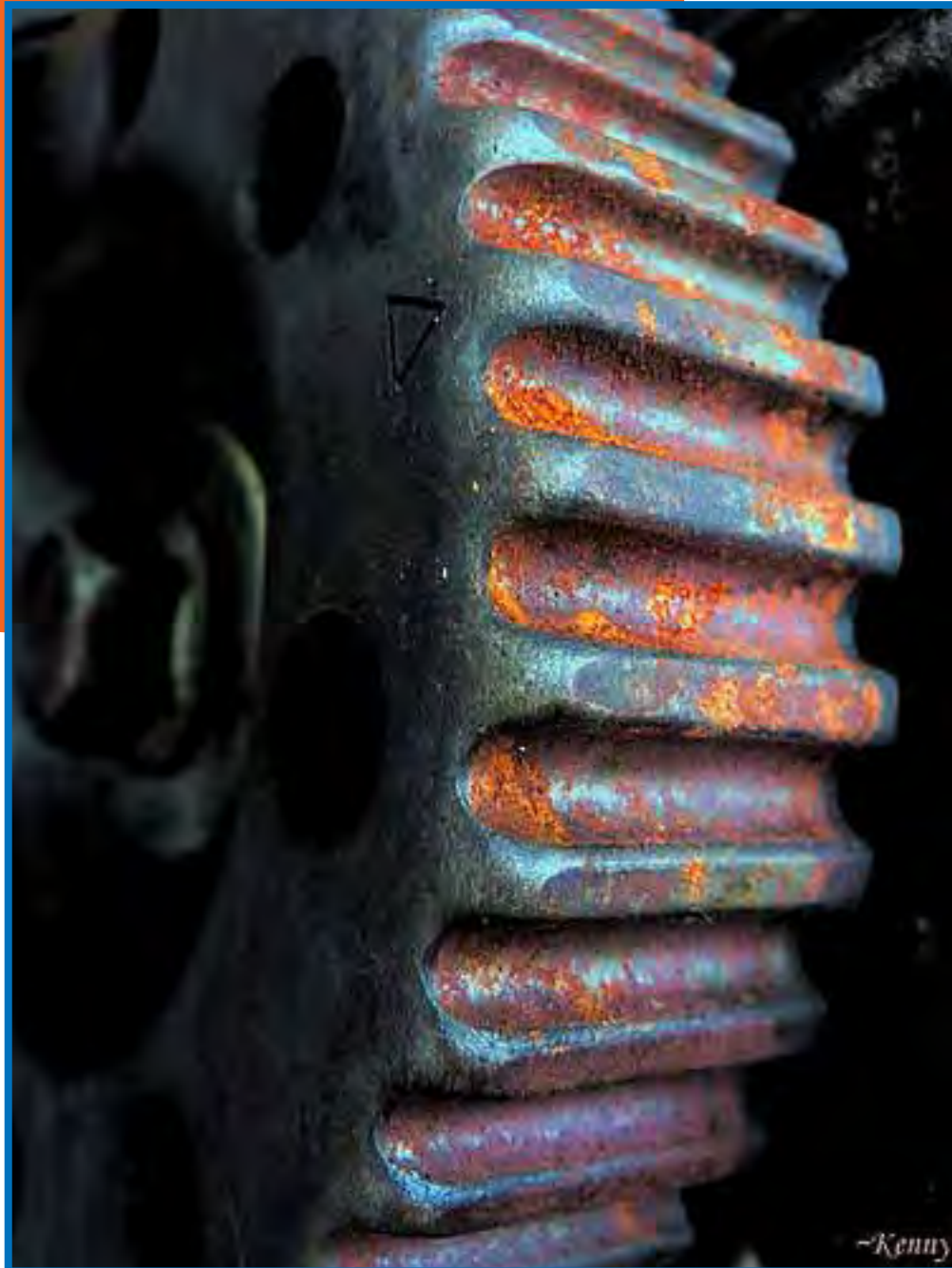


MILWAUKEE

Downtown Denver Peer City Analysis Report



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This document is the culmination of thorough research of the downtown area for the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The purpose of this document is to inform the Downtown Denver Partnership about successes and failures that Milwaukee has had in its endeavors to create a vibrant downtown area. Denver and Milwaukee are considered peer cities by area and demographic definition, therefore the information provided here should assist the Downtown Denver Partnership in their efforts.

We closely studied various aspects of Milwaukee's downtown, which include, but are not limited to:

- DOWNTOWN DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS: General location, boundaries, and zoning (pg. 2).
- POPULATION: Population demographics (pg. 12).
- DEVELOPMENT: Commercial and residential development, business improvement district, and events (pg. 15).
- RETAIL: Trends, successes and failures (pg. 19).
- PARKING: Management, policies and regulations (pg. 21).
- POLICIES AND POLITICS: Development agencies, affordable housing (pg. 24).

The information for this report was gathered from published documents, current web pages, and interviews via phone and email. In our endeavors, we found that all the information we sought was not readily available, nor were the people whom are familiar with the information readily willing to assist. Nevertheless, the information contained in this document is a thorough report of the information available about downtown Milwaukee and further inquiries should either be extrapolated from the existing report or forwarded to the sources cited at the end of the document.

A notable oddity about the downtown area is that there are two different definitions: the City of Milwaukee defines one boundary, and Business Improvement District #21 defines another. The boundaries are not completely different being that the city's boundary completely encompasses the Business Improvement District #21.

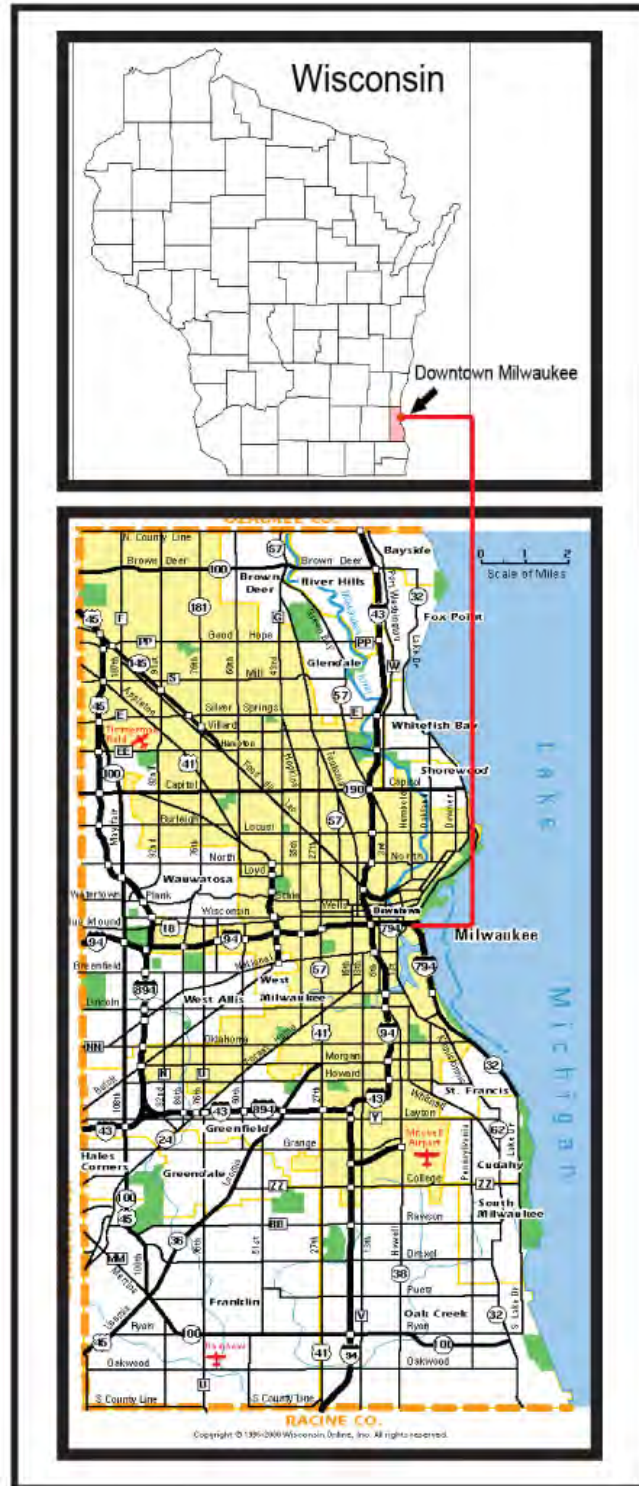
SECTION 2: DOWNTOWN DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Location

Milwaukee was a part of the Mid-West industrial boom and grew rapidly to just under 750,000 people as the population peaked in the 1960's¹. As the Milwaukee's total population skyrocketed, it had an adverse effect on the population living in Milwaukee's downtown. In response to the city's growing housing demands, the Mayor Frank Zeidler (1948-1960), annexed enough greenfield to double the city's size. On this newly acquired land the city built Cape Cod and ranch style suburbs, which virtually emptied the downtown area as well as its surrounding historic neighborhoods. Through the early 1990's Milwaukee's surrounding counties grew as well, locking the city in, the final land acquisition being in 1962. Because the city had no room to grow outside of its suburbs, and there were minimal infill initiatives in the downtown area, the population of the city fell overall from 745,000 people to about 625,000 in the early 1990's, to the current population of about 575,000 people. Downtown Milwaukee's population and economic vitality wasn't effected as much as the surrounding areas because it already suffered a population and business decrease in earlier decades.

The dissipation in population is due, in part, to smaller family size and migration to surrounding suburbs, but another significant factor was the disinvestment in the older neighborhoods including downtown Milwaukee. As most of the city's residents that were able to move out did, much of the inner city population in Milwaukee was working class, depending heavily on manufacturing jobs. The deindustrialization of the city and the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs to Mexico weighed heavily on the downtown population decrease. Furthermore, although downtown Milwaukee began to attract corporate business to the downtown area, much of the corporate workforce came from surrounding suburbs. A combination of these factors seriously affected the population of the downtown area, but they also spawned urban infill projects, many of which were residential and mixed use developments to supplement the downtown business growth.

¹ Kenny, Judith T. "Picturing Milwaukee's Neighborhoods." Milwaukee Neighborhoods: Photos and Maps 1885-1992. March 2004. University of Wisconsin Libraries, Milwaukee, WI. November 2006. <http://www.uwm.edu/Library/digilib/Milwaukee/records/picture.html>



Gentrification and downtown disinvestment played a large role in the initiation for the revitalization of Milwaukee in the 1990's. Milwaukee as a whole was benefiting from local economic growth, but what was also clear is that the residents of the inner city areas received little benefit from said economic growth². From this, one can surmise that much of the early revitalization was activated by corporate business, which drew their work force from the suburbs. Only after business reestablished itself in the downtown area were residential opportunities made for downtown employees.

With the deindustrialization of the Mid-West, Milwaukee became part of the "Rust Belt" cities and the downtown lost much of its vitality. Like many other Rust Belt Cities, Milwaukee remained relatively stagnant until the 1990's³. The downtown area struggled to attract business, large and small, in the 1990's. More than incentives, the agreeability of the economic and real estate markets sparked downtown growth (Sancar). Currently, a heavy majority of the Class A and Class B office spaces are performing well in the downtown area (Rozick). Most of the office space in the defined downtown area is Class A.

The recent growth in corporate business, amongst other factors, has prompted residential growth in the downtown area. Young families and downtown professionals are now interested in the cultural amenities and location of downtown and are moving into recently developed housing in the urban areas. Additionally, "empty nesters" from Milwaukee's many suburbs as well as the nearby Chicago metropolitan area are migrating to the dense, diverse urban core to experience the cultural amenities and live more efficiently (Rozick).

Boundaries

The Downtown Milwaukee area is bound as follows: The west boundary is Interstate 43, to the north is Walnut Street which changes into Pleasant Street, the east side ends at Lake Michigan, and the south side is bordered by the Menomonee River. These boundaries are agreed upon by two of the major downtown BIDs, the East Town Milwaukee BID (#21) and the Westtown BID.

² Levine, Mark V. "Metropolitan Polarization in an Era of Affluence: Income Trends in Metropolitan Milwaukee Since 1990." Center for Economic Development Policy Research Publications. University of Wisconsin Libraries, Milwaukee, WI. October 2006. http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CED/publications/income_trends.pdf

³ Sancar, Fahriye. E-Mail to Fahriye Sancar. 6 Nov. 2006



Although Lake Michigan is the most notable of the natural features in Milwaukee, the downtown area actually grew around the confluence of the Menomonee River and the Milwaukee River, which flows through the center of downtown, north to south. The Menomonee River, in the mid

20th century, separated the more diverse downtown land uses from a heavy industrial section of the city directly south of the downtown area. Interstate 43, bordering the west side, is a relatively binding boundary because its current structure hampers movement across and/or under it. Efforts to relieve the highways relative impermeability are in the works, which may expand the downtown borders into the Marquette University campus in the future⁴. Per the north boundary of Walnut/Pleasant Street, the density drops sharply within 2 or three blocks of that boundary transitioning into residential neighborhoods. Rather affluent residential areas are minimally connected, physically as well as socially, from the downtown area to the south.

Characteristics

In this section the sub-districts are defined as large, all encompassing areas that comprise the downtown as a whole. The sub-areas are found within the sub-districts and are either defined by the activities that occur there or as projects that the city has implemented in the area.

Downtown Milwaukee has four sub-districts. The first is East Town, which is the area west of Lake Michigan, to the Milwaukee River. The area is bound by the Walnut/Pleasant Street boarder to the north and Interstate 794 on the south. The East Town sub-district contains most of the downtown area's class A office space in it's southern end⁵. The architecture consists of classic Industrial age office buildings and more modern high-rise commercial structures. In the northern section, East Town contains part of the Beerline B sub-area and a portion of the Brady Street sub-area. Beerline B consists of mixed use buildings and new or recently renovated condominiums and apartments. The area is a popular cultural hub and is home to a young and upwardly mobile demographic⁶. The Brady Street sub-area, although not completely contained in the downtown area, contains some of Milwaukee counties most upscale residencies and historic neighborhoods. At the western edge of East Town, the sub-district shares a sub-area called The Milwaukee River Walk. The River Walk is a mixed use project involving the city's public riverfront areas and the private development that fronts it.

⁴ Rozick, Allison. Personal Interview. 2 Nov. 2006

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.



The second sub-district is the Westtown area. Westtown is the area east of Interstate 43 and west of the Milwaukee River. The area is bound by McKinley Avenue to the north and Interstate 794 to the south. Westtown is home to the more historic buildings of Milwaukee's downtown including the County Courthouse, the Library, and the History Museum. A significant sub-area in Westtown is the Wisconsin Center District, which contains the Midwest Airlines Arena, U.S. Cellular Arena, the Milwaukee Theater, and the Milwaukee Athletic Walk of Fame. These venues serve as a cultural hub for the greater Milwaukee metro area and are home to the Milwaukee Bucks, The UW Milwaukee Panthers, The Milwaukee Theatre Company and many more cultural and entertainment entities.

The third sub-district is the Schlitz Park area. This area is relatively small in comparison to the first two. The area is bound by Walnut Street to the north, Interstate 43 to the west, the Milwaukee River to the east and McKinley Street to the south. The most prominent attribute of this sub-district is the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company, which is the terminal for the Beerline B sub-area as well as a notable tourist attraction.

The final sub-district is the Third Ward area. This area is relatively small compared to the first and second sub-districts and it lies in the area south of the I-43/ I-794 intersection, north of the Menomonee River. The area used to be comprised of active industrial warehouses. However, in recent years, said warehouses are being renovated and transformed into residencies and much of the western area is under construction with the Marquette Interchange project.

As we understand, the Third Ward area is also the area that is most problematic in terms of its viability and stability. The area, as stated before, was once predominantly industrial. Milwaukee has shifted from a major industrial center to a more diverse commercial center over the past 50 years and industrial areas have suffered the most in terms of economic instability and disinvestment. The area was the last to be reinvested in and it currently "playing catch up" to the rest of the booming downtown area⁷. The BIDs and DPO's did not reveal much information about what was being done to help the area other than the projects that are already going on. Natural market activity is playing an important role in the revitalization of the area as people are

⁷ Rozick, Allison. Personal Interview. 2 Nov. 2006

relocating to downtown areas. Furthermore, the Marquette Interchange project will be important in the reconnection of the area with the larger sub-districts, which may open up more opportunities for land use and interaction in the area.

There is another area that plays a large role in downtown Milwaukee's vitality, if only for a few months at a time, the Summerfest grounds. Due to its minimal usage timeframe, the area is not designated as a part of any sub-district downtown. This minimal usage, however, does not take away from the importance of the area. The Summerfest grounds are home to what Milwaukee claims as the largest music festival in the world. The Summerfest averages approximately 1 million attendees every summer for two weeks in late July, early June. This festival brings an extremely large amount of business to the downtown service industries and is cited as one of the main reasons that people visit Downtown Milwaukee overall. This very unique aspect of Milwaukee's Downtown is vital to the city's character and it seems like the city and its businesses value the event and do all they can to integrate it into the city's identity.

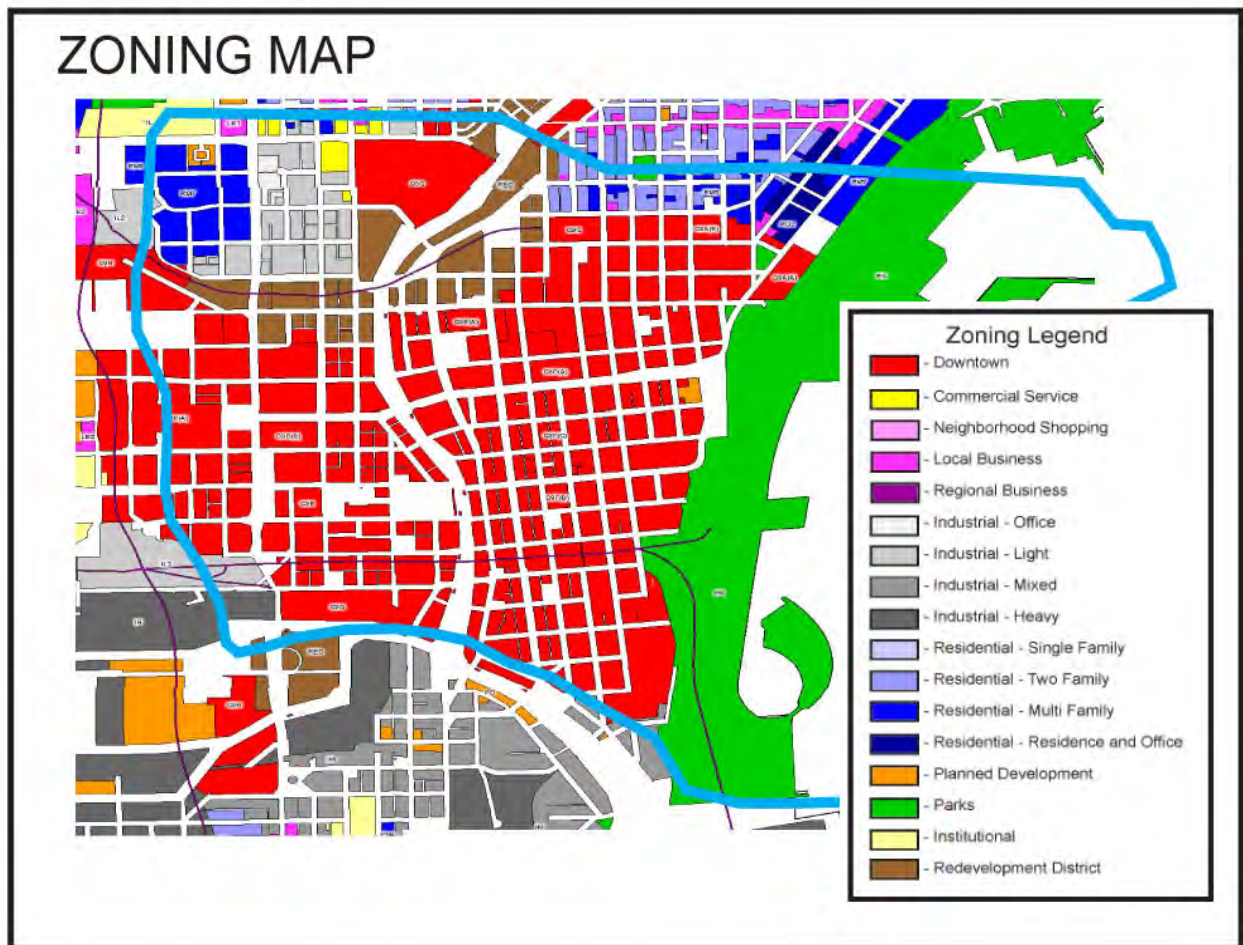
Zoning

The City of Milwaukee Downtown Management and Planning Department is currently giving a massive overhaul to the Downtown Plan. As you can see from the city zoning map, a majority of the area is zoned as "downtown." The ambiguity is there for good reason however as the process of revamping zoning policy downtown is already in motion. The city recognized that the zoning in downtown was dated and inadequate to support growth in the downtown area. Current zoning policy lacks design standards and is too all-encompassing to provide an environment of innovation and progress.

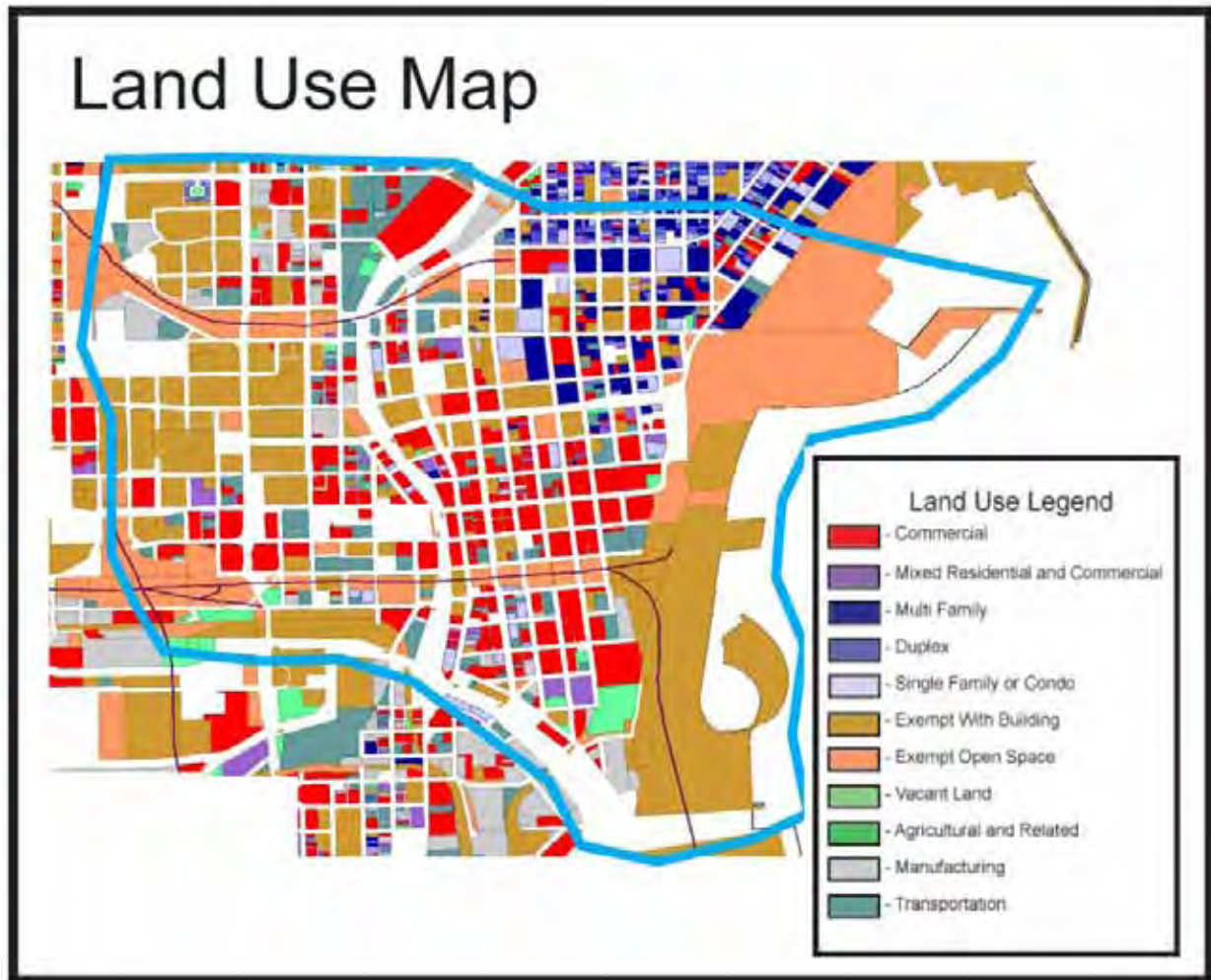
Milwaukee is switching from a district zoning approach to a street typology approach, which consists of 4 or 5 different typologies a street can be zoned as (Milwaukee Downtown Plan has yet to define typologies). Furthermore, the zoning policy in the past has incorporated areas not in the defined downtown area. Thus, Milwaukee administration is trying to focus on the needs of the downtown area as its own entity and disregarding the blanketed land use policy of old.

With the new and rapid growth that is occurring in the area, the city staff also recognizes the need for mixed use and residential zoning in the new downtown plan. Efforts are being made to

assist in urban renewal projects in particular, as well as projects that prescribe to a more human scale (i.e. residential buildings, public areas, entertainment nodes, etc.). Because of the ambiguity of the zoning map, we have elected to add a land use map that is more illustrative of the nature of the current downtown area. The maps were constructed using an interactive map tool on the City of Milwaukee’s website.



As per figure 5, many of the buildings in the southern and central portions of city are commercial or exempt with the building. The residential boom that is occurring in the northern section of the downtown area is much better illustrated through the land use map than the zoning map. The diversity in land use needs to be supported by the zoning policy. Thus, the overhaul of the dated policy can ensure Milwaukee can be more adaptable with the coming change.



SECTION 3: POPULATION

As with other respects to research concerning a downtown area, the population of Milwaukee’s downtown varies due to inconsistencies in the defined boundary of the downtown. Because the US Census does not provide an official definition of a downtown, figures represent tracts defined by the local DPO as within the downtown area, as well as independent sources.

Though the exact population size may not be consistent, trends emerge demonstrating that while the city of Milwaukee is losing population, the downtown area is booming, celebrating a drastic increase in population over the last two decades.

MILWAUKEE HISTORIC POPULATION PROFILE

YEAR	POPULATION	NUMERIC CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE	RANK*
1850	20,061			35
1860	45,246	25,185	126%	20
1870	71,440	26,194	58%	19
1880	115,587	44,147	62%	19
1890	204,468	88,881	77%	16
1900	285,315	80,847	40%	14
1910	373,857	88,542	31%	12
1920	457,147	83,290	22%	13
1930	578,249	121,102	26%	12
1940	587,472	9,223	2%	13
1950	637,392	49,920	8%	13
1960	741,324	103,932	16%	11
1970	717,099	-24,225	-3%	12
1980	636,212	-80,887	-11%	16
1990	628,088	-8,124	-1%	17
2000	596,974	-31,114	-5%	19

The city of Milwaukee has seen its population decline in each of the past four censuses. Since reaching its peak in 1960 at 741,324, the city of Milwaukee has lost 20.2% of its population, reaching its lowest point in the 2005 census estimate with a population of 578,887.⁸ Though not as severe as the loss in other “Frostbelt Cities” (including Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia and more), this population decrease means shrinking consumer markets and the migration of entrepreneurs and skilled workers, leading to economic stagnation. In a downward spiral, this induces more residents to leave the city in search of

economic opportunity, while discouraging others from moving to the city, promoting further population decline and economic distress.

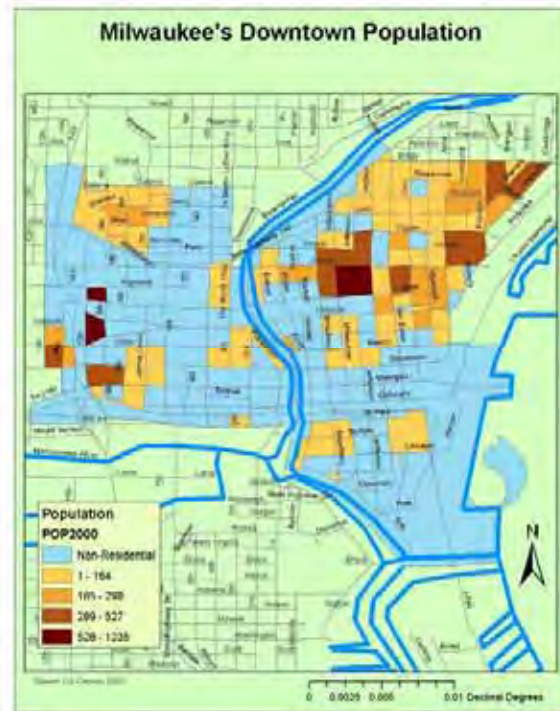
In fact, all of the region's net population growth since 1960 has occurred in the suburbs. Since 1960, while the population in the city of Milwaukee has declined by 20.2%; in the Milwaukee suburbs, population has increased by 61.3%. Since 1990, according to Census Bureau estimates, the city's population has declined by 6.0% while the suburban population has risen by 7.8%.

⁸ <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CED/publications/milwecon/chap1.html>

The city population greatly affects the downtown population, sharing similar declines throughout 1960-1990. Since the late 1970s, however, capital has returned to downtown, first in the form of office buildings and retail space, and more recently as apartments and condominiums. Milwaukee has performed similarly to national population trends. Its downtown lost 11.6% of its residents in the '70s; stagnated in the '80s (a drop of 0.4%); and showed an above-average 13.1% rise in the '90s.⁹

Based on tracts 110,111, 113, 141, 143, 144, 145, 151, 152, and 153 within the city, the downtown population was 16,359 in 2000, a gain of 470 from 1990, and just below its 1970 population of 16,427.¹⁰ This decade, Downtown Milwaukee has seen an unprecedented boom in population rising to an estimated 19,600, an incredible increase of 20%. This increase is projected to continue with a 2010 estimate of 21,500.¹¹

Particular factors favor the population increase downtown as opposed to the rest of the city. Office space built during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s increased the number of downtown office workers, many of whom prefer to live near their jobs. Demand for housing increased, especially for high-end new construction and renovated lofts that compare well with similarly priced units in the suburbs.



Milwaukee's Downtown Population

⁹ Bayer, Michael. "Housing Sprouts in Downtown Milwaukee". Wisconsin Chapter- American Planning Association. 11/24/06 <<http://www.wisconsinplanners.org/wapanews/downtown.html>>.

¹⁰ United States Census 2000. <www.census.gov>

¹¹ "Downtown Data." Downtown Milwaukee. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/data/>>.

Many of these workers want to live near the shops, theaters and restaurants they see and visit during the day. Downtown residents only have to step outside their buildings to be within walking distance of the many festivals and other events which frequently occur in the downtown area. Downtown's rich history and variety of architectural styles suit the tastes of young professionals and empty nesters. Downtown residents can also travel with few delays to nearby office parks and nearby suburbs for job opportunities.¹²

Milwaukee's newest downtown residents are largely college educated and are largely a group of 25 to 34-year-olds who are considered key to the post-industrial development of America's cities. 82% of the residents are non-family, having no children, while 67% of the downtown population is unmarried.¹³ High end marketing is certainly the trend, appealing to high-income clients. Developers have been rushing to convert old warehouses and factories into condominiums and apartments. As residents have flocked to the city, downtown businesses have shown interest, providing the potential for more work in the downtown area.¹⁴

The demographics within Downtown Milwaukee are very interesting as well. Only 7% of the downtown households live in tracts whose median income exceeds that of the metropolitan area (\$45,901) but 36% surpass the city's (\$32,216). The Whites are 71% of all "downtowners" and are dominant, 79% to 86%, in 80% of the tracts. The African Americans are the largest component in the remaining tracts, contributing 69% of the households in one tract and 80% in another.¹⁵

As downtown Milwaukee makes continual improvements in streetscaping, and the quality and image of downtown life, more and more residents will flock to the downtown area, strengthening the tax base for the entire city and providing incentive for jobs and development within Milwaukee.

¹² Bayer, Michael. "Housing Sprouts in Downtown Milwaukee". Wisconsin Chapter- American Planning Association. 11/24/06 <<http://www.wisconsinplanners.org/wapanews/downtown.html>>.

¹³ Birch, Eugenie L. "Who Lives Downtown Today." University of Pennsylvania. 2005. Institute of Urban Research. 20 Nov. 2006 <http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=penniur_papers>.

¹⁴ Daykin, Tom. "Milwaukee Journal Sentinel." Manpower Plans Downtown Move. 21 Dec. 2006. 21 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=379566>>.

¹⁵ Birch, Eugenie L. "Who Lives Downtown Today." University of Pennsylvania. 2005. Institute of Urban Research. 20 Nov. 2006 <http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=penniur_papers>.

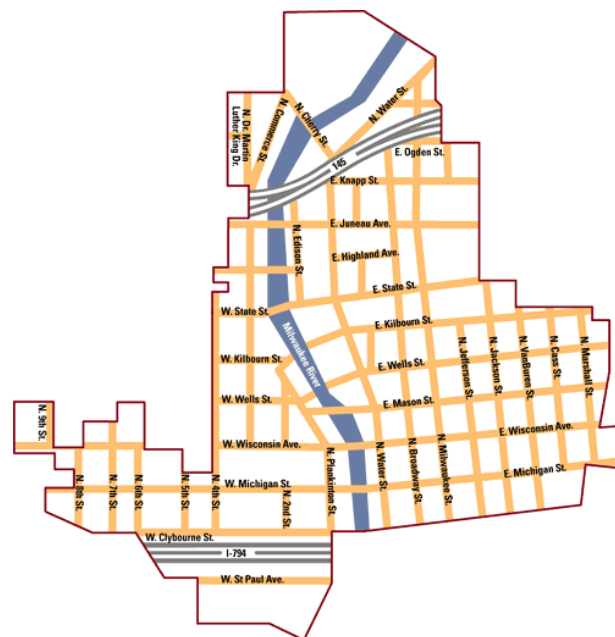
SECTION 4: DEVELOPMENT

Historically, Milwaukee is an industrial town, but as globalization has increased in the past decades towns like Milwaukee have been hit hard. According to the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, “joblessness has been endemic.”¹⁶ Milwaukee ranks 44th out of the 50 largest cities in the United States with an unemployment rate of 9.3%.¹⁷

In the past 10 years, Milwaukee has developed many catalyst projects in hopes of creating jobs and a more vibrant social and economic environment. These projects have been in the form of entertainment facilities and downtown revitalization programs. In addition to these built development projects, Milwaukee has been exploring many avenues for economic and community development.

Milwaukee’s unofficial downtown boundary is Business Improvement District (BID) # 21 encompassing about 120 blocks. BID # 21 has seen much investment in the last few years in housing and other revitalization programs and has an operating budget of \$2,929,711 for 2007.¹⁸ “In the last three years, nearly 2,500 new condos, lofts, townhomes and apartments have been constructed in the downtown area, representing 40 building complexes and more than \$530 million in investments.”¹⁹

Consequently, downtown’s population has increase 20%. The BID #21 has a number of improvement programs to enhance the downtown experience and promote vibrancy.



Business Improvement District # 21

¹⁶ "Milwaukee Downtown." 2007 Budget. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeeedowntown.com/pdf/2007Budget.pdf>>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Milwaukee Downtown." 2007 Budget. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeeedowntown.com/pdf/2007Budget.pdf>>.

¹⁹ "Downtown Data." Downtown Milwaukee. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeeedowntown.com/data/>>.

BID #21 Programs²⁰

- Clean Sweep Ambassadors (cleaning 15 50-gallon bags of trash per day)
- Downtown Public Service Ambassadors (“walking concierges”)
- Graffiti Removal Crew (cut %70 of downtown graffiti)
- Landscape Crew (250 planters and 100 hanging baskets)
- Traveling Information Kiosk (attendant and stocked with brochures)



Traveling Information Kiosk

In attempts to remedy or, at least mitigate, the poor economic situation

Milwaukee has been faced with due to its transition away from an industrial economy, it has created many “catalyst” projects.

Major “Catalyst” Projects²¹



The Riverwalk

- Wisconsin Center District (1994): entertainment and convention center.
- Humphrey IMAX Theatre (1996)
- The Riverwalk (1990’s): commercial, retail, pedestrian, and water activities.
- Milwaukee Art Museum (2001)
- Milwaukee Public Market (2005):

- Park East Redevelopment (Current): Mixed-use development, and open space.
- Intermodal Transit Station (Groundbreaking this year): Bus and train station renovation.

²⁰ "BID Programs." Milwaukee Downtown. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaueedowntown.com/programs/>>.

²¹ "Downtown Plan, Development Update." City of Milwaukee. Depart. of City Development. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/downtown/update.html>>.

According to the Director of BID #21, Elizabeth Nicols, they have yet to collect the information requested for this report for the downtown district, such as vacancy and square footage rates for commercial office, retail, and residential.²² Therefore, assumptions will have to be made and information must be inferred from the data that is available to us at this time.

Economic trends in Milwaukee have been focused on new forms of investment and mitigation of the joblessness problem. As aforementioned, downtown has found its niche with investors and residential development. This has been positive for BID #21, but according to the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee the districts surrounding the downtown have continued to decline, hence the revitalization of downtown is isolated from the surrounding region.²³

A few notable endeavors for economic development are: the regional “Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Campaign” – seven counties working together to seek out Chinese investment back into Milwaukee (since China is a main alternative for industrial manufacturing);²⁴ Johnson Controls, Corp. – whose headquarters are in Milwaukee and will be initiating the program there - has created an Metro Markets campaign for economic development in inner-city areas with job training, business investment, schools, affordable housing, and sport centers;²⁵ Manpower Inc. just announced that it is moving its headquarters to Milwaukee providing 900 new jobs.²⁶ Milwaukee is exceptionally proud of their events agenda, providing much needed tourism.

Milwaukee Events

- Holiday Lights Festival (city tours with free transportation and refreshments)
- Summerfest (“the largest music festival in the world”)
- The Great Circus Parade (circus finale show)



Holiday Lights Festival

²² Nichols, Elizabeth. E-Mail interview. 2 Nov. 2006.

²³ http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CED/publications/stealth_depression803.html. 23 Aug. 2006. University of Wisconsin. 24 Nov. 2006

²⁴ "Downtown Plan, Development Update." [City of Milwaukee](http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/downtown/update.html). Depart, of City Development. 24 Nov. 2006

²⁵ "Johnson Controls Hopes to Optimize New Brand." [The Business Journal of Milwaukee](http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2001/12/10/focus3.html). 7 Nov. 2001. 24 Nov. 2006

²⁶ Daykin, Tom. "Milwaukee Journal Sentinel." [Manpower Plans Downtown Move](http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=379566). 21 Dec. 2006. 21 Nov. 2006

SECTION 5: RETAIL

Over the past decade, Milwaukee has made great improvements in terms of downtown retail cultivation. One of Milwaukee's greatest retail achievements is the Milwaukee Public Market. The Public Market is located in the historical Third Ward of Downtown Milwaukee, which has been a retail hub for more than 100 years. Today's Milwaukee Public Market preserves the true nature of the Third Ward and capitalizes on the history of an area that locals associate with fresh produce.



Milwaukee Public Market, 1880's



Milwaukee Public Market, 2005

The Milwaukee Public Market showcases many specialty foods and fresh produce vendors. Each merchant is owner and operator and in many instances producer, of the products they sell.

²⁷ The Milwaukee Public Market outlines the following goals for the space in their website:

Milwaukee Public Market Goals²⁸

- To promote economic vitality within the Market District, the city of Milwaukee, and our state.
- To support small businesses that offer unique products and expertise.
- To support our local farmers by providing a unique direct marketing opportunity.
- To attract urbanites, suburbanites, tourists and people of all backgrounds, races and

²⁷ "Our Story." Milwaukee Public Market. 22 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeepublicmarket.org/ourstory.shtml>>.

²⁸ "Market Goals." Milwaukee Public Market. 22 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeepublicmarket.org/ourstory.shtml>>.

creeds to a public gathering place.

- To create employment opportunities through new business formation.
- To present and preserve the best of Wisconsin's agriculture.
- To expand food choices for consumers that reflect Milwaukee's vibrant, international heritage.
- To enhance knowledge of food sources and nutrition through educational programs and direct interaction between producers, vendors, chefs and consumers.
- To engage the public through cooking demonstrations and classes.

As illustrated above by the Milwaukee Public Market goals, The Milwaukee Public Market is more than just a retail experience for Milwaukeeans, it is a public gathering space and a place for community making. It is also away for Milwaukeeans to connect to their local heritage and preserve Midwest customs.

The Shops of Grand Avenue

Like Denver's 16th street Mall, Milwaukee has its own downtown shopping hub. The Shops of Grand Avenue combine locally own shops with nation-wide brands to provide something for everyone. The Shops of Grand Avenue spans approximately three city blocks and combines historical buildings with turn-of-the-century architecture, with more modern additions such as glass skywalks to create this downtown shopping venue. It touts Wisconsin's largest food court and also has more than 80 shops downtown. The Shops of Grand Avenue is located in the Business Improvement District # 5, locally called Westtown. Westtown also has its own Farmers Market every Wednesday with more than forty vendors. The Westtown Farmers market combines fresh produce and local art.

Retail Area Streetscaping Project

To enhance Wisconsin Ave and invigorate downtown retail and atmosphere, a large-scale streetscaping was commissioned in 2005. The streetscaping included "textured sidewalks, permanent planters and landscaping, new streetlights, a pedestrian way-finding system, decorative trashcans, distinctive crosswalk treatments, illuminated bus shelters, public art and other pedestrian amenities."²⁹

²⁹ "Downtown Data." Downtown Milwaukee. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/data/>>.

SECTION 6: PARKING

The city of Milwaukee requires some of the lowest parking ratios in the country. For retail zones, the parking ratio is two spaces per 1,000 square feet as opposed to the Institute of Transport Engineers standard of one space per 300 square feet. In the downtown zone, there is no minimum required parking ratio except in high-density residential units, where the requirement is only two spaces per three units. Meanwhile, the city tends to discourage surface parking lots, requiring that at least 50% of the ground level of the structure be used for retail. In principal, this idea promotes walkability in the compact, mixed-use neighborhood, while allowing the development market to determine where and how to build parking.³⁰

This policy certainly has its benefits, encouraging the use of public transportation and promoting infill within the downtown area, but there are consequences as well. As one of these consequences, a recent poll of Wisconsin residents found that parking was one of the worst things that Milwaukee had to offer.³¹ The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute recently conducted a study concerning the effects of minimum amounts of parking within the downtown area, citing that while the booming area has plenty of entertainment, culture, and restaurants to offer visitors and residents, there are minimal amounts of parking and the situation is getting worse.³²

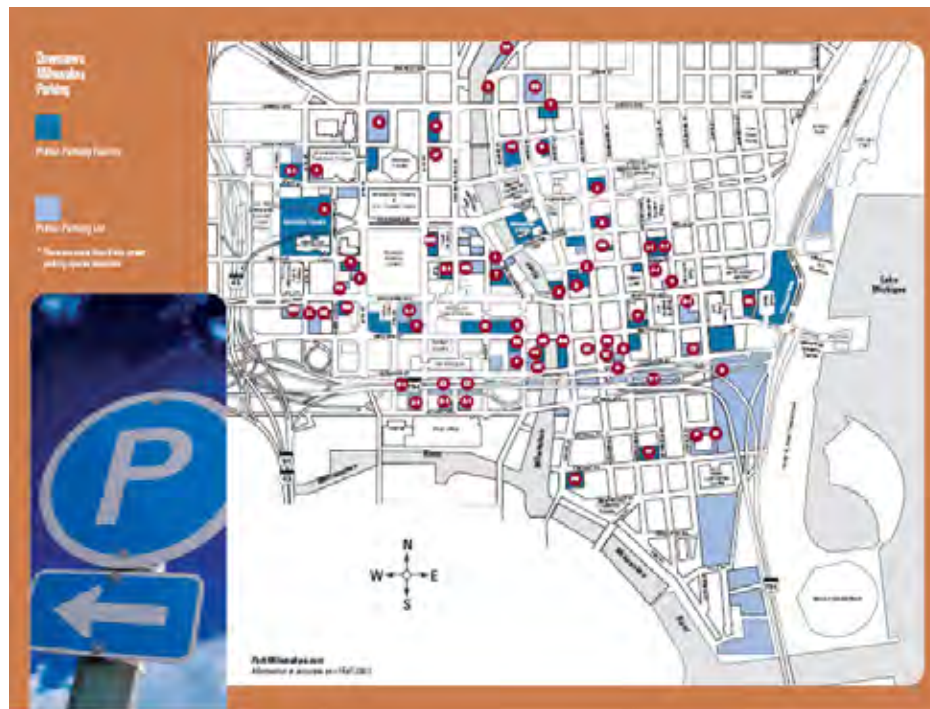
In a difficult, Catch 22 situation, the downtown boom combined with no parking requirements has led to a decrease in the total amount of parking, inspiring developers to replace parking structures with more profitable retail and residential units. While this obviously leads to a higher tax base and more activity downtown, it can consequently raise parking rates to an unreasonable cost, irking workers and perturbing suburban customers traveling downtown. This has the capability of greatly affecting local shops and restaurants.

³⁰ <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/EPAParkingSpaces06.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.wpri.org/WIInterest/Vol11no1/Hein11.1.pdf>

³² <http://www.wpri.org/WIInterest/Vol11no1/Hein11.1.pdf>

Another consequence is attempting to attract businesses downtown, where vacant office space is plentiful and vacant parking spaces are not. On average, the cost of parking is \$4.25 per space per day in downtown, while typically, parking free in the suburbs. Some experts propose



Parking in Downtown Milwaukee

that by providing cheaper parking solutions, the city would be much more successful at recruiting tenants to fill this office space. Recently, the city decided to create a tax incremental financing district to provide a \$15 million parking structure for Manpower Inc., a staffing and consulting company providing thousands of jobs. This move demonstrated the possibility of parking solutions to other potential customers.³³

Several solutions have been suggested to control and improve the parking in the downtown area. The city currently owns and operates four parking structures spread throughout the downtown area. In 2005, the city received \$42.1 million in parking revenue from ramps, meters, permits and the towing and disposal of abandoned vehicles. Of the total, \$15.2 million was

³³ "Johnson Controls Hopes to Optimize New Brand." *The Business Journal of Milwaukee*. 7 Nov. 2001. 24 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2001/12/10/focus3.html>>.

poured into the general revenue fund.³⁴ One idea has been to create a Milwaukee Parking authority that would have power to allow the city to build more parking locations in strategic locations. Unfortunately, this option may be too pricey based on the current revenue.³⁵

Another idea is to form a special parking fund to lessen the parking cost for companies moving downtown. The fund would receive a percentage of parking revenue from the city's ramps, lot permits and meters. City officials are also addressing the parking issue by issuing more parking tickets and making them more expensive. Ticket issuance is up 50% from its 1999 level.³⁶

One observable change that the city has made is that many visitors had problems locating the parking because it was poorly signed and inappropriately located. As a consequence, the city, sponsored by The Westown Business Improvement District #5 and the Downtown Business Improvement District #21, created the www.ParkMilwaukee.com website. The website was designed to help users easily identify parking locations for all of the downtown area. Users are able to click on specific parking structures to receive information on pricing and directions. Additionally, the city spent \$4,500 on new, blue identification signs which direct drivers to parking locations.³⁷



**New Parking Signs
Downtown**

Additionally, The Alliance for Downtown Parking and Transportation was created to address parking and transportation issues. The Alliance mission is to keep the public informed and promote positive parking and transportation options in the downtown area. Though programs and policies may be changing to improve the parking situation in downtown, clearly, Downtown Milwaukee needs to focus on parking as a pertinent, important issue in its development and must consider parking in its long- and short-term goals.

³⁴ <http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2006/04/03/story3.html?page=1>

³⁵ <http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2006/04/03/story3.html?page=3>

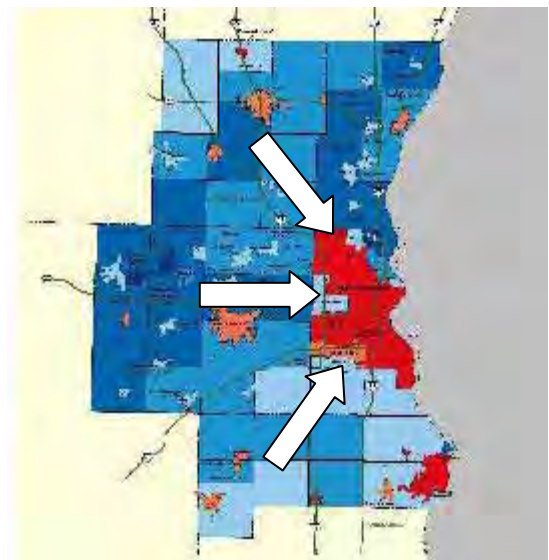
³⁶ *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, January 10, 2002

³⁷ <http://www.parkmilwaukee.com>

SECTION 7: POLICIES AND POLITICS

Downtown Milwaukee has many different political influences, entities, and policies affecting its direction. Milwaukee's downtown is within the larger influence of the Milwaukee metropolitan region (consisting of four counties and 37 municipalities), the City of Milwaukee, and the Business Improvement District #21 (BID #21). These entities assert different aspects towards the downtown's growth. For example, the larger metropolitan area provides labor force and economic activity, the City of Milwaukee provides economic and community development tools, and the BID #21 provides extra incentives and amenities.

Although the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area has no policies' directly in relation to the downtown area its policies still have great influence on downtown. The Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Campaign is a cooperative regional economic program fostered by seven counties in the region whose mission is, "[t]o strengthen the economy of our region by attracting, retaining and growing companies and diverse talent."³⁸ They intend to do this through a "5-year, \$12 million economic development campaign that brings together the region under a unified strategy to support and maintain economic growth."³⁹ This influence has great potential to bring new businesses, jobs, and activity to the downtown area that is a nexus for the entire region.



Milwaukee Metropolitan Area

The City of Milwaukee exerts the most influence on downtown than any other entity. The City of Milwaukee is responsible for all development policies, agencies, and authorities. The City embraces the power to redevelop areas with use of tax increment financing (TIF) and eminent domain, create affordable housing programs, and regulate zoning ordinance. In addition to these powers, the city has created a vision for the future in the "Downtown Plan".

³⁸ http://www.mmac.org/ImageLibrary/User/cdavis/PDF/Investors_Piece_020106.pdf

³⁹ Ibid.

The City of Milwaukee works with the quasi-governmental Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) to remedy blighted conditions by providing development tools (such as condemning blighted areas, acquisition of land through eminent domain, and financing with TIF) to private developers.⁴⁰ One such important redevelopment to downtown is the Park East redevelopment project. Formerly an under-utilized, blighted, freeway spur, Park East – which is currently under construction - will become a vibrant downtown area for commercial, residential and retail mixed use, extension of the Riverwalk, and increased pedestrian connectivity.⁴¹

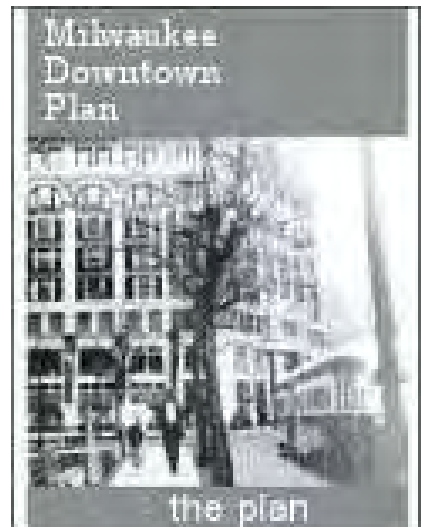


Future Park East Commercial Centers for Flatiron, Kern, and Manpower

In 1999, the City of Milwaukee drafted its “Milwaukee Downtown Plan” which creates a different boundary than that of the BID #21, which in fact expands it substantially. The Downtown Plan outlines nine general priority categories:

Downtown Plan Priorities⁴²

- I. Policy and Management Directives
- II. Transportation Alternatives
- III. Residential Land Uses
- IV. Catalytic Projects
- V. Commercial and Mixed Use
- VI. Image of Urban Armature
- VII. Downtown Development and Redevelopment Mgmt.
- VIII. Pedestrian Systems
- IX. Parks and Open Spaces



⁴⁰ <http://www.mkedcd.org/racm/>

⁴¹ <http://www.mkedcd.org/parkeast/plan/MasterPlan/Chap1MasterPlan.pdf>

⁴² The Milwaukee Downtown Plan

The Downtown Plan has come to fruition in projects such as the Intermodal Transit Station, Milwaukee Public Market, Park East Redevelopment, and the Riverwalk.⁴³ (See Section 4 for more information.)

The City of Milwaukee has a particularly vibrant affordable housing program. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) won the World Leadership Award for its affordable housing program, now housing 10,000 families and individuals.⁴⁴ This housing includes public units that are subsidized by the federal government, housing vouchers for low-income families to rent privately-owned housing units and non-subsidized affordable housing units. The HACM has been successful due to its multi-fold programs:

Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee's Major Initiatives⁴⁵

- Economic Self-sufficiency
- Home Ownership
- Public Safety
- Health Care Services
- Physical Improvements

The final major political influence on downtown Milwaukee is the Business Improvement District #21 (BID #21). BID #21 lays claim to the internet identity "www.milwaukeedowntown.com" and is completely encompassed by the Downtown Plan as recognized by the City of Milwaukee. BID #21's mission is "to create a clean, safe and friendly downtown. We strive to provide a great quality of life for people who live, work and play downtown by putting funds back into the community through improvement projects."⁴⁶ BID #21's website provides important information about activities and events happening, and updates on development in the downtown area. For more information about their development activities see Section 4: Development, earlier in this report.

⁴³ <http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/downtown/update.html>

⁴⁴ <http://www.ci.mil.wi.us/newsreleaseheader6214568.htm>

⁴⁵ <http://www.hacm.org/about/index.htm>

⁴⁶ <http://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/>

SECTION 8: COMPARISON/CONTRAST TO DOWNTOWN DENVER

Downtown Definition and Characteristics:

As peer cities, Denver and Milwaukee share many of the same physical and social characteristics. However, the manner in which these cities grew into their current state presents the ways in which the two cities are very different. National historic trends, demographic shifts, economic fluctuations and regional influences all affected the way both of the cities progressed. The factors that shaped these modern metropolises into similar cities also give them their uniqueness.

In the context of the built environment, Denver and Milwaukee seem to be more similar than different. There is a variety of building types ranging from turn of the century civic architecture to modern glass high-rises. Neither of the cities has the extreme super-structures of New York or Chicago and don't necessarily need to prepare for buildings of that nature. Milwaukee and Denver are also new proprietors of both a new convention center and a new Art Museum addition, both of which are of post modern architecture.

Milwaukee and Denver downtowns' both neighbor college campuses as well. Marquette University lies across the street from Downtown Milwaukee's western boarder and the Auraria Campus is just west of Denver's city center. The close proximity to these institutions provides a much needed vitality to areas of the downtown.

Both Milwaukee and Denver are currently experiencing a housing boom in the downtown areas. New condominiums and apartment buildings are extremely popular right now and a healthy mix of new building construction and old building renovations are providing the market with a popular commodity, the downtown living experience. The new residents provide patronage for the growing commercial industry downtown.

Location is an important factor in some of the differences between the Milwaukee and Denver city centers. By the 1960's Milwaukee boomed into a metropolis far larger than Denver has ever been. With a population of a little less than 750,000 people at its peak, Milwaukee was born of the industrial age in Middle America. Its location in the Mid-West, with close proximity to

Chicago and, to a lesser extent Detroit, provided the burgeoning city with economic vitality and access. However, the deindustrialization of American cities, especially in the Mid-West, caused a dramatic fall in the economic stability of rust belt cities and a subsequent fall in population. In contrast, the American West has grown at a steadier pace. Denver, like most cities in the West, has had population increases and declines but the population has not fluctuated like those in the rust belt cities. In the context of location, regional activity and influences shaped these two cities and still bear influence on the cities' progress. Denver has, and continues to grow at a steady rate. Milwaukee was once 50% larger than it is now. While Denver builds, Milwaukee rebuilds. One of the most prominent differences between the cities is Milwaukee's premise of rebuilding and recuperating verses Denver's premise of building and expanding the downtown area.

Another major difference between the two cities is Milwaukee's close proximity to a megalopolis and regional center in Chicago, while Denver acts as the regional center amongst many smaller metro areas. Milwaukee's suburbs and Chicago's suburbs have become a continuous body of development between the cities. Chicago's influence as a regional and even national economic hotbed effects the city of Milwaukee as in many cases it is subsidiary to the larger city of Chicago. Denver is not affected by a major city in that manner. As the regional hub, social and economic activities that occur in Denver affect the surrounding area more than the surrounding area affects Denver. Denver is not affected by spillover affects and externalities of a mega-city because it acts as a relative mega-city.

Development

Historically, Denver and Milwaukee are different because of their commercial/industrial roots. Milwaukee is behind Denver in its revitalization of downtown due to its industrial focus until the 1990s. Hence, today Denver has a decidedly vibrant downtown with the assistance of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the last 24 years. Generally, the drastic differences between Denver and Milwaukee's downtown development are the duration of time put toward this cause.

Denver and Milwaukee find similarities with their development when we look at their goals and objectives. Both cities find it very important to encourage residential growth in the downtown.

Also, they recognize that large events bring people downtown and create spin-off economic impacts. Hence, the creation of convention centers, art museums, and promenades.

Policies and Politics

Denver and Milwaukee have similar policies for development when we consider aspects such as redevelopment (i.e. DURA and MDC) and housing (ie. DHA and HACM). Both cities have been relatively successful in these endeavors. In addition, the cities' have a central similarity in their planning departments: Peter Park.

An important and notable difference between Denver's housing authority - Denver Housing Authority (DHA) - and Milwaukee's housing authority - Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) - is that HACM has a broader focus on areas such as health care, safety, and self-sufficiently. These attributes have contributed to Milwaukee's HACM being one of the most effective housing authorities in the country.

Retail

In terms of retail, Denver and Milwaukee have a few similarities. Milwaukee's The Shops of Grand Avenue is a similar downtown shopping hub to Denver's 16th Street Mall. Both retail venues help bring life and vitality to their downtowns. They both support a mix of local boutiques and national brand name shops. Where the downtowns differ is Milwaukee's downtown retail is more community oriented with an abundance of farmers markets and public gathering space, such as Milwaukee's Public Market that supports local business and also fosters a sense of place making.

As section two illustrates, the City of Milwaukee's population, from 1960- 1990 was declining. However, in the past two decades, Milwaukee's downtown area is booming with an increase of 20 percent from 1990 to 2000. Denver's downtown has seen a population increase in the past two decades.

SECTION 9: SUMMARY

The city of Milwaukee is re-urbanizing itself just as many American city centers are. Though they did not plan for the de-industrialization of the city center and the rapid suburbanization of the county's edge cities, it seems they have learned from past mistakes. In recent years the city has taken measures to provide economic stability to the city center with real estate and business incentive programs. Additionally the city has nurtured its role as a cultural center and continues to grow as a regional hub for arts, entertainment and urban lifestyle.

Denver and Milwaukee share many of the same characteristics but have taken very different paths in fostering said characteristics. Many of the similarities shared by the two cities are a product of the re-urbanization of American cities. The general nature of this social and economic shift is why Milwaukee and Denver are peer cities. Moreover, the problems shared by the two promising downtowns are also general problems that many American cities, especially in Middle-America, are facing. However, Milwaukee is also trying to recover from the economic change it has been going through since the 1960's, which further complicates the general trend.

Denver seems to be more advanced in preparing the city center for the re-urbanization shift. Denver's planning preparation is far better suited to assist in this paradigm shift than Milwaukee's as Denver has a better transportation network and a more established downtown community of both businesses and residents within the re-urbanization context. Both of the cities are trying to overcome the challenges of attracting businesses that will sustain growing downtown economies in the future, but Denver has the added appeal of being a regional hub as well. Although the Denver, particularly the downtown area, has faced adversity in the past, it is a growing city. Milwaukee is still trying to recuperate from the globalization of the economy and the de-industrialization of the city center. Denver can learn from the mistakes of cities, like Milwaukee, that did not plan for major socio-economic and land use shifts.

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