



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Sam Leichtling
Deputy Commissioner

October 20, 2025

Honorable Chair Marina Dimitrijevic
Members of the Finance and Personnel Committee
Milwaukee Common Council

Re: DCD 2026 Proposed Budget - Responses to Follow-Up Questions

Dear Chair Dimitrijevic and Committee Members:

This letter responds to requests and questions that were raised at the Finance and Personnel Committee's October 13, 2025 hearing regarding the Department of City Development's (DCD) proposed 2026 budget.

1. Share the anticipated timing of the next Housing Trust Fund RFP.

The Housing Trust Fund is administered by the Department of Administration. DOA will follow up with information to respond to this inquiry.

2. For the existing in rem inventory, please provide the breakdown of the numbers of properties acquired prior to, and subsequent to, the March 24, 2024 effective date of the updated State Statutes governing sale of tax deed in rem properties.

There are currently 3,736 in rem foreclosed properties in City inventory. Of that total, 3,348 (89.6%) were acquired before 3/24/24. The remaining 388 (10.4%) were acquired on or after 3/24/24. The table below shows the breakdown of these properties by category (vacant lot, residential, commercial/other).

All	Total	3736	
	Pre 3/24/24	3348	89.61%
	On/After 3/24/24	388	10.39%
Vacant Lots	Total	3250	
	Pre 3/24/24	3178	97.78%
	On/After 3/24/24	72	2.22%
Residential	Total	376	
	Pre 3/24/24	93	24.73%
	On/After 3/24/24	283	75.27%
Commercial/Other	Total	110	
	Pre 3/24/24	77	70.00%
	On/After 3/24/24	33	30.00%



3. *Provide a list of all 2025 recipients of Commercial Revitalization Grants awarded by DCD. Share information about employment impacts as a result of the grants.*

Please see the attached spreadsheet containing this requested list of 2025 grantees. Additionally, DCD has included a summary of Commercial Revitalization Grant activity during the past five years in the Legistar file associated with the 2026 Proposed Budget. A table with job creation data reported by Retail Investment Fund grantees is included on page 3 of the report. RIF grants have supported creation of more than 170 jobs in the past five years, with 70+ additional planned through projects currently under construction.

4. *Provide current status and final outcomes of the MERI, MERI 2.0, and RICH programs.*

The Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative (MERI and MERI 2.0) programs provided funds to participating developers for the rehabilitation and resale of City-owned tax foreclosed homes, including a workforce development subsidy. These programs were created and funded in 2017 (MERI) and 2019 (MERI 2.0) with funds from the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (MERI) and local funds (MERI 2.0). MERI and MERI 2.0 investments totaled \$2,055,000 to support the rehabilitation of 115 homes.

The ARPA-funded Homes MKE Initiative was modeled in large part on the MERI program, and will continue to operate with ARPA funding during 2026, with 32 home rehabilitations currently under construction and 20+ homes currently in the pre-development pipeline.

The Re-Invest City Homes (RICH) program utilized \$280,000 CDBG funds in 2017-2018 to provide loan funds to Habitat for Humanity to support construction of seven new affordable homes. That program has been completed and the initial loan remains current in repayment.

5. *Has DCD sold any improved residential properties to investor owners during 2025? If so, how many?*

Of the 54 residential property sales YTD, 43 were sold to owner occupants, and 11 to investor owners. These sales were carried out under the previous version of the City Real Estate sales ordinance. This means that in each case, the local alder had received the Neighborhood Property Report that provided them the opportunity to specify whether or not DCD should consider investor offers after the initial 60-day owner occupant only listing period. Generally, the properties sold to investor owner represent some of the most difficult to market and sell properties, often because of property condition.

Thank you for the thoughtful questions and dialogue during last week's hearing and please feel free to contact me if the Committee has any additional questions during the process of reviewing DCD's proposed 2026 Budget.

Sincerely,



Sam Leichtling
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

2025 Approved Commercial Revitalization Grants						
Prepared by Department of City Development - October 2025						
Total 2025 Awards by Aldermanic District:						
District 1	\$	51,830.00				
District 2	\$	-				
District 3	\$	33,785.00				
District 4	\$	155,284.97				
District 5	\$	20,594.50				
District 6	\$	103,620.00				
District 7	\$	77,903.07				
District 8	\$	119,144.47				
District 9	\$	16,250.00				
District 10	\$	108,938.19				
District 11	\$	-				
District 12	\$	47,901.00				
District 13	\$	1,539.33				
District 14	\$	82,315.51				
District 15	\$	41,285.00				
Funding Source	Grant Product	Business Name	Address	Ald. Dist.	Total Grant	Estimated Job Creation (For RIF grants only)
General Fund	Facade Grant	TBD (beauty, barbers, nail techs)	3607 W Villard Ave	1	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	TBD (beauty, barbers, nail techs)	3607 W Villard Ave	1	\$ 21,000.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Uptown Restaurant & Lounge	3535 W Villard Ave	1	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Uptown Restaurant & Lounge	3535 W Villard Ave	1	\$ 20,830.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Poppy Bakery	2021 E Ivanhoe Pl	3	\$ 8,350.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Sip & Purrr Cat Café	833 E Brady St	3	\$ 435.00	
General Fund	RIF Grant	Sip & Purrr Cat Café	833 E Brady St	3	\$ 25,000.00	5
General Fund	Facade Grant	Uppa Yard	1123 N Water St	4	\$ 10,000.00	
General Fund	RIF Grant	Uppa Yard	1123 N Water St	4	\$ 75,000.00	40
General Fund	Signage Grant	Tootsie's Tea	2406 W Clybourn St	4	\$ 2,300.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Tootsie's Tea	2406 W Clybourn St	4	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Tootsie's Tea	2406 W Clybourn St	4	\$ 25,000.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	H2O Athletics & Tillytill Photos	2627 W State St	4	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	H2O Athletics & Tillytill Photos	2627 W State St	4	\$ 22,000.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Your Office	763 N Milwaukee St	4	\$ 600.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Your Office	763 N Milwaukee St	4	\$ 845.00	
General Fund	RIF Grant	Your Office	763 N Milwaukee St	4	\$ 9,539.97	18
General Fund	Signage Grant	New Beginnings Adult Learning	7718-7720 W Burleigh St	5	\$ 1,548.50	
General Fund	Facade Grant	New Beginnings Adult Learning	7718-7720 W Burleigh St	5	\$ 1,250.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	New Beginnings Adult Learning	7718-7720 W Burleigh St	5	\$ 2,400.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Fireside BBQ & Grill	7706 W Burleigh St	5	\$ 2,650.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Natchiek Mane Essentials	8424-8426 W Lisbon Ave, Unit 2	5	\$ 3,750.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Natchiek Mane Essentials	8424-8426 W Lisbon Ave, Unit 2	5	\$ 4,612.50	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Darick Books Café Complex	3953 N 76th St	5	\$ 4,383.50	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Cross Management Services	425 W Walnut St	6	\$ 4,810.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Cross Management Services	425 W Walnut St	6	\$ 25,000.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	TBD (retail, small business)	1950 N MLK Dr	6	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	TBD (retail, small business)	1950 N MLK Dr	6	\$ 24,670.00	
TID 59	Signage Grant	Cross Management Services	425 W Walnut St	6	\$ 2,500.00	
TID 59	Signage Grant	Maures Development Company	1944 N MLK Dr	6	\$ 2,070.00	
TID 59	Facade Grant	Fur Baby Funds LLC	501 W North Ave	6	\$ 5,000.00	
TID 59	Signage Grant	Bronzeville Arts & Tech Hub	610 W North Ave	6	\$ 2,500.00	
TID 59	Facade Grant	Bronzeville Arts & Tech Hub	610 W North Ave	6	\$ 5,000.00	
TID 59	Storefront Activation Grant	Bronzeville Arts & Tech Hub	610 W North Ave	6	\$ 25,000.00	
TID 59	Signage Grant	Allah Mode	1942 N MLK Dr	6	\$ 2,070.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Multipile (TBD)	4704 W Center St	7	\$ 7,500.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Nash Mechanicals LLC	5219 W Hampton Ave	7	\$ 897.50	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Nash Mechanicals LLC	5219 W Hampton Ave	7	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Nash Mechanicals LLC	5219 W Hampton Ave	7	\$ 16,300.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Multipile (TBD)	4704 W Center St	7	\$ 48,205.57	
General Fund	Facade Grant	TreeHouse Studios	3710 W National Ave	8	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	TreeHouse Studios	3710 W National Ave	8	\$ 11,894.66	
General Fund	VIA Cluster Signage Grant	Good Boy Marketing	3509 W National Ave	8	\$ 2,065.05	
General Fund	VIA Cluster Facade Grant	Good Boy Marketing	3509 W National Ave	8	\$ 10,505.01	
General Fund	VIA Cluster Signage Grant	NTS Jewelry and Gifts	3630 W National Ave	8	\$ 3,862.50	
General Fund	VIA Cluster Signage Grant	Thai Barbecue	3417 W National Ave	8	\$ 2,062.00	
General Fund	VIA Cluster Facade Grant	Thai Barbecue	3417 W National Ave	8	\$ 3,918.75	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Tactile Craftworks	1985 S Muskego Ave	8	\$ 9,971.50	
General Fund	Facade Grant	MH Concepts	3516 W National Ave	8	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	MH Concepts	3516 W National Ave	8	\$ 25,000.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Elite Styling	1901 S 26th St	8	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Elite Styling	1901 S 26th St	8	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Elite Styling	1901 S 26th St	8	\$ 13,990.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Colt Construction Services	2701 S 29th St	8	\$ 1,875.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Colt Construction Services	2701 S 29th St	8	\$ 3,750.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Colt Construction Services	2701 S 29th St	8	\$ 12,750.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Racine Liquidators 2	6431 N 76th St	9	\$ 1,250.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Racine Liquidators 2	6431 N 76th St	9	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Racine Liquidators 2	6431 N 76th St	9	\$ 12,500.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Cloud 9 Workshop	5205 W North Ave	10	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Facade Grant	Cloud 9 Workshop	5205 W North Ave	10	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Cloud 9 Workshop	5205 W North Ave	10	\$ 16,000.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Monterrey Market	7025 W Main St	10	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	RIF Grant	Monterrey Market	7025 W Main St	10	\$ 37,500.00	40
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Sandra Co	5927 W North Ave	10	\$ 11,781.47	

Funding Source	Grant Product	Business Name	Address	Ald. Dist.	Total Grant	Estimated Job Creation (For RIF grants only)
General Fund	Storefront Activation	TBD	6411 W Burleigh St	10	\$ 8,600.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Uplifting Mansion	3121 W Wisconsin Ave	10	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Multi-Use Commercial	6710 W Fairview Ave	10	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Interiorscapes	5600 W North Ave	10	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Barbers Company Academy	6111 W Blue Mound Rd	10	\$ 7,900.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Goodway Grille	925 N 27th St	10	\$ 2,156.72	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Halo Café	1978 S 6th St	12	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Halo Café	1978 S 6th St	12	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Halo Café	1978 S 6th St	12	\$ 20,000.00	
TID 85	RIF Grant	Midwest SAD	601 S 6th St	12	\$ 20,401.00	5
General Fund	Façade Grant	Brown Wilbert Vault Company	3900 S 13th St	13	\$ 1,539.33	
General Fund	Signage Grant	The Last One	2901 S 11th St	14	\$ 2,180.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	The Last One	2901 S 11th St	14	\$ 10,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	The Last One	2901 S 11th St	14	\$ 26,140.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Riley's Sandwiches	100 E Montana St	14	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Riley's Sandwiches	100 E Montana St	14	\$ 12,500.00	
General Fund	Signage Grant	At Random	2501 S Delaware Ave	14	\$ 2,745.51	
General Fund	Signage Grant	Cactus Club	2494-96 S Wentworth Ave	14	\$ 2,500.00	
General Fund	Façade Grant	Cactus Club	2494-96 S Wentworth Ave	14	\$ 5,000.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Cedar Teeth Pizza	2375 S Howell Ave	14	\$ 18,750.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation	Heiress Lounge & Networking Lounge	4917 W Center St	15	\$ 5,830.00	
General Fund	Storefront Activation Grant	Philip Apparel	3814 W Center St	15	\$ 2,455.00	
TID 98	Storefront Activation Grant	BLK Coffee	2126 W Fond Du Lac Ave	15	\$ 8,000.00	
TID 98	Storefront Activation Grant	Langdon Salon Suites	2256 W Fond Du Lac Ave	15	\$ 25,000.00	