sense of Place):

- Streets, plazas, and other open spaces should be enclosed by appropriate, proportionately sized buildings.
- For a distinctive and recognizable skyline, tops of buildings should be articulated and unique to the site when possible.
- Acknowledge a street terminus or vista with architecturally distinctive features or buildings.
- Articulate large floor plates to avoid large, bulky building massing.
- Building entrances should be located at corners, along the primary streets and be scaled appropriately to the character of the street. While single doors may meet building code, double doors may be a better fit to enhance the street.
- Glazing should be incorporated into a significant portion of the first floor. Flexibility for future entrances should be considered in full window walls.
- Glazing should be clear, non-tinted glazing on the first floor. (Upper floors are encouraged to have a non-tinted or lightly tinted glazing as well.)
- Where the highest active storefronts are not appropriate, buildings should still have engaging ground level floors. Wall articulation, detail, and human scaled elements are important.
• Introduce the use of LED lighting and other visual and graphic improvements that will activate blank or unsightly building walls that would otherwise detract from the Downtown environment.

• Where gaps in the street wall are necessary, design elements such as wall extensions, landscaping, and other techniques should be used to mitigate the loss of enclosure at the gap.

• Parking lots or existing parking lots awaiting future development should have well defined street edges. These edges should be created with a combination of hard elements such as walls and fences, as well as base planting and crowns of closely spaced trees.

• Emphasize activation and vertical articulation on parking structures, which tend to have horizontal emphasis.
Parking structures should have screened facades or façades with a developed design pattern. Despite the functional use of the building as a parking structure the design of the exterior walls should have similar rhythms and openings as one would expect with an office, residence or other human occupied space.

- Public atriums, enclosed arcade and wintergarden spaces are strongly encouraged to allow year round pedestrian comfort in downtown. These internalized spaces should connect to and complement the pedestrian experience on the public street.

- To avoid walled-off, insulated office complexes, in-house cafeteria facilities can be located on the ground floor and visible to the sidewalk.
Existing “Places” and Key Connections
The blue shapes on the map depict the existing most notable and identifiable “places” Downtown. The hubs of these areas and other key spots are also noted (green asterisks). The arrows represent the key connections that need to be reinforced in order to allow these “places” to grow together. Community input had identified these existing places as “campfires” Downtown, however noted the gaps that separated these areas were a significant concern.
Key Connections Reinforced
This map shows the “key connections” (blue arrows) that are reinforced as a result of creating new “places” (yellow shapes) in downtown.
New “Places” Downtown
The shapes on this map show the existing, most notable and identifiable “places” in blue, but also shows “new places” in yellow. Concentrating “place-making” efforts on these “new places” and hub points will create or strengthen identity where little or no identity currently exists, and will help bridge those gaps to “string the Downtown pearls” together. Of these “New Places”, the shapes outlined in red denote places elevated to catalytic project area status.
CIVIC QUALITY

Valuing the civic qualities of planning can reinforce a memorable and recognizable place in Downtown.

Monumental streets or Showcase Streets create the first tier and most over-arching network in the street design character. These streets should have consistent design themes as they traverse downtown.

Special attention should be paid to the “approach” to Downtown. Often times development projects or planned open spaces do not consider the processional movement into Downtown. This experience and the design consideration given to arrival is of utmost importance in communicating the sense of place and quality of environment experienced by the visitor.

Buildings that terminate vistas help to visually draw from one location to another. These buildings in downtown Milwaukee tend to be along the river where grids do not align or at locations on streets that bend or curve, such as Water and McKinley Streets.

Sites that terminate vistas should receive buildings designed for their unique location. These are special sites and should be treated as such. For example the Journal Sentinel block terminates the view looking westward on Kilbourn.
Civic Design

Place-making at the larger “downtown wide” scale is considered by this map. These elements include the network of showcase streets, gateways into and within Downtown and vistas.
LANDMARK, HISTORIC AND ICONIC BUILDINGS

A well connected downtown allows one’s location in relation to the larger environment to be recognizable and understood.

This is similar to how place-making in a more localized setting helps to establish a familiarization to your surroundings. Buildings such as the City Hall, Milwaukee Art Museum Calatrava addition, the Bradley Center, the Intermodal (Train) Station, the Central Library, the Courthouse, and other civic buildings help establish this relationship.

Downtown Milwaukee has numerous historic or historic-quality buildings. Well executed restorations have sparked new life for a number of these buildings. While some buildings retained their original uses others have found new ones when former uses became obsolete. Locally designated contributing historic buildings should be retained and redeveloped in accordance with local preservation requirements.
Notable Buildings
Place-making can be anchored by significant buildings at the local scale. Historic buildings and “iconic” buildings, (which may or may not be listed as historical structures) that strongly define a local context due to their unique placement, design, or character should be used as the essential framework on which to create or further develop a sense of place.

Nationally and Locally Designated Historic
Locally Designated Historic but Not National
Nationally Designated by Not Local
Buildings with Historic Quality
Notable Modern Building (Scale or Design)
New Structure Since 1999
Downtown Center

Posner building at W. Wisconsin Ave. and N. Plankinton Ave.
Renovated Johnson Bank at corner and other similar era buildings awaiting renovation
PUBLIC ART AND DESIGN AMENITIES

Public art in Downtown can take on many forms. It might be an art piece prominently located on a vista or an axis to a view. Examples include works such as the DiSuvero sculpture at the end of Wisconsin Avenue or the statue of Solomon Juneau at the end of Kilbourn Boulevard. Other pieces such as the sculpture in the plaza at the Reuss plaza, or on the plaza of MGIC building show a piece of public art on a publicly accessible private location. Public art can take on the form of an integral building element such as the fountain at Northwestern Mutual or even the elaborate building elements on some of the historic buildings can be considered public art.

Public art can be impressively large or small detailed objects. Public art should include local artists as well as world renowned artist. Traditional pieces, pop art, and unique concepts all have a place. Public art has the ability to transform an environment and make it memorable. It has the ability to move people through space when placed in a linear progression. It can draw people to Downtown and add to a unique sense of place.

Public art should not be considered an afterthought or a “decoration” but an integral part of the built environment. Locations for public art should be crafted into the creation of public spaces, streetscapes, and buildings. Utilitarian objects and elements can be transformed into public art pieces. These could include items like transit shelters, bike racks, benches, and paving patterns. New bridges or other infrastructure elements could also evolve into being pieces of public art.
Public Art and Design Locations

Public art can take on many forms. It can give a fine grain to place-making and make Downtown unique, authentic and memorable. This map shows notable existing locations of public art in the Downtown environment and suggests possible locations for new opportunities for public art. This map is not intended to be a complete inventory nor a specific future plan, however it could be developed into an implementation strategy.
Wintergardens and Privately Owned Public Spaces

Another opportunity to significantly improve the environment for working, living, and visiting Downtown is the expansion of Downtown arcades and wintergardens into a collection or network that provides indoor pedestrian spaces and climate-tempered connections throughout Downtown. Unlike “skywalks”, arcades, atriums, and wintergardens are glass-roofed indoor spaces that resemble the character of outdoor sidewalks or plazas. They also keep pedestrian circulation on the ground floor to complement sidewalk circulation and reinforce access to retail businesses. Given Milwaukee’s cold-weather climate, arcades, atriums, or wintergardens are ideal for year-round use and expansion of public gathering sites. Outdoor street crossings between arcades, atriums, and some sidewalk segments could even include arched coverings containing radiant heaters overhead and in the pavement.

Existing arcades and wintergardens Downtown include the midblock passages through the Milwaukee Center and 330 East Kilbourn complex, the historic Plankinton Arcade, the City Hall atrium, and the central space in the Calatrava-designed Milwaukee Art Museum addition. New wintergardens can be incorporated into new developments and are a key feature within each catalytic project presented in this plan.

Since 1961, the City of New York has used an incentive program for private developers to provide public spaces within or adjacent to their developments. Since its inception, 503 spaces at 320 buildings totaling over 3.5 million square feet of public space has, with varying degrees of success, been created using the City’s incentive zoning program. These public spaces include outdoor plazas, arcades, or indoor atriums and winter gardens.
Federation Square, Fracture Gallery. Melbourne, Australia

World Financial Center, wintergarden. New York, New York

Vancouver Public Library atrium. Vancouver, B.C.
A Connected Downtown

The majority of plan participants agreed that downtown Milwaukee contains a number of bright spots - “camp fires” - that make Downtown an attractive and engaging place. The problem is that few of these points are connected to one another, lessening the economic and social impact in the Downtown and making Downtown more of a one-stop shop rather than a meaningful place.

While the center of Downtown contains many key components and attractions there are districts and destinations outside the Downtown core that complete the overall make-up and future successes for Downtown. Strengthening and enhancing the connections to these areas through infill of vacant and underutilized spaces and more comprehensive street improvements will serve these goals.

It is crucial to focus on “key sites” that are at “hinge” locations and allow important connections to be enforced and function appropriately. It is for that reason that we recommend key sites for redevelopment in order to strengthen those key connections.
Vision: Milwaukee recognizes that great urban environments are not centered on the car. Great urban environments are centered on the pedestrian and complemented with a range of transportation modes that connect people, places, attractions and neighborhoods to one another in order to create a dynamic and engaging city.

Intent:

• Strengthen linkages throughout Downtown and to adjacent neighborhoods.
• Use the Milwaukee River corridor as a major connector from north to south
• Expand transit options Downtown.
• Revisit the role of streets.
• “Shorten” the perceived distance to Chicago.

Lakeshore State Park looking northwest to Downtown. Connections to one of the most important assets, Lake Michigan, is vital.

North Old World 3rd St. at W. Highland Ave. connecting north to Haymarket District and Schlitz Park

East Mason St. at the Lakefront connecting west to Downtown

North 5th St. at E. Michigan connects the Downtown Center south to the Intermodal Station
Policies and Strategies (Connected Downtown)

- Improve connections to the Third Ward at Broadway and Water Streets.
- Complete the conversion of Wells and State Streets to two-way.
- Consider expanding Van Buren and Jackson to two-way south of Kilbourn.
- Reduce and mitigate the physical barriers between the Lakefront, Downtown, and the Third Ward.
- Build on the success of the Marquette Interchange and pursue alternatives for the reconstructing of the on/off ramps at the north end of the Hoan Bridge in the area of the Lincoln Memorial Drive and Milwaukee’s museum and festival grounds. Some of the most potentially valuable real estate in the state of Wisconsin exists in the Downtown-Lakefront-Third Ward triangle currently occupied by bridge and freeway ramps.
- Introduce streetcar and express bus transit to Downtown with connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Initial streetcar connections should stress a connection between the east town office area and the Intermodal Station as well as connections to the densest adjacent residential areas.
• Incorporate universal access and complete street elements.

• Consider removal of on-street parking in areas that are appropriate for wider sidewalks to serve dining and entertainment uses.

• Provide ADA spaces throughout Downtown. The chosen locations of spaces on a block should allow multiple access points to the vehicles.

• Establish the Intermodal Station as a regional transit hub with expanded commuter rail and high-speed train access into Chicago’s Union Station.

• Expand bike facilities such as racks, storage spaces, and dedicated bike lanes.

• Integrate the Department of Public Works 2010 bike plan into Downtown policy decisions.

• Wherever possible, support a mix of uses along the river and RiverWalk system. A mix of uses includes boat and river taxi parking zones, dining areas and platforms, and retail kiosks including food and beverage sales.

• Consider exploring a Downtown network of arcades and wintergardens as a ground level, retail friendly alternative to a skywalk system.

• Support on-street spaces and spaces in parking garages for car sharing programs.

ADA parking stalls on N. Broadway between E. Kilbourn Ave. and E. Wells St.

Designated on-street car sharing spaces reinforce connections with vehicle mode alternatives.

The RiverWalk looking south from W. Highland Ave.
River Connection

The Milwaukee River Corridor creates a unifying north-south corridor through downtown Milwaukee, much as Wisconsin Avenue does in an east-west direction. This corridor includes not only the river and the RiverWalk, but also the adjacent parallel streets of Water, Plankinton, Broadway, 2nd, and Old World Third Streets.

Streets and spaces also connect across the river. A key connection is the sort of “central park” that is formed by the three open spaces along the river – Pere Marquette Park, the Marcus Center Grounds and Red Arrow Park.

Numerous key connections are made by the streets that cross the river. Wisconsin Avenue is, of course, a key street, where the each side of the river has its own character. But many other streets, such as Kilbourn, Juneau, Wells, and St. Paul avenues all should embrace connections to the river.
Chapter 3 - Land Use Strategies and Policies

A Connected Downtown

River Connection
This map shows the numerous existing places, key connections, new places, projects, and other key sites/features and how they relate to the Milwaukee River.
Form (Connected Downtown):

- Maintain the Downtown street grid and public alley system. Alleys serve an important function by connecting multiple sites and minimize the number of curb cuts otherwise needed on a block.
- Where the street grid has been disrupted, efforts should be made to reconnect the grid. Where motor vehicle connections are not possible, pedestrian connections, at a minimum, should be made.
- Where possible use alleys as active, pedestrian friendly commercial space accented with lighting, arcade coverings, and storm water management best practices.
- Provide mid-block cross walks on long blocks (often as a result of “super-block” block combinations).
- A dedicated pedestrian sidewalk should lead to all building entrances. Driveways should not be used for this purpose.
- Use attractive lighting, signage, landscaping, and other appropriate means to fill in gaps between successful or active nodes or districts. Lighting can include up-lighting of buildings, trees, or public art.
- Use visible and uniform parking and bike route signage.
- Bus shelters should be positioned so riders do not impede pedestrians and storefront shoppers and vice versa.
Van Buren is a primary connector from high office density to high density residential.

North Van Buren at E. Juneau St. looking south to the Lakefront Office District.

View looking northeast to Prospect/Farwell Corridor on the lower east side. Next to Downtown, this is the highest density residential area. Improved connections to Downtown are important.
Key “Hinge” Sites
This map depicts sites that are “key” to evolving a sense of place at the specific location and/or are critical “hinge points” to building and enforcing the key connections.
Focused Streets
This map shows streets that should be the focus of enhanced pedestrian environments. The Street Typologies are established to recommend building and site improvements to support the enhanced pedestrian environment and street design qualities that further support design enhancement.
DOWNTOWN STREETS

Streets Downtown, as in many neighborhoods, have differing qualities. The differences are based primarily on three main factors:

- The level of pedestrian activation and engagement
- The qualities of the aesthetic design of the street
- The balance of the street devoted to motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and other amenities.

Buildings and uses along a street help to define the character of that street. “Street typologies” define the types of streets Downtown and how requirements will affect properties and development on a particular street. The actual “public” street is defined by the “civic design qualities” of the public right of way improvements. On all streets, multiple modes of transportsations, such as personal motor vehicles, public transit, and bicycles should function in a balanced manner.

STREET TYPOLGIES

Streets concentrated in the center of Downtown and along key connections in Downtown are specifically called out as Type 1 or Type 2 Streets based on the need of buildings and sites to engage the pedestrians and in some cases activate that environment.

Pedestrian activation and engagement is strongly defined by the uses and urban design quality of the buildings along particular streets. In some limited areas and on certain streets, a higher level of street wall enclosure and activation is needed but on other streets the mandates are less critical to a successful street. On corner sites where differing street typologies intersect, the street types should be used to help determine appropriate uses on each sides of the building. Where street types are the same a rationale for the most appropriate uses fronting on each street should be evaluated.

While raising standards for certain streets, the street typology hierarchy also clarifies which streets do not mandate active uses or storefront type first floors of buildings. In the past there have been concerns that ground level retail requirements were applied with limited regard to practicality, market demand and functionality. Establishing a functional street typology system allows requirements to be applied where most practical, while allowing differing standards where appropriate.
Type 1 Active Streets
Type 1 streets are the streets with the most important sense of place, where the “street room” sense of enclosure is well defined and the streets have a strong sense of identity. Type 1 streets have a clear sense of connection along the street. Type 1 streets have a need for the highest level of occupied activity at ground floors. This means retail stores, active office areas without blinds, active building lobbies, restaurants, and bar spaces, or other spaces or uses that are frequently occupied. Buildings on Type 1 Streets should define the street edge at the upper floors as well. Where upper floors are parking structures, garage façades should be enclosed, substantially articulated and be designed to the standard of an inhabited floor. An interactive pedestrian experience is most important aspect of the Type 1 street facades.

Type 1 Streets
This map depicts the streets where the highest level of pedestrian activation is needed. This would result in ground floor storefronts and other active, occupied uses. These streets also need the highest level of street frontage definition.
Type 1 streets are concurrent with the described “Westown Design Guidelines Shopping Streets” and the “Park East” Type A Streets”. Type 1 streets should generally not allow surface parking lots or gaps in the street wall that ruin the momentum of the street. Existing surface lots on Type 1 streets should be prioritized for redevelopment, and temporary uses that enliven those existing gaps are encouraged. Curb cuts should be avoided on Type 1 Streets and only allowed where no better choice exists. Blank walls and “life-less” façades should be upgraded to provide a more engaging pedestrian experience.

1000 N. Water building on N. Water St. between E. State S.t and E. Highland Ave. is a good building for a Type 1 Street.

East Mason St. looking west from N. Jefferson St.

Outdoor seating on sidewalk in the Third Ward’s primary Type 1 Street, Broadway.
Type 2 Connecting Streets
Type 2 streets are important for pedestrian connections and continuity. First floor street facades need to have a high level of pedestrian engagement with either storefronts or display type windows. Intricate façades of buildings, such as ones found on historic quality buildings, are often appropriate to meet the façade engagement needs. Type 2 streets often connect Type 1 streets or connect to major destinations.

Type 1 and 2 Streets
This map shows how the Type 2 Streets compliment and connect Type 1 Streets. The street network reinforces key connections that have been identified.
Street façade materials should be of high quality given the priority pedestrian linkages on which they occur. Buildings should define the street edge well at the upper floors. Where upper floors are parking structures, garage façades should be enclosed or substantially designed. Where street walls are more passive in nature due to historic buildings or existing conditions, elements such as lighting and landscaping can help bridge those locations. Type 2 streets can be developed into a quality that emulates a type 1 street. The quality of the continuous pedestrian experience is most important.

In some locations changes to the realm of the private property are less important; however improvements to the pedestrian quality of the public street right-of-way may be needed. New surface parking lots should be avoided on Type 2 streets. In cases where surface lots are deemed appropriate and permitted, and/or at existing parking lots, the street edges should be upgraded with elements significantly more substantial than the typical landscape and fence of a hard urban edge treatment. This might include elements like masonry walls and other arcaded forms.

Comparable streets to Type 2 streets includes: “Westown Design Guidelines Mixed Use Streets” and “Third Ward Mixed Use Streets”. RiverWalks and pedestrian ways are typically included in this category. Sites that may need attention on proposed Type 2 streets include existing parking structures along East Michigan Street and surface and vacant lots on West St. Paul Avenue.
Chapter 3 - Land Use Strategies and Policies

A Connected Downtown - DOWNTOWN STREETS

Hilton parking garage with first floor display windows engage the pedestrian.

Historic facade at street level engages pedestrians.

MSOE surface parking on N. Broadway and E. Highland Ave. with landscape edge.

Metro Market surface parking on N. Van Buren St. with landscape edge.

Animated wall at East Point Shopping Center.

Metro Market parking structure on E. Juneau Ave with landscape edge. Good landscape at parking facilities can improve the pedestrian realm.

US Bank parking structure on E. Clybourn St. with ground floor display windows that engage the pedestrian.
OTHER STREET TYPES

Type 3 Local Streets
Type 3 Local Streets are pedestrian quality streets where street facades are to be pedestrian scaled and well proportioned to fit into the urban context. Street walls should be richly detailed and have a good sense of depth. In more passive situations, such as at fully residential buildings or parking structures, a first floor landscape planter that is coordinated with the building may be needed. Street cross-section quality should promote streets that are well balanced for pedestrian, transit, and other motor vehicle uses based on local conditions. Parking lots that are not landscaped or are not landscaped to the full extent required by code should be upgraded in the near term. Type 3 streets have a more passive pedestrian environment. Type 3 streets can be developed into a quality that emulates a Type 1 or 2 street.

Type 3 Local Streets are comparable to the “Third Ward Plan - Local Streets” and the “Park East Redevelopment Plan - Type B Streets”.

Residential streets are great local Type 3 Streets

MSOE Kern Center along N. Market Street

Parking garage with landscape edge

Garage entrance and ground level integral planters on a residential building
**Type 4 Traffic Service Streets**

These street types should be designed to be as attractive as possible while recognizing that the pedestrian function of these streets is limited or secondary. Considerations for pedestrian crossings are more important than the experience of traversing along these streets. Landscaping may be a primary way to upgrade the quality of a Type 4 Street while also creating some abilities to integrate storm water management techniques. Alleys and other service lanes are also considered a part of the Type 4 category.
CIVIC AND STREET DESIGN QUALITY

The Showcase or Strolling designation should be viewed as a "quality upgrade" to streets or certain section of streets. The public realm should generally be designed to a higher civic quality on these streets. Requirements for development of properties may mean higher grade materials for buildings or other improved site details.

Showcase Streets

Showcase Streets are “busy” streets that exemplify the hustle and bustle of Downtown and have prestigious name recognition as a business address. Showcase Streets can be a Type 1 or 2 Pedestrian Street, or can be a more traffic dominant street. Showcase Streets carry varying volumes of vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Design elements include formal planting beds between the sidewalk and the curb, a potential landscaped median where feasible, tall light fixtures and high canopy shade trees. Showcase Streets may be fronted by retail shops or other pedestrian level engagements. Showcase Streets are also used to connect district and places to one another by means of attractive or meaningful streetscaping.
Two streets have a special place as Showcase Streets: Wisconsin Avenue is the historic and traditional “main street” of downtown Milwaukee and for the entire city. Its long-term place as a notable street remains constant as other areas around it experience change. Over time, the de-centralization of Downtown has had an effect on the health of the street. It is important that the street remain a prominent Downtown street. Recent street enhancements have helped to reinforce this significance and future art installations could further this trend. Kilbourn Avenue, a product of the City Beautiful movement, was intended to be a grand boulevard with strong vistas and terminuses. While an elegant street, it is also a wide, traffic moving street. Sections with lack of landscaping, angle parking and other changes over time have negatively affected the image of this grand street. Efforts to re-establish its planned prominence should be engaged. The “Districts” chapter of this document outlines various projects and recommendation for these and other showcase streets.
Showcase and Strolling Streets
These two street types work in tandem. This map shows how the more local character “strolling streets” weave together the area of higher pedestrian activity and reinforce the focus of the plan and the key connections recommended.
Strolling Streets
Strolling Streets are located where existing retail businesses are concentrated as well as places where retail and related businesses are desired to better connect nodes or places. Both Type 1 and Type 2 Pedestrian Streets can also be Strolling Streets. Strolling streets are designed to carry varying volumes and speeds of traffic but intended primarily for local access. Some street segments can be redesigned as “curb-less” streets, utilizing European-inspired “pedestrian zone” details including decorative pavement; daylight-spectrum lighting within low-height historic fixtures; sidewalk seating for cafés and dining; and fountains, sculptures, and flower gardens within the area formerly designated for traffic lanes. For portions considered non-essential vehicular corridors, segments of Strolling Streets can be closed to traffic or narrowed on weekends or evenings to accommodate gatherings and events.
Strolling Streets require the highest level of pedestrian level activation and building materials. As a branding concept the Strolling Streets, particularly the heavily-landscaped “curb-less” streets, could become a nationally-recognized feature of Milwaukee. While open to auto traffic, these streets should be designed to discourage fast through-traffic and encourage easy crossing by pedestrians.

A unique strolling street is the RiverWalk along the Milwaukee River. RiverWalks are generally a pedestrian only realm that follows the river’s edge throughout Downtown. At a number of points along the RiverWalk, streets that lead to the RiverWalk (and do not cross the river, often referred to as “stub ends”), are examples of streets with a higher demand for pedestrian qualities.

Jefferson Street is a prime candidate for installation of retractable bollards that could be raised for events or at certain times to allow street to become a pedestrian only street. These bollards typically have sensors to allow cars to exit or local property owners to enter the temporarily pedestrian-ized zone with a key.
BALANCE OF CIRCULATION MODES

Street balance between pedestrians, motor vehicles, transit, bicycle and all other users can occur across differing street type combinations. The various circulation networks mesh together in numerous combinations and with differing emphasis on different streets. The various combinations of street typologies and street design qualities can have traffic that ranges from lower to higher amounts of traffic. In some case “traffic” can mean comparatively more speed or volume of vehicles or can mean both.

The City of Milwaukee has adopted and endorsed the state’s Complete Streets legislation. Wisconsin is one of only a few states that has passed this legislation. This important legislation provides for accommodations of bicycles and pedestrian facilities in reconstruction or new street projects. In the following section, the various circulation network are addressed.

It is recommended that Wells St. be converted to two-way traffic and into a “complete street” design with bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks.
DOWNTOWN CIRCULATION

STREET NETWORK
While individual Downtown streets each have a specific quality relating to pedestrian activation, engagement, and quality of design, all streets together function as an overall street network that accommodates autos, truck, bicycles, pedestrians, and differing transit vehicles.

For the circulation networks to function well it is important that the street grid be generally maintained, the alley system be retained where possible, and that pedestrians can easily and safely traverse Downtown. Case by case instances for vacating a street or alley may be acceptable, however the effects of the change to the larger street network should be considered. Re-establishing the street network where it has been lost should be considered in some key locations.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
Pedestrian “traffic” or the ability for people to traverse the Downtown and reach destinations on foot is an important part of the overall traffic network. Comfortable sidewalks of sufficient width and clear paths are important. Excessively wide crossings should be mitigated with special design considerations such as curb extensions, long blocks with mid-block crossings, and larger existing superblocks should have clear and contiguous public pedestrian paths.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN BALANCE
In order to establish a strong cohesive center to Downtown, as called for in the Distinct Downtown Center secion of this chapter, high speed through-streets should not divide the Downtown center. While streets such as Wisconsin Avenue or Water Street will continue to serve larger volumes of traffic and public transit, these streets should move traffic at a slower pace with high regard for the pedestrian environment in the center part of Downtown.
Streets that currently speed traffic through the center such as Wells Street or Broadway should migrate toward less, slower moving traffic to reinforce the pedestrian emphasis in the center of Downtown. (Wells Street should be redesigned into a two-way pattern with the multiple aspects of a “complete street” and Broadway should become a more pedestrian quality “strolling street”, as implemented in the Third Ward.) Zones where traffic “congestion” is acceptable should be established to coordinate with the areas where pedestrian movement is emphasized, notably at the center areas of Downtown.

While efficiently moving traffic is needed in any area, traffic should be directed to specific streets with both the capacity to handle such flow, while not dividing areas that should work cohesively together. Higher traffic volume on streets such as Kilbourn or on Van Buren Street is less detrimental as these streets tend to be on the “seams” of neighborhoods.

Pedestrian and Traffic Balance
This map is not intended to be a engineering map, however is meant to convey the long-term consideration on how higher speed and higher volume traffic should interact with the center of downtown.
BICYCLE NETWORK

Certain streets Downtown are currently bicycle routes and Downtown currently has limited bicycle lanes. Based on the city wide bicycle plan, additional streets in downtown should consider bicycle lanes. Streets such as Mason, Juneau and St Paul can add striped lanes with few changes to existing lane markings. Milwaukee Street should be adjusted to one lane in each direction to allow bicycle lanes on the street. Milwaukee Street can become an ideal cross Downtown connection for cyclists. With upcoming changes for the Streetcar on Wells Street the remaining cross section should accommodate bicycle lanes in addition to wider sidewalks and planting strips.

Facilities that support bicycling are important to compliment the network. This includes elements such as enhanced bicycle parking areas and well distributed, sufficient numbers of bicycle racks throughout Downtown. Bike storage, including indoor and outdoor facilities could be located in various key transfer locations Downtown, such as at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Programs such as bicycle sharing could take root in the Downtown area.

Key provisions as set forth in the recently updated and approved Milwaukee Bicycle Master Plan should be incorporated into the downtown as opportunities present.
Bicycle Lane Map
This map shows the current bike lanes and those proposed in conjunction with the recently approved 2010 Master Bicycle Plan. (Bike “routes” are not shown on this plan, but can be referenced in the master plan.)

Existing Bike Lanes
Proposed Bike Lanes

The bike lanes on N. Water St. is one of the few locations of bike lanes that currently exist.

Trail head for the Oak Leaf Trail at E. Mason St. and N. Prospect Ave.
TRANSIT

Mass transit is a vital component for a successful downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and an overall region. Mass transit works best when it takes a multi-modal approach including fixed rail and buses. Within Downtown, a streetcar network, buses, bus rapid transit, commuter rail and heavy rail all play a part to this mix.

HEAVY RAIL TRAIN SYSTEMS

Local heavy rail and potential commuter rail trips begin and end in downtown Milwaukee. Recent investments in the remade Milwaukee Intermodal Station (formerly the Amtrak Station) show commitment to this rail-based approach. Linking future investments to the Intermodal facility, especially with a fixed rail streetcar system are essential to appropriate levels of rider distribution to key areas in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Bus, any future express bus and/or bus rapid transit should also consider connections to the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Accommodations for other transportation connections to the Intermodal station, such as rental car, taxi and parking structures for commuters should be considered.
BUS NETWORK

A bus transit network is vital to any large city, especially within the Downtown and central areas. Wisconsin Avenue has traditionally been the spine of the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) bus service to Downtown. Currently, buses have an indoor marshalling facility at the east end of Michigan Street. While original intentions saw the function of this facility to be more related directly to the actual transit users, it now serves few passengers directly from this location and has evolved into more of a vehicle storage facility. Relocation of this bus marshalling facility could free up potentially valuable lakefront land ideally suited to other uses.

Facilities that support the bus system should be pursued as it relates to Downtown. Improvement can come in the form of improved stops, signage, and loading areas. For example, providing improved waiting areas for buses, allowing transit users sufficient space so as not to conflict with the pedestrian path of the street would benefit transit users, businesses on the street, and pedestrians in general.

Future system-wide enhancements, such as express buses or bus rapid transit (BRT) could better connect Downtown to other areas of Milwaukee.
Currently, the Downtown BID #21 runs a free Downtown rubber-tired trolley in a one-way loop throughout Downtown. Service typically runs from June through September. The route has been flexible over the years and could be modified to coordinate with a first leg of a fixed-rail streetcar network.
STREETCAR SYSTEM

A streetcar offers a mobility choice ideally suited for Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The streetcar has the ability to be a “pedestrian accelerator”, making walks that are often considered just a bit too far into manageable journeys without use of a motor vehicle or bicycle.

Key connections for the streetcar system that have been identified include linking the East Town office areas to existing adjacent neighborhoods that have high density residential areas, such as Yankee Hill, the Prospect/Farwell corridor and the growing Third Ward. Connection of the East Town office area to the intermodal train station is also essential in order to serve the large employers in that area, many of whom have a national and international reach.

Enhanced Transit Corridors

This diagram depicts the corridors for enhanced transit in downtown and connecting with adjacent neighborhoods. These corridors are prime candidate for Streetcar or other enhanced transit such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or express buses.
Improved connections to the Westown areas, especially the convention center, are important, in order to stimulate demand for the center. Connecting any Downtown system beyond Downtown to residential areas of higher density (roughly 30-40 units per acre or greater) and to key activity areas such as major universities is also key for future expansions.

Given the limited financial resources for a “starter” streetcar system, an initial system should make the initial connections that have been identified in this Plan, while setting up expansion possibilities for future phases.

Future expansion of the streetcar system should include neighborhoods such as the UWM campus and the East Side, Marquette University and the Avenues West neighborhood, the King Drive and Bronzeville areas, and the Fifth Ward and Walker’s Point. Secondary corridors are Riverwest, King Park, and Caesar Chavez Drive.

On streets where streetcar lines are proposed, considerations to limit loss of on-street parking and to minimize and even enhance the environment for cyclist is encouraged. Downtown streets can easily accommodate streetcar tracks in driving lanes, moderate levels of traffic, buses and bicycle facilities.
Notable Downtown Areas and Streetcar Connections
This diagram shows the distinct areas of downtown and highlights the route and initial phase of a Streetcar should connect and serve. Future key connections are also depicted.
Bus Lines and Streetcar

- Streets with Bus Lines
- Streetcar

Passengers boarding at bus stop on Wisconsin Ave.

MCTS Route 30 connects high-density neighborhoods on the east side to the Downtown Center
STREET MODIFICATIONS

As a result of this plan and the policies and projects recommended, a number of changes to public streets in the Downtown would need to occur. These changes result from projects such as creating new “places” Downtown, the need to enhance key connecting corridors, to improve the pedestrian realm in directed areas and to accommodate the introduction of the streetcar.

This map is included to summarize the streets affected by strategic policies and project initiatives. This map should be considered during future planning purposes and is not intended to specifically require or limit improvements and implementation will likely be tied to other project initiatives.

A Connected Downtown - CIRCULATION

East State Street under reconstruction, a conversion to two-way circulation
Downtown Milwaukee should be a neighborhood in its own right, rather than simply the “Central Business District.” To achieve this goal, Downtown must add more residents and employees to its day and night time populations in order to transform into a cohesive and vibrant neighborhood. Furthermore, greater density acts as a catalyst for greater investment and services creating value for Downtown and for the entire city as a whole.

**Vision:** Downtown Milwaukee contains the highest levels of commercial and residential density of any Midwestern city outside of Chicago.

**Intent:**

- More people living and working downtown.
- Grow more mixed-use neighborhoods Downtown.
- Establish a larger university presence Downtown.
- Support a larger corporate presence Downtown.
- Reduce the number of surface parking lots Downtown.
Chapter 3 - Land Use Strategies and Policies

Density and Intensity

Mixed Use Buildings and Neighborhoods

Boston Lofts on N. 4th St. added office space and residential apartments to previously unused department store space.

Cathedral Place on E. Wells Street and N. Jackson successfully mixes office space with residential condo units and a large shared use parking structure.

View southwest from City Green Apartments in Yankee Hill, shows hotel use mixed into a residential neighborhood.

The Milwaukee Center on N. Water St. and E. Kilbourn Ave. integrated several historic structures into its development which contains theaters, hotel, offices.

Apartments above retail uses on N. Water Street add to the density and diversity of Downtown housing types.
Policies and Strategies (Density and Intensity):

RESIDENTIAL

- Develop a variety of housing types Downtown with varying levels of affordability that supports a mix of populations – e.g. singles, DINK’s, empty nesters, families with children, students, and vulnerable populations.
- Redirect future student housing to Downtown.
- Support policies that allow for the updating and conversion of older and/or historic properties to usable and functional residential space.
- Encourage and support the conversion of under-utilized Class B office space to upper level residential uses.
- Support new residential development in currently non-residential areas, notably Westown, the Haymarket District, and areas West of 6th Street. This includes the Park East corridor, Mac Arthur Square, The Brewery, and south of the Central Library.
- Emphasize multi-family residential to be a key land use for the Park East corridor.
- Demolition for the purposes of surface parking or smaller buildings is prohibited.
- Maintain the policy of not having a density cap.
Chapter 3 - Land Use Strategies and Policies

Residential Density

This map shows the block density of residential units. The northeast corner of downtown has a considerable amount of residential density. Increasing the residential density throughout downtown, especially in the “new places” and connecting corridors is strong way to enhance the vibrancy of downtown.

Mid-rise condominium infill on E. Ogden St. and N. Jackson St.

Park East Enterprise Lofts

Hillside Neighborhood
OFFICE POLICIES (Density and Intensity)

- Create physical environments that are attractive to specific industries and professions that would benefit from being located Downtown and that have important connections to the corporations that are located in Downtown.
- Support policies that allow for the adaptive re-use of older or historic buildings.
- Take advantage of Milwaukee’s proximity to Chicago, lakefront setting, existing Downtown amenities and supporting commercial uses to attract and recruit a larger corporate presence. Support mixed-use commercial development throughout Downtown.
- Increase the density of office space in the Downtown with a mix of small, mid, and high-rise office buildings dispersed throughout the downtown utilizing new, in-fill, and existing building stocks.
- Encourage local institutional colleges and universities to locate future or expanded schools and dormitories Downtown.
- Re-develop existing surface lots in the Downtown.
- Establish parking policies that work to reduce the need for single-development parking structures.
- Demolition for the purposes of surface parking or smaller buildings is prohibited.
Office Concentration
This map shows the relative office density in relation to the block on which they are located. New office locations should continue to cluster in existing areas of offices in order to allow support systems such as restaurants, retail, transit and shared parking to function more efficiently.

1 to 25,000 sf/acre
25,001 to 100,000 sf/acre
100,001 to 200,000 sf/acre
200,001 sf/acre and Higher
Downtown Center
RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT POLICIES (Density and Intensity)

- Concentrate destination retail area in relation with the retail plan of BID 21.
- Promote neighborhood supporting retail in existing and future neighborhoods of Downtown.

Form (Density and Intensity):

- Require minimum FAR’s Downtown.
- Avoid “buildings in a park” – siting buildings near the center of a block with large, landscaped areas between them and the street edge.
- Sites with larger setbacks, primarily mid-20th Century developments, should consider new street edge buildings that provide additional development opportunity and build-out the street wall.
- Avoid surface parking between the front face of a building and the public right-of-way.
Retail and Entertainment Concentration
This map depicts the locations where retail and entertainment areas exist. Both retail and entertainment generally benefit from being clustered in specific districts or nodes. New downtown retailing should be concentrated in the Downtown Center District, the Third Ward, and to a lesser degree on Old World Third Street. See the Downtown BID 21 Retail Strategy for further details.
Examples of Susceptible to Change Sites

- Milwaukee River at Edison St.
- Michigan St. and 2nd St.
- Wells St. and Van Buren Ave.
- Wisconsin Ave. and 4th St.
- Mason St. and Jefferson St.
- Wells St. and Milwaukee St.
- Wells St. and 2nd St.
- Milwaukee River at Knapp St.
- Ogden Ave. and Milwaukee St.
- Juneau Ave. and Water St.
Downtown Milwaukee has numerous sites that can considered "susceptible to change". This includes vacant land, underutilized surface parking lots, as well as significantly vacant or underutilized existing buildings. Some sites are likely to change in the upcoming years, where other are longer term redevelopments. Key "hinge" sites are further discussed within the Districts Chapter, as well as the Catalytic Projects Chapter of this document. To establish additional context for change, this map not only shows where future site may be, but also shows recent developments and the streetcar route as proposed at the date of this plan.
Environmental Sustainability

Green Downtown: Downtown Milwaukee should be the most sustainable part of the metro area based on its overall density; scale and mix of uses; building re-use; volume and frequency of mass transit; and its green infrastructure such as green roofs, and parks and playgrounds connected to the pedestrian network and RiverWalk.

There are already sustainable practices occurring in Downtown Milwaukee:

- Sensitive Lakefront development and preservation
- Green roof installations at the Central Library and 809 Broadway building
- Sustainable storm water management at The Brewery and MSOE
- Energy savings at the City Hall municipal complex

Recommended Downtown policies and practices that can expand Downtown’s sustainability include:

- Storm water management – take advantage of Downtown Milwaukee’s wide streets to incorporate sustainable storm water management practices in its right-of-ways and surface parking lots, particularly river adjacent lots.
- Shared car parking – shared cars can decrease costs of living for Downtown residents by reducing personal vehicle uses for short, day-to-day trips. On-street parking locations and possibly City-owned parking garages should be identified for Zip Cars or other car-sharing programs.
- Electric car outlets – in the upcoming years it is anticipated that rechargeable cars will become more common place. Identify outlet locations for both on-street parking and in city parking structures.
- Steam heating - take advantage of Downtown’s underground steam system for increased building heating opportunities.
- Green roof and solar usage – the large roof square footage Downtown offers expanded opportunities for green roof and solar energy usage.
- Bicycling – expand bike lanes, routes, and bike-related facilities Downtown as described in the City of Milwaukee 2010 Bicycle Master Plan.
- River adjacent parking lot buffers.
- Significantly increase the tree canopy.
Chapter 3 - Land Use Strategies and Policies

Density and Intensity

Green roof at 809 N Broadway

Solar and wind powered call box at MSOE surface lots on N. Broadway

Debri skimming boat on the Milwaukee River

WeEnergies power plant in the Menomonee Valley on W. Canal Street distributes waste steam to Downtown for heating of buildings

Stormwater retention integrated into streetscaping pattern on a residential street in San Mateo County, Ca