

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



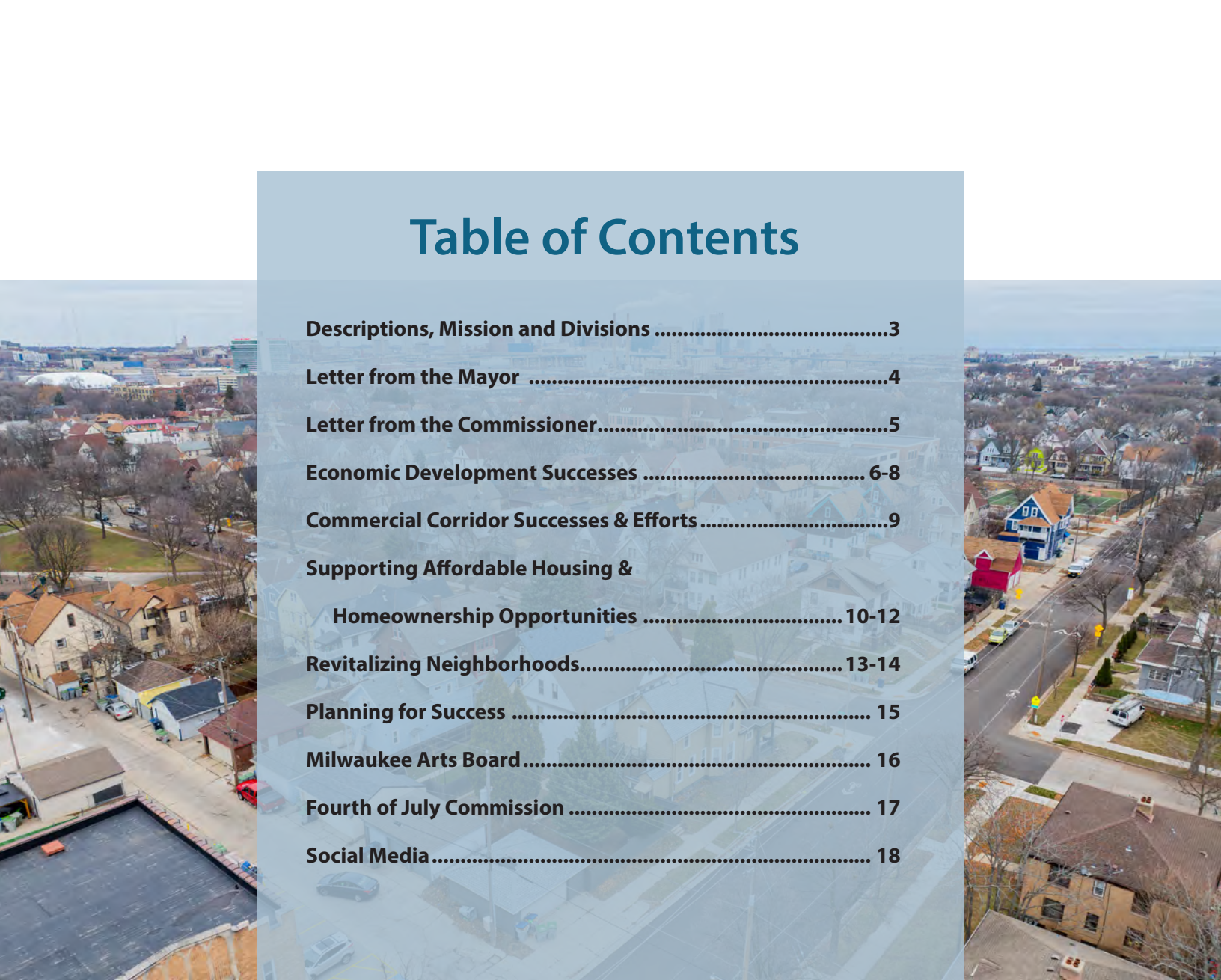


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Department of City Development

809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202

414-286-5730 | milwaukee.gov/DCD

Facebook, Instagram, and X: @milwaukeedcd

LinkedIn: Milwaukee City Development

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Description, Mission and Divisions

Mission

The mission of the Department of City Development (DCD) is to improve the quality of life in Milwaukee by guiding and promoting development that creates jobs, builds wealth, strengthens the urban environment, and at the same time, respects equity, economy, and ecology.

Divisions of the Department of City Development:

- City Real Estate
- City Planning
- Commercial Corridor Team
- Economic Development
- Finance and Administration
- Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC)
- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM)

To fulfill this mission, the Department of City Development:

- Works with partners throughout the region to ensure an economic climate that stimulates investment and job creation.
- Builds on the city's competitive advantages, including its built environment, natural setting, diversity, and status as a center of commerce and culture.
- Encourages high-quality, sustainable development that respects and enhances its context.
- Makes sound planning and investment decisions, which serve the needs of local residents, workers, and businesses.
- Fosters and supports business development.
- Promotes neighborhood economic development.
- Ensures processes, reviews, and approvals are efficient, consistent, and user-friendly.

Mayor's Letter



Positive development in the City of Milwaukee is vital to ensure our future is economically, culturally, and functionally first-rate. Our Department of City Development (DCD) is guiding that growth and change.

The team at DCD takes on a wide range of activities including real estate management, important housing programs, planning, economic development, and neighborhood business support. What all this work has in common is the desire to improve life for every person in Milwaukee.

As you can see in this report, the department is building on its accomplishments. This continuing work is strengthening neighborhoods, improving livability, and adding jobs and business impact to our city.

It takes talented and dedicated employees to achieve our goals, and that's what we have at DCD. People within the department bring expertise and innovation to their jobs, and I am proud to call them colleagues.

I am highly optimistic about Milwaukee's future. We are building on a strong foundation with committed residents, willing investors, and a combined vision that promotes growth and opportunity. I am confident the coming years will bring even more positive developments to our city.

Mayor Cavalier Johnson

Commissioner's Letter



Milwaukee is in the midst of a period of innovation and momentum. In 2024, we welcomed new companies and residents to our vibrant central business district with newly constructed and upgraded offices and living spaces. We witnessed the preservation of beautiful buildings rich with history, expanded opportunities for gathering in the public realm, more affordable housing options and celebrated partnerships that make our city unique.

At the Department of City Development, we have the duty and privilege of carrying out Mayor Johnson's vision of a safe, prosperous, and equitable city and being deeply embedded in the projects responsible for the growth and development of Milwaukee's built environment.

Among the projects DCD led and impacted in 2024 were the spectacular and moving Vel R. Phillips Plaza, an expansion of Milwaukee's award-winning Riverwalk in the Harbor District, obtaining ownership and ensuring significant demolition progress at the former Northridge Mall, transformational vacant property renovation and homeownership access via Homes MKE, and production of additional rental housing, from the deeply affordable to stunning luxury developments like the Couture and 333 Water.

None of this is possible without vision, planning, a great team, and great partners. Together, we will continue to develop all of Milwaukee and ensure that all 96 square miles of this special community enjoy the fruits of our labor and the benefits of economic and real estate development in our city and region.

DCD Commissioner Lafayette Crump

Economic Development Successes

The Department of City Development works with developers, businesses, and organizations to advance economic development projects in Milwaukee. DCD provides incentives that support economic development efforts, as well as helps developers, businesses, and organizations secure financing and additional resources for projects. Through this work, DCD plays a role in creating jobs and returning value to taxpayers.

Couture Development Opens in 2024

In 2024, Milwaukee's lakefront saw the completion of The Couture developed by Rick Barrett, and the opening of the Lakeline for Milwaukee's streetcar, The Hop. Located at Michigan and Lincoln Memorial Drive, the 44-story development with 322 apartment units is now home to hundreds of residents who have access to a public park, the Hop, and Milwaukee County's Bus Rapid Transit Connect 1. The \$185 million development is a beautiful addition to Milwaukee's skyline and accessible to anyone who wants to experience Milwaukee's cultural assets that

are located within walking distance of the site. TID 82 (East Michigan) included \$17.5 million in funding for public improvements related to The Couture project, such as a public transportation concourse, visitor walkways, bike/pedestrian amenities, and publicly-accessible plaza.

In 2025, it's anticipated the 42,000 square feet of commercial space will be home to new restaurants and retail shops. If you haven't taken a ride on The Hop and through the Couture's transportation concourse, it's an experience you may want to consider.



North Avenue Public Infrastructure

In 2024, a significant multimodal improvement project on the city's east side at East North Avenue, from North Humboldt Boulevard to North Prospect Avenue, was completed.

This project was funded by Tax Incremental District (TID) 111 (East North Avenue), and DCD played a unique role by hiring the design/engineer team and managing their contract for the work. Working with the design team, DPW, and the East Side BID, improvements made during the project include:

- New asphalt and lane restriping, including high visibility crosswalks at several intersections and bike lane markings
- ADA-compliant sidewalk curb ramps
- Pinned-on concrete islands for permanent bike lane protection
- Bus boarding islands



Riverwalk Progress

The City of Milwaukee fosters enhanced utilization and appreciation of the Milwaukee River by partnering with private developers and Business Improvement Districts to build a continuous system of riverwalks along the shores of all three of its rivers. The Milwaukee Riverwalk draws a mix of high-end residential, commercial, and recreational venues to its shoreline, creating a highly active pedestrian environment along the river. This amenity is open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and has access points located throughout the system.

Two new Riverwalk projects broke ground in 2024. Located along Plankinton Avenue, these Riverwalk adjacent projects include the Downtown Dog Park and a future taphouse, known as Foxtown Landing. Construction will continue through 2025 on the Foxtown Landing project, with the Riverwalk expected to be open to the public by early 2026. The Dog Park and associated Riverwalk should be open in the summer of this year. The Riverwalk connection adjacent to the new residential tower at 333 N. Water St. opened to the public in the fall of 2024 and Riverwalk construction is nearing completion at the Riverhouse Apartment project on N. Water St.

A significant achievement in 2024 includes the successful award of a \$14.7 million Transportation Alternatives Program grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. These funds will support the Harbor District Riverwalk Project as a match to the city's approved TID funding to construct the nearly 3/4-mile stretch of the city-owned Riverwalk. The project is out to bid at this time and we anticipate construction getting underway in mid-2025 with completion in the summer of 2026.

Two riverfront projects are anticipated in 2025/2026. Construction will begin on a new residential tower at 1005 N. Edison St. and a rebuild of the existing riverwalk to improve access to two new riverfront plazas. In addition, in partnership with the Downtown Riverwalk Business Improvement District #15, the City proposed an amendment to TID 84 to fund the construction of a new riverfront plaza located on West Highland Avenue between the river and North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, to serve as a gateway to Water Street, the Old World Third Entertainment District, and the Deer District. The plaza will be named the Gary P. Grunau Memorial Plaza, in honor of the late developer who has worked on the riverwalk system and other major projects in the City of Milwaukee.



Proposed design for new riverwalk and public plaza at 1005 N. Edison St.



Proposed plaza design for West Highland Avenue.

TID Public Infrastructure Enhancements

In 2024, the Urban Development Team amended four TIDs to fund public infrastructure in downtown and the City's neighborhoods. In total, \$14,150,000 in TID funding was approved for improvements city-wide that will include; the narrowing of roadways, bump-outs, raised intersections, speed humps, and protected bike lanes to slow traffic down and make for a better pedestrian and cyclist experience.

In 2025, the team will continue to amend additional TIDs to fund additional public improvements to support Mayor Johnson's focus on slowing down traffic to reduce reckless driving and provide protected bike facilities. To date, since Mayor Johnson has taken office, the administration has advanced \$57.75 million in tax incremental financing to support public improvements aligned with his priorities.

Vel R. Phillips Plaza Opening, Artist and Vendor Selected

Mayor Johnson also prioritizes creation of public plazas for enhancing public infrastructure. In June of 2024, Mayor Johnson, members of the Common Council, and City officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Vel R. Phillips Plaza at 401 W. Wisconsin Ave. Funded by Tax Incremental District (TID) 48 (Park East), the Plaza and Milwaukee County's Bus Rapid Transit stop are now open to the public.

In October, DCD announced the chosen artist and artwork at Vel R. Phillips Plaza, titled *"I Didn't Do It Alone"* by Karen Olivier. Olivier's permanent memorial installation will honor Milwaukee politician, attorney, jurist, and civil rights activist Vel R. Phillips, and will serve as a creative representation of her work in breaking down social and cultural barriers for women, and women of color, in the City of Milwaukee, throughout the State of Wisconsin, and around the United States. The memorial will honor several pivotal aspects of Phillips' life of service and her fight for liberty while highlighting the core of her lifelong efforts. Throughout her career, Phillips often stated, "I didn't do it alone," a reflection of her commitment to collective action. Funded by TID 110, which was created for the Fiserv HQ project, this piece will be installed in 2026.

Also in 2024, RACM signed a lease with Draft & Vessel to be the food/beverage vendor tenant at Vel R. Phillips Plaza. The tenant has extensive experience in running multiple locations focused on beverage service and will be partnering with Crave Café in Shorewood to provide food, including burgers, soup, and ice cream. Interior buildout will begin this coming winter with operations expected to begin in the spring of 2025.



Photo credit: Karyn Olivier Studio

Commercial Corridor Successes & Efforts

The Department of City Development's Commercial Corridor Team (CCT) provides technical assistance and business development resources to commercial and retail businesses and designated commercial districts such as the BIDs and NIDs. Additionally, CCT is responsible for the management of the City's Façade, Signage, Storefront Activation, and Retail Investment Fund Grants. CCT's work expands to collaborating with City Real Estate and Planning to further support projects that help improve the City's neighborhoods and commercial corridors' quality of life.

In 2024, CCT awarded 94 grants for a total of \$1,709,924, leveraging an estimated total of \$5,859,807 that businesses and property owners invested in their properties or commercial spaces. CCT Retail Investment Fund (RIF) awardees created 67 Full-Time Equivalent employment opportunities for City of Milwaukee residents in 2024, while RIF grants awarded in 2024 are projected to create as many as 112 full-time employee employment opportunities in coming years.

3728 N. Fratney St.



215 E. Bruce St.



Photo credit: Jessica Sanchez

CCT staff secured and administered:

- A \$250,000 Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) for use in the redevelopment of the former Acapulco Restaurant (600 W. National Avenue)
- A \$500,000 Idle Sites Redevelopment Grant from WEDC to support the United Community Center early childhood education activities at 1648 S. 37th St. and 1645 S. 36th St.
- An \$88,000 Site Assessment Grant to support the Bronzeville Arts and Tech Hub along West North Avenue between North Sixth and North Seventh streets
- \$100,000 as part of the Fresh Food Access Fund (FFAF), which was awarded to seven different projects

Looking forward

The CCT anticipates awarding additional Commercial Revitalization Grant awards in 2025, totaling approximately \$600,000, which is expected to leverage an estimated \$2.5 million in private investment from business and commercial property owners.

- CCT will attempt to secure another CDI Grant of \$250,000 for project and location to be determined.
- CCT is currently working with a number of prospective Business and Neighborhood Improvement Districts (BIDs and NIDs) throughout the City, and plans to continue supporting them as they explore the process of BID/NID creation in 2025.
- All previously-awarded FFAF projects are expected to be completed in 2025 or 2026.

Supporting Affordable Housing & Homeownership Opportunities

Tax Incremental Districts for Affordable Housing

DCD's Housing Division continues to utilize Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) to support the development of affordable housing. In 2024, four new affordable housing Tax Incremental Districts (TID) totaling \$7,215,000 were approved.

- The **East National Flats**, located at 1st and National in the city's Walker's Point neighborhood, will feature 140 affordable rental units and 3,700 square feet of commercial space. A TIF of \$2.17 million was awarded by the City to support the \$54.6 million investment, which broke ground in the fall and is anticipated to be completed by the spring of 2026.
- The **Midtown Home Ownership Initiative** is a mix of 34 homes built by Habitat for Humanity and 20 duplexes to be developed by the Emem Group in Milwaukee's Midtown neighborhood. A TID was created in the amount of \$2.345 million to support the \$19.2 million investment into home ownership and rental units. City-owned vacant lots being repurposed to support affordable housing were also a component of this initiative.
- The **Kin at Freshwater**, located in Milwaukee's Harbor District, will include 140 mixed-income units and 1,300 square feet of commercial space that will be developed on a RACM-owned parcel. The \$44.4 million development was supported with \$2 million of tax incremental financing and is anticipated to be completed in 2026.
- In the Bronzeville neighborhood, the **Bronzeville Arts and Tech Hub** will be developed on city-owned parcels at Sixth Street and North Avenue. This mixed-use project will include 48 affordable units and 29,000 square feet of art and tech space that supports the vision of the Bronzeville Area Plan. The \$28.7 million investment received \$700,000 in tax incremental financing, broke ground this fall, and is set to be completed in late 2025.



Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC)

The Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation works with City departments, community-based agencies, financial institutions, developers, local foundations, and most importantly, residents, to improve Milwaukee's neighborhoods.

The NIDC outreach and relationship-building efforts work to harmonize the professional experience of City staff with the lived experience and insights of members of the Milwaukee community. In 2024, NIDC staff participated in over 100 events and meetings with local organizations. These forums, coalescing with weekly door-to-door neighborhood outreach, have allowed for an exchange of ideas that can result in the thoughtful, efficient administration of programs while revealing opportunities for policies to evolve with the needs of a growing Milwaukee. Throughout the year, DCD allocated \$2,223,273 towards the preservation, rehabilitation, and renovation of more than 91 housing units across the City.

DCD remains dedicated to fostering affordable housing initiatives aimed at preserving and enhancing existing homes, as well as supporting new homebuyers in their journey to purchase and renovate properties. In 2025, DCD will work closely with Targeted Investment Neighborhood partner organizations to strategically engage residents in new opportunities.



Milwaukee Home Down Payment Assistance Program

The Milwaukee Home Down Payment Assistance Program proudly offers City of Milwaukee residents **grants of up to \$7,000** to assist in purchasing their first home. ACTS Housing, Housing Resources Inc, and the United Community Center, our dedicated homebuyer education counseling partner agencies, administer this valuable program. In 2024, our partner agencies **helped 312 homebuyers** achieve the goal of homeownership within the City of Milwaukee. An impressive investment of \$1,967,060 in down payment assistance funds made these homebuyers' dreams come true.

In 2025, DCD will work on creating a new request for proposals to continue championing the exceptional outcomes achieved under the Milwaukee Home Down Payment Assistance Program.

Homes MKE

Homes MKE works with local partners to renovate vacant City-owned tax-foreclosed properties and create high-quality, affordable home ownership and rental opportunities. With lease-to-own and direct ownership opportunities, Homes MKE, through its partner homebuyer counseling agencies, helps provide buyer's down payment assistance and ensure owner occupancy for a minimum of five years.

In 2024, Homes MKE has completed 30 properties with 14 development teams; all but one of the teams is



either a nonprofit, emerging developer, or developer of color. An additional 32 properties have been transferred and are at some stage in rehab. Every Homes MKE property with a failing sewer lateral has had a complete replacement through the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Private Property Infiltration and Inflow Reduction Program. All Homes MKE properties have replaced lead water service lines.

While all Homes MKE developers utilize local labor, many have elected to participate in the American Rescue Plan Act Unemployed or Underemployed workforce development subsidy, employing workers at or above the city-mandated Living Wage.



Homes MKE press conference.



Supporting emerging developers.



Rehab in progress with accessible entryway.



DCD team members discuss renovated duplex.



Kitchen in fully rehabbed property.



Team member reviews renovation.



Home rehab in progress.



Finishing touches at North 29th Street.

Revitalizing Neighborhoods

Real Estate Highlights:

DCD sales in 2024

158
IMPROVED
PROPERTIES

100
VACANT
LOTS

The majority of the vacant lots sales were for the development and construction as part of a targeted and coordinated affordable housing initiative in the Midtown neighborhood led by the Community Development Alliance (CDA).

20
DUPLEXES



34
SINGLE
FAMILY



**ANOTHER
13
VACANT LOTS**

were part of LISC Milwaukee's Early Childhood Educators' initiative will provide affordable homes across five strategic locations in the City.

Department staff worked diligently on several successful projects in the community in 2024 including:

- While DCD was marketing the mixed-use building at 3700-02 N. Teutonia Ave., the basement was filled with water, the stairwells collapsed, and a vehicle crashed through the commercial space. The building was blighted and recommended for demolition. However, 3706 Property Investments LLC acquired the property in January 2024 from the City. They combined the property with the adjacent vacant lot, removed a static billboard, and completed the renovation of the single-unit commercial space along with three market-rate residential units.
- The City sold three tax-foreclosed properties at 6137, 6143, and 6147 W. Fond du Lac Ave. The properties have a combined area of 19,200 square feet and were occupied by a small building and a static billboard. DCD negotiated the removal of the billboard and sold the three properties to Jackson's Soul Food Redefined, LLC. Jackson's is renovating the existing 900-square-foot commercial building into a dine-in and carry-out drive-thru restaurant specializing in hot and ready-to-serve delicious and nutritional meals. The restaurant anticipates hiring approximately 10 employees from the community. The renovation involves new street frontage (with the relocation of curb cuts), interior building layout, commercial kitchen, the addition of a drive-through lane, onsite parking, outdoor seating, and new landscaping. DCD staff shepherded the project through various City processes, including approval of a Certified Survey Map, a stormwater management plan, new ingress/egress locations, and the overall design through the department's Design Review Team.
- The McKinley School Renovation was completed in 2023 and immediately became an asset to the surrounding neighborhood and was recognized with a Daily Reporter Top Projects of 2023 Award, a Mayor's Urban Design Award, and a Cream of the Cream City Award. The project involved taking a former school building that was a blight to the community and transforming the historically significant building into a multi-family apartment building that provides affordable housing to veterans and families. The overall project included the development and construction of four McKinley School homes along West Vliet Street that were completed in 2024. These homes activate the street where the asphalt playground once stood and had been unused for more than 15 years.



"Before and After" at 3700-02 N. Teutonia Ave.



"Before and After" on West Fond du Lac Avenue.



West Vliet Street.

Healing Spaces Initiative

In 2024, the Healing Spaces Initiative celebrated the successful completion of a new site: Bumblebee Haven Community Garden and Healing Space, located at 1439 W. Mitchell St., in the Historic Mitchell Street neighborhood. This thoughtfully designed space now continues to serve as a community hub for community engagement, relaxation, connection, and wellness. It will feature community garden beds, native plants, a rain catchment system, and an area for small group activities. The addition of Bumblebee Haven Community Garden and Healing Space reflects the ongoing commitment to creating inclusive, accessible spaces that foster healing and engagement across Milwaukee.

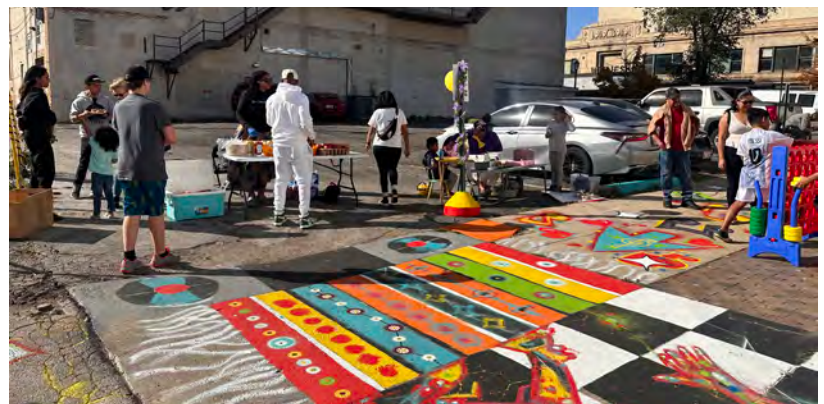


Looking ahead, efforts will focus on identifying additional neighborhoods for future Healing Spaces while expanding partnerships with local organizations to enhance programming. Plans will include community art installations, to encourage greater use of these spaces. The initiative will also continue to engage residents in the planning and maintenance efforts to ensure future Healing Spaces meet the unique needs of their communities.

Community Improvement Program (CIP)

The Community Improvement Program (CIP) achieved significant milestones in 2024, completing 20 projects totaling \$78,275. These efforts included community garden creation, art installations, beautification initiatives, and other targeted improvements that have enhanced the overall appearance of neighborhoods. CIP orientations continued throughout the year, complemented by neighborhood canvassing efforts where community organizers distributed flyers promoting NIDC programs and encouraging resident participation. These outreach efforts have contributed to sustained high levels of activity for CIP projects in 2024.

In 2025, bi-monthly in-person CIP orientations will return, providing residents with more opportunities to learn about program benefits and how to participate. Continued canvassing and outreach will remain a cornerstone of the program to ensure widespread awareness. Looking forward, CIP aims to increase the number of funded projects, expand its reach into underserved areas, and collaborate with other initiatives, such as the Healing Spaces program, to drive holistic neighborhood revitalization efforts.



Planning for Success

During 2024, the Planning Division advanced multiple major projects to shape and support City planning, engagement, and development goals. In June, the Common Council approved the Pierce & Bruce Sub-District Plan that was developed in partnership with Menomonee Valley Partners to provide guidance for future land use, zoning, and public infrastructure improvements to support existing businesses and attract new ones to the area that provide employment opportunities to local residents.

After a yearlong process of community engagement that included engaging more than 1,700 residents in person as well as housing sector stakeholders, Planning released a draft of the proposed update to the Housing Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan to encourage housing growth and choice and advance the city's goals for housing affordability, climate sustainability, and resilience through updates to the zoning code and complementary policies. The Planning Division will continue to work during 2025 to advance the Housing Element's goals for housing affordability, anti-displacement, and housing choice.

The former Northridge Mall site is the largest development site within the City of Milwaukee and holds incredible potential to be reimaged as an asset for the Northwest Side and the whole City. Planning has launched an initiative to work with neighborhood partners, including the Granville Business Improvement District, to refine and implement the vision for the redevelopment of the former Northridge Mall site. This redevelopment planning effort will examine multiple development scenarios, including a market analysis, and public engagement to say, "Goodbye Northridge, Hello Granville!"

The West Side Area Plan Update kicked off in 2024 and will continue in 2025. The planning process will include partnerships with local neighborhood partners and leaders, engagement, commercial corridor recommendations, market analysis, and opportunities for key catalytic sites and commercial corridors in the area including, Reimagining the WIS 175 freeway spur to evaluate alternatives to improve multimodal transportation and neighborhood connections.

During the past year, **45 zoning changes, area planning, and other files were reviewed by the City Plan Commission. Developments and rezonings approved by the City Plan Commission during the past 12 months are anticipated to bring 700 new homes to the City, including approximately 300 affordable housing units, and add an estimated \$100 million to the tax base.** This includes the proposed Edison development at 1005 N. Edison St. which will be the tallest mass timber building in the country upon completion, and the River Trail Commons development that will bring Milwaukee's first new cohousing development to the Riverwest neighborhood.



Milwaukee Arts Board

The Milwaukee Arts Board (MAB) is a 17-member board that is tasked with promoting the development, support, and enjoyment of the arts in Milwaukee; promoting cultural diversity in the artistic life in Milwaukee; and promoting the formation and growth of artistic projects or programs that are administered by and responsive to the needs of the city's communities that have been historically underrepresented or underserved based on race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, or citizenship status. MAB is staffed by DCD employees with support from the City Clerk's Office.

In 2024, MAB administered the annual Sustaining Grant program with grants to local, arts-focused nonprofit organizations to support artistic or administrative staff, facility and operating costs as well as programming costs if applicable. Recipients are strongly encouraged to use these funds to support artists. Forty-seven Milwaukee-based arts organizations were awarded a total of \$272,000. MAB also honors members of the arts community with two annual awards. The 2024 Mildred L. Harpole Artist of the Year awardees were Fatima Laster and Justin Goodrum while Jacobo Lovo and Jessica Meuninck-Ganger were named the 2024 Friends of the Arts. These awardees were honored, along with the 47 sustaining grant recipients, at the annual arts celebration that was held in June in the City Hall Rotunda.

2024 marked the end of the Public Artist in Residence (PAIR) pilot program. PAIR invests in the city's cultural creators by leveraging the knowledge and practices of local artists to build a stronger Milwaukee. Sarah Davitt, Haptotrope Artist Services, served as the first PAIR and worked collaboratively with the Department of Public Works, Vision Zero and other stakeholders to develop, strategize, promote, and implement artist-driven solutions to address reckless driving and create safer, stronger neighborhoods throughout the city. Davitt undertook the creation of an art car, The Moving City, as well as a visibility patch printing activity, which is being used by Vision Zero for community outreach to catalyze constructive, deep conversations about our shared responsibility for safe driving.



Justin Goodrum (Artist of the Year), Jessica Meuninck-Ganger (Friend of the Arts), Mayor Cavalier Johnson, Fatima Laster (Artist of the Year), and Jacobo Lovo (Friends of the Arts) at the arts celebration in the City Hall rotunda.



Public Artist in Residence (PAIR) pilot program.



Fourth of July Commission

Since 1911, the City of Milwaukee has provided a safe and friendly celebration of America's independence in uniquely Milwaukee ways. In parks throughout the city, families and friends gather for picnics, games, parades, and talent contests. At night the sky is filled with fireworks bursting all over town. These festivities are tasked to the City's Fourth of July Commission, which is supported in its efforts by the Department of City Development.

In 2024, these festivities celebrated the theme of "Working Together for a Better U.S.A." Through the hard work of very dedicated volunteers from individual park organizations, celebrations took place at Alcott Park, Enderis Playfield, Gordon Park, Humboldt Park, Jackson Park, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center, Lake Park, Lincoln Park, Mitchell Park, Noyes Park, Washington Park, and Wilson Park. Milwaukee's 4th of July celebrations would not be possible without the support and cooperation of Milwaukee County Parks and the Milwaukee Public Schools recreation division.

For information about the Fourth of July Commission and its activities, or how to get involved, visit city.milwaukee.gov/July4th.



Social Media

The Department of City Development's (DCD) social media channels have experienced tremendous growth in 2024. From joining LinkedIn to extending our reach on Facebook, DCD continues to shape the way we connect with the community while keeping the public engaged and updated. Here is a breakdown of the most important social media statistics and trends from 2024.

Facebook

Analytics from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025, shows DCD's "reach" has increased by 53.8%. In Facebook analytics, "reach" refers to the number of unique users who see a post or page, regardless of whether they have engaged with it. DCD has also seen a 101.3% increase in content interactions during this same time frame. Videos posted on DCD's Facebook page also saw a huge increase in viewership. There was a 94% increase in 3-second video views and a whopping 892.5% increase in one-minute video views. According to analytics, DCD's top content by views included renovation pictures related to Homes MKE and photos of current listings on DCD's Real Estate website. DCD's top post of 2024 was an announcement that the multimodal improvement project on North Ave from Humboldt to Prospect was complete.

Instagram

Analytics from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025, shows DCD's "reach" on Instagram also saw a 25% increase. DCD's top content on Instagram in 2024 included:

- Photos: Milwaukee Harbor District Riverwalk awarded \$14.7 million in federal funding
- Video: Redevelopment efforts at the former Northridge Mall
- Photos: City leaders celebrating beautification efforts along N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
- Photos: Nationally acclaimed artist, Karyn Olivier, selected for Artist Commission at Vel R. Phillips Plaza



well content resonates with viewers. DCD's top content on X in 2024 includes announcements and reminders regarding meetings for Growing MKE and the West Side Area Plan. It also included press coverage on The Edison securing financing for construction. Also performing well was press coverage on a \$33 million investment to improve safety on streets and to boost riverfront access in the Third Ward, Walker's Point, and Downtown.

YouTube

DCD's YouTube channel saw enormous growth in 2024 with a boost in analytics. Views increased 67%, watch time increased 29%, and there was a 26% increase in subscribers. Top content on YouTube in 2024 included the Growing MKE webinars and videos regarding the former Northridge Mall. A video on a commercial property for sale (2673-79 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) also performed well.



LinkedIn

In October 2024, DCD officially joined LinkedIn. Currently, DCD's followers are from the Greater Milwaukee and Greater Chicago areas and work mainly in the government industry, as well as in real estate and broadcast media. DCD's top posts to date include:

- Commissioner Crump's interview regarding Homes MKE on Spanning the State
- Photos inside the former Northridge Mall and demolition updates
- Growing MKE webinar announcements and updates
- Photos from the launch of the Center of Equity Practice and Planning Justice at UW-Milwaukee





milwaukee.gov/DCD