



Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21  
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## **Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 endorses Mayor's streetcar plan**

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (December 8, 2014) – Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's board of directors has voted to support Mayor Barrett's current \$123.9 million streetcar plan. The motion to endorse the initiative was approved at the Dec. 4 board of directors meeting.

"Given the availability of significant federal funding and the potential for economic development in the central business district, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 supports Mayor Barrett's streetcar plan, including funding the streetcar with tax incremental financing," said Joe Ullrich, chair of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. "The Milwaukee Streetcar aligns with the goals of our organization's strategic plan and is consistent with Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21's prior support of regional public transit."

Since 2005, over \$2.6 billion has been invested in completed private and public projects in and around the central business district, spurring a dramatic turnaround that has re-established downtown as a vibrant center of activity. In addition, \$980+ million is currently being invested in projects under construction, and another \$1.2+ billion awaits in proposed projects – indicating a trajectory of growth for downtown Milwaukee.

Other indicators such as downtown's 80,000 employees, 25,000 residents and 5.5 million visitors annually, also substantiate downtown Milwaukee's ability to support fixed transit. According to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau, Milwaukee ranks 14<sup>th</sup> as the most densely populated city in the U.S. Among the top 25 most densely populated cities, Milwaukee is one of only three communities in which fixed transit currently does not exist or is not already under construction.

"The Milwaukee Streetcar is a game changer for downtown," said Beth Weirick, CEO of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. "We look forward to seeing this catalytic project come to fruition and know the success of the starter system will prompt expansions to near-downtown neighborhoods and beyond for the benefit of our city and region."

As demonstrated by cities with fixed transit, Mayor Barrett's 2.5-mile system, which includes new connections to the Lakefront and Couture, would spur investment near and along the route, attract and retain businesses and talent, appeal to millennials who are less likely to own cars, and further establish Milwaukee as a world-class city that can compete globally.

"Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 recognizes that a modern streetcar system is one major component of an overall comprehensive and well-connected transportation system," said Matt Dorner, economic development director of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21. "The Milwaukee Streetcar will build upon downtown's momentum and further increase our attractiveness from an investment perspective and more competitively position the city as a place to live, work, play and do business."

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### **ABOUT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN**

Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 is an organization established in 1998 to support the interests of the downtown Milwaukee business community. Created through private sector leadership, Milwaukee Downtown is a management district organization that oversees 150 square blocks representing approximately 400+ property owners in the center of downtown Milwaukee. The organization funds specific initiatives aimed at creating a clean, safe and friendly downtown. For more information, visit [www.MilwaukeeDowntown.com](http://www.MilwaukeeDowntown.com) or call 414-220-4700.