



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

April 23, 2021

To the Honorable, Common Council
of the City of Milwaukee

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

As you consider Common Council file number 201674, the project plan and term sheet for Tax Incremental District Number 108, I want to share my perspective on the file. I strongly support this resolution.

The Milwaukee Tool development at Fifth and Michigan Streets provides benefits to the entire city in several different ways. First, it brings hundreds, if not thousands, of new jobs to the center of our city. Second, it is an investment in a neighborhood that has not seen significant business activity in a number of years. Finally, it welcomes a company that is a responsible employer offering family supporting wages directly to its employees and indirectly through its contractors.

Milwaukee Tool projects it would bring more than 1,200 jobs here. That impact would be felt in nearby restaurants and hotels. It would be felt at entertainment and cultural venues. Local not-for-profits will benefit. It would add to the economic health and to the vitality of our city. Milwaukee Tool looks forward to the possibility of hundreds more jobs – beyond the 1,200 – in the years ahead.

Importantly, the company is a signatory to the MMAC Region of Choice initiative, which aims to increase overall minority employment 15% by 2025 and to increase minorities in management 25% by 2025.

In Milwaukee's recent history, this part of Westtown has seen the departure of major employers such as Blue Cross, Assurant, and Boston Store. What Milwaukee Tool offers is a shot in the arm for this part of downtown allowing this area to start to achieve the potential we know it has.

The respected accounting and consulting firm Baker Tilly has analyzed the project specifics and come to the conclusion that Milwaukee Tool's Fifth and Michigan presence will produce an annual economic impact of \$935 million. I want that economic activity in our city.

Milwaukee Tool has shown remarkable growth in recent years through innovation and respected business practices. Its employees are paid well, and the pledge the company has made to pay service contractors a fifteen dollar per hour wage is backed up by its reputation as an honest enterprise.

With enormous effort, Commissioner Lafayette Crump has brought this project to the finish line. He has worked hard, along with his team, to obtain the best possible terms for Milwaukee and its residents. I commend him for what he has achieved here.

Pushing Milwaukee Tool away would be a serious mistake and a major disappointment. The company's growth requires office space as soon as possible, and it will select a location outside of Milwaukee if the current proposal does not move forward. The negative impact of Milwaukee Tool's departure would be compounded. Right or wrong, the message others in the business community would hear is that Milwaukee is a difficult place to grow. Potentially, that will discourage others from choosing our city, and that would be harmful to everyone here in Milwaukee.

I strongly encourage you to move the Milwaukee Tool project forward without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Barrett
Mayor