

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Commercial corridors are the windows to our neighborhoods and play a significant role in improving neighborhood perception and quality of life. Commercial corridors are the major arterials that connect neighborhoods and are the first glimpse people experience when entering into residential areas. When we imagine healthy neighborhoods, we think of well-kept storefronts filled with businesses that offer the community and surrounding area places to shop, eat, work and play.

The goal of the Commercial Revitalization Grant Program is to assist and incentivize the enhancement of commercial properties and storefronts in Milwaukee's commercial corridors. The grants are intended to eliminate blight, enhance building aesthetics, and activate the public realm by assisting businesses to achieve higher quality storefronts to attract customers and improve neighborhood perceptions.

The Signage, Façade, Storefront Activation and Retail Investment Fund (RIF) grant products are available city-wide.



COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Commercial Revitalization Fund is focused on supporting projects that align with the following criteria:



Location

Priority may be given to projects within Commercial Corridors with significant blight or storefront vacancies as well as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Areas, Target Investment Neighborhoods, Business Improvement Districts, Neighborhood Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Districts.

Activation of the Street

Projects must visibly improve public-facing facades, address blight, or enhance the exterior of the building.

Funding Need

Applicants must demonstrate that the grant enables improvements that would otherwise not occur and leverages additional investments.

Design

Projects must comply with city codes, use quality materials, and enhance the property's appearance. Approval from Historic Preservation or Architectural Review Boards is required where applicable.

Community Impact

Projects must contribute to the neighborhood well-being, address unmet needs, or support corridor growth. Evidence of community or Business Improvement Development (BID) support is encouraged.

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



GENERAL FUND

Commercial Revitalization Grants Awarded from the General Fund

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Budget Allocation	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$500,000
Grant Awards (#)	72	82	91	86	79
Grant Awards (\$)	\$809,019	\$1,416,989	\$1,156,391	\$1,467,428	\$762,850
Jobs Created or Planned*	45	15	30 (with 10 more planned)	71 (with 14 more planned)	9 (with 48 more planned)

*The Retail Investment Fund (RIF) incentivizes new businesses or existing business expansions which will create jobs held by city of Milwaukee employees. Job creation is only tracked for RIF projects, and the numbers above were reported by business owners and include the planned job creation for projects that are not yet complete.

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCING

TID	Year Created	Original Balance	Current Balance	Grants awarded (#)	Grants awarded (\$)
<u>TID #48 – Park East</u>	2002	\$250,000	\$0 – funds expired	12	\$245,425
<u>TID # 59 – Bronzeville</u>	2005, amended 2025	\$1,000,000	\$955,860	7	\$44,140
<u>TID #85 – 6th and National</u>	2015, amended 2024	\$500,000	\$399,726	9	\$129,777
<u>TID #91 – Park Place</u>	2017	\$300,000	\$220,724	6	\$79,276
<u>TID #92 – Sherman Phoenix</u>	2017	\$100,000	\$16,279	10	\$112,886
<u>TID #98 – The Ikon</u>	2019	\$500,000 (\$100,000 currently released)	\$4,500	5	\$95,500
<u>TID #111 – East North Avenue</u>	2022	\$100,000	\$2,500	2	\$97,500

Tax Incremental Districts (TIDs), when created or amended, may allocate funding for commercial revitalization. Here is an excerpt from the 2024 TID 85 amendment: “In an effort to attract or retain office and retail tenants in the District and within a one half-mile radius of the District boundary, per Section 66.1105(2)(f) Stats., fund cash grants or loans to be used for tenant improvements, façade improvements, new signage or other expenses. The funds would be administered through the City’s existing Commercial Corridors...program. To implement these programs, cash grants may be paid to property owners, lessees, or developers as part of a grant agreement.”

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



DEMOGRAPHICS

Commercial Revitalization Grants awarded in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025* – by project type

Project Type	Grant Dollars awarded	% of total
Business Expansion	\$ 1,442,777	27%
Existing Business Improvements	\$ 308,649	6%
New Business	\$ 2,778,491	52%
Property Owner Improvements	\$ 796,341	15%

Commercial Revitalization Grants awarded in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025* – by applicant race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity Category	Grant Dollars awarded	% of total
African American/Black	\$ 1,927,610	36%
Asian/Indian/Southeast Asian	\$ 871,594	16%
Caucasian/European American/White	\$ 1,399,397	26%
Chicana/o, Hispanic, Latino/a, Latinx	\$ 752,834	14%
Indigenous American/Alaskan Native	\$ 53,569	1%
Middle Eastern	\$ 48,750	1%
Other/Multi Race	\$ 272,504	5%

Commercial Revitalization Grants awarded in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025* – by applicant gender

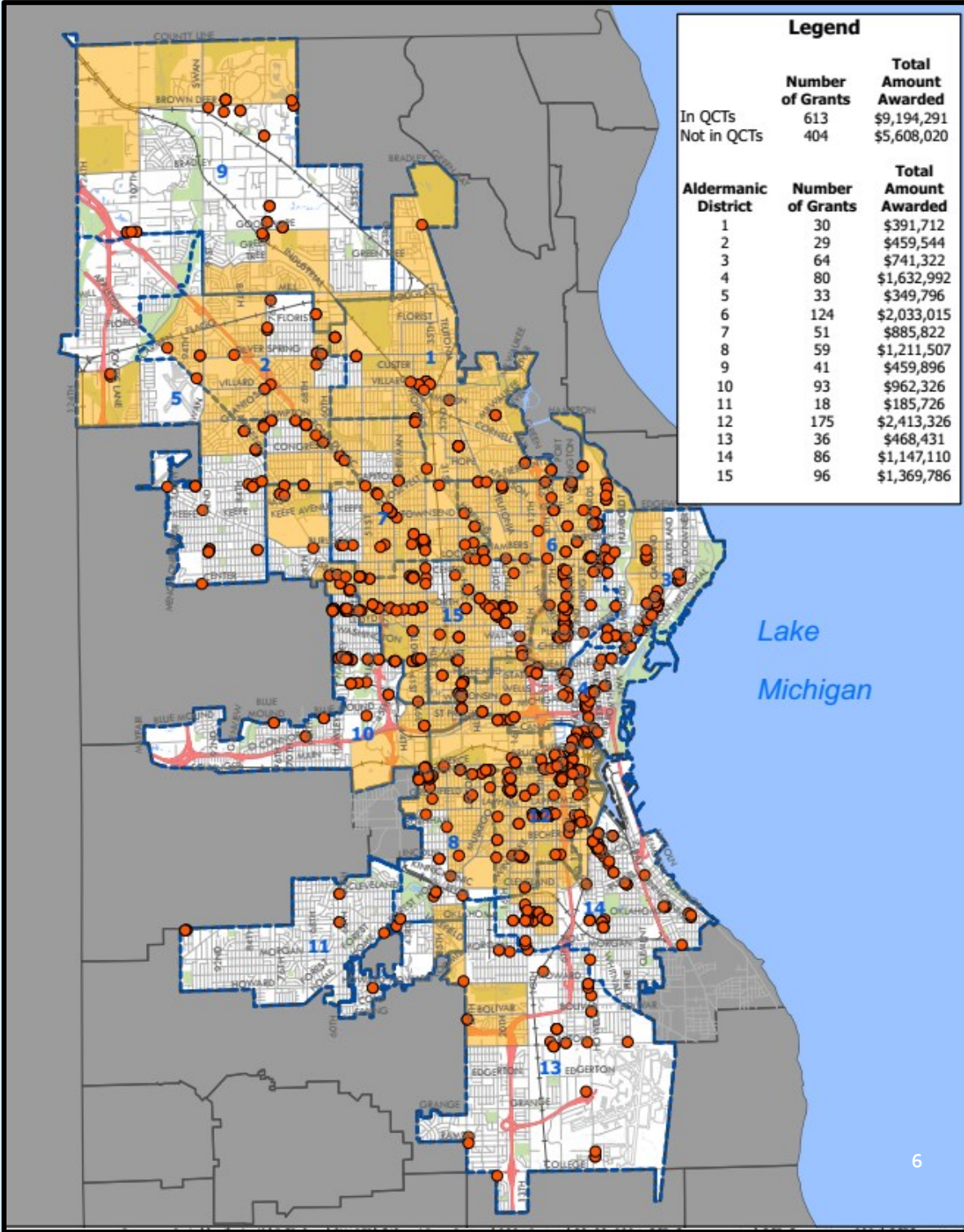
Gender	Grant Dollars awarded	% of total
Woman	\$ 2,486,734	47%
Man	\$ 2,584,193	49%
Multiple	\$ 228,116	4%
Nonbinary	\$ 27,215	1%

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACTS

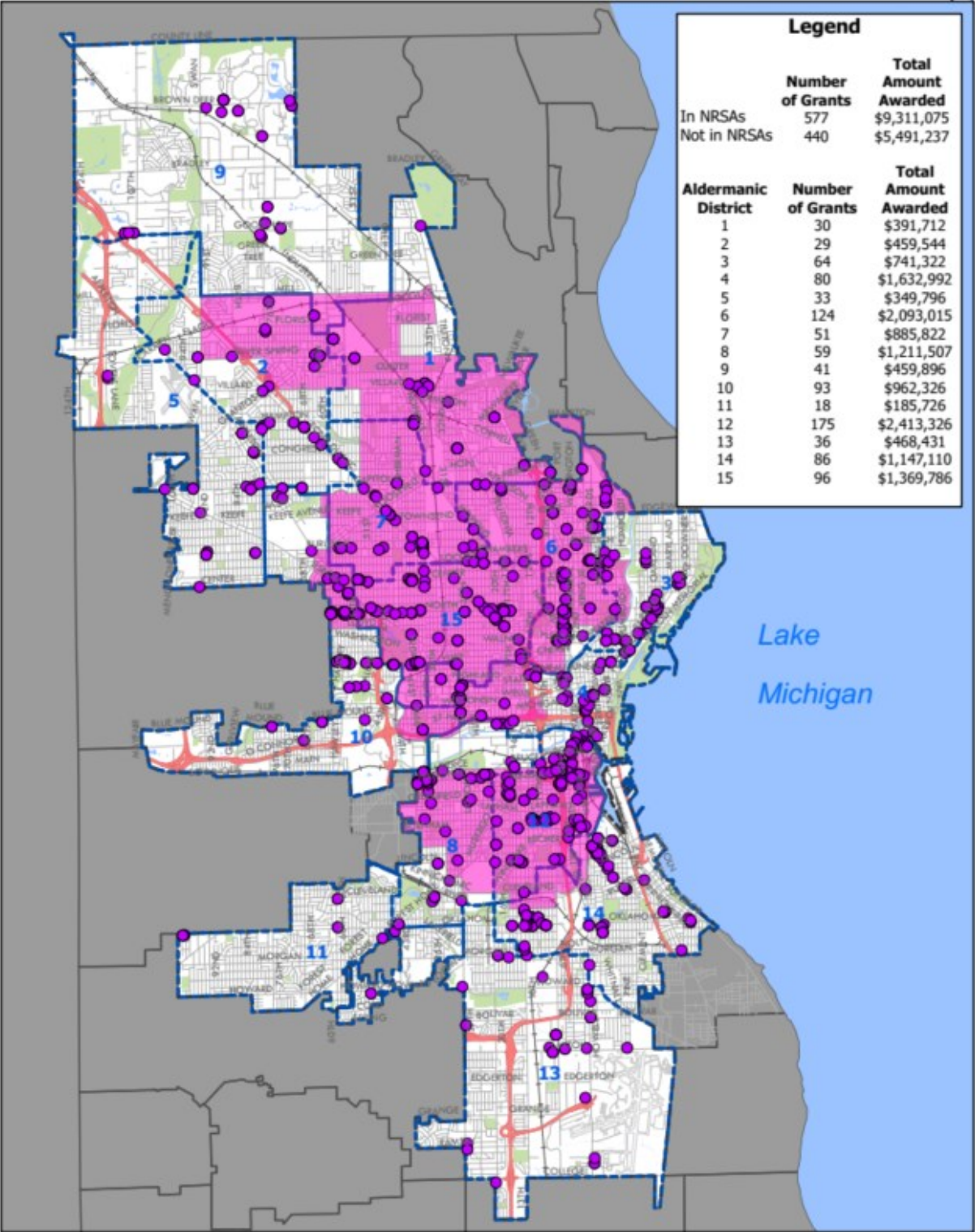
Grants within QCTs, 2015-2024, includes the Commercial Revitalization Grants, Fresh Food Access Fund and WEDC grants administered through CCT



COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREAS



Grants within NRSAs, 2015-2024, includes the Commercial Revitalization Grants, Fresh Food Access Fund and WEDC grants administered through CCT

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



TAX BASE IMPACTS

Public Investment

For grants awarded between 2018, 2019 and 2020:

- \$2,306,752 reimbursed to grantees
- \$21,532,593 in total grantee investments

Tax Base Increase

For grants awarded between 2018, 2019 and 2020:

- \$23,529,600 additional assessed value due in part to Commercial Revitalization Grants*

*Return on investment, calculated by taking change in assessed value before and after project completion

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



GRANTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

CCT Grants awarded from all funding sources by Aldermanic District						
Ald. Dist.	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Total 2021-2025*
1	\$1,602	\$49,809	\$47,663	\$91,895	\$51,830	\$242,798
2	\$25,000	\$16,090	\$71,916	\$30,379	-	\$143,385
3	\$25,000	\$44,113	\$50,000	\$56,474	\$33,785	\$209,372
4	\$126,946	\$180,814	\$163,773	\$178,704	\$155,285	\$805,521
5	-	\$45,750	\$83,646	\$14,288	\$20,595	\$164,278
6	\$202,500	\$324,479	\$172,470	\$328,361	\$103,620	\$1,131,430
7	\$90,741	\$215,523	\$5,000	\$38,797	\$77,903	\$427,965
8	\$7,748	\$5,089	\$34,019	\$124,881	\$119,144	\$290,881
9	\$84,220	\$67,500	\$2,500	\$78,240	\$16,250	\$248,710
10	\$52,106	\$59,250	\$118,494	\$17,207	\$108,938	\$355,995
11	\$1,899	\$50,000	-	\$58,000	-	\$109,899
12	\$154,707	\$111,211	\$227,366	\$39,213	\$47,901	\$580,398
13	\$51,307	-	\$63,550	\$35,890	\$1,539	\$152,287
14	\$92,905	\$60,475	\$154,660	\$568,993	\$82,316	\$959,349
15	\$66,219	\$97,700	\$189,335	\$48,603	\$41,285	\$443,141
Total:	\$982,900	\$1,327,802	\$1,384,391	\$1,709,924	\$860,391	\$6,265,408

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

5840 N 60th St, District 1

HAVENWOODS

TAPROOM & BEER GARDEN



Photo courtesy of Korey Christiansen

- ★ Included façade and storefront activation grants as part of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative
- ★ Renovated industrial facility into beer garden & taproom
- ★ Features outdoor seating next to state forest
- ★ 2025 Mayor's Design Award recipient

6137 W. Fond du Lac, District 2

JACKSON'S SOUL FOOD



After



- ★ Formerly City-owned property received façade, signage and storefront activation grants to incentivize reinvestment
- ★ New street frontage, curb-cuts relocation, and updated building layout.
- ★ Created 10 local job opportunities for the community
- ★ Addition of commercial kitchen, drive-through lane, and onsite parking

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

2100 N Farwell Ave, District 3

ALLIE BOYS



- ★ Retail Investment Fund grant funded kitchen buildout and improvements to dining room
- ★ Signage grant covered custom blade sign and window graphics
- ★ 11 FTE jobs created and held by Milwaukee residents

819 N 27th St, District 4

FRUITION MKE



- ★ Storefront Activation grant incentivized Tiffany Miller & Rachaad Howard in opening café and co-working space
- ★ Concordia27 redevelopment, a 2025 Mayor's Design Award recipient, transformed a 15-year vacant building into a thriving community hub with nonprofit offices, retail spaces, and affordable housing.



Photos courtesy of Jeramey Juaneane

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

7815 W Burleigh St, District 5

ITC REPAIRS



- ★ Façade grant incentivized replacement of glazing and security improvements

3728 N Fratney St, District 6

HOME AGAIN FABRIC & FURNISHING



Before (2018)



- ★ Storefront activation, façade and signage grants
- ★ Renovated historic industrial building with preserved historic character
- ★ Business relocated to Milwaukee from Shorewood
- ★ 2019 façade grant awarded to restore brick

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

4315 W Fond Du Lac Ave, District 7

SHERMAN PARK GROCERY



Before



After

- ★ Signage, Façade and Whitebox (Storefront Activation) grants incentivized owner Maurice Wince
- ★ Formerly a daycare, owners transformed the building into a grocery store with plans to grow into food preparation and rooftop fresh food growing operation

3610 W Pierce St, District 8

SHEWOLF MKE



- ★ Signage and Storefront Activation grants assisted Donna Gallardo in opening Milwaukee's first women only boxing gym

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

10950 Good Hope Rd, District 9

IVR BAR



Before



After

- ★ Signage, Façade and Storefront Activation grants, funded from the TID #91 assisted Apexa Patel in opening International Variety Restaurant in the vacant space that formerly housed Point Burger Bar

4227 W Vliet St, District 10

DENIZEN MKE

Before



- ★ Façade and signage grant to revitalize the exterior
- ★ Storefront Activation grant incentivized interior transformation from vacant building to vibrant event venue
- ★ 2024 Mayor's Design Award recipient



After

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

3419 Forest Home Ave, District 11

MULTICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INSTITUTE



- ★ Storefront Activation grant incentivized activation of a vacant commercial space
- ★ Owner Nelson Soler offers small business development classes for entrepreneurs



215 W Bruce St, District 12

MKE CITY TOURS & STATION 1846



- ★ Storefront activation and façade grants (funded through TID #85) assisted in transforming vacant garage into a co-working space, coffee shop, bar, and event venue
- ★ Preserves historic garage and encourages tourism
- ★ 2025 Mayor's Design Award recipient

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT

3503 S. 16th St, District 13

AKARA ARTS



Before



After

- ★ Locally-owned tattoo studio
- ★ Façade grant for exterior enhancements
- ★ Upgrades made the space more inviting and added to the community's character
- ★ 2025 Mayor's Design Award recipient

2501 S Delaware Ave, District 14

AT RANDOM



Before



After



After

- ★ Legacy Grant incentivized façade upgrade
- ★ Inviting street appeal enhances exterior and redesigned bar inside
- ★ Vintage beer memorabilia and music-themed atmosphere serving vintage cocktails and nonalcoholic ice cream drinks
- ★ 2025 Mayor's Design Award recipient

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION



PROJECTS BY ALDERMANIC DISTRICT



1810 Fond Du Lac Ave, District 15

Before

FAVORITES

RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

- ★ Signage, Façade and Retail Investment Fund grants (funded through TID #98) supported full renovation and job creation
- ★ Owner Tressa Jones aimed to make Favorites a place that brings families and the community together in a friendly, safe, clean environment, while experiencing the “Urban Soul” of our city



After