

# City of Milwaukee – Revitalizing a Downtown Neighborhood

WAM DC LLC (Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee  
Development Corporation)

# WAM DC

## MISSION

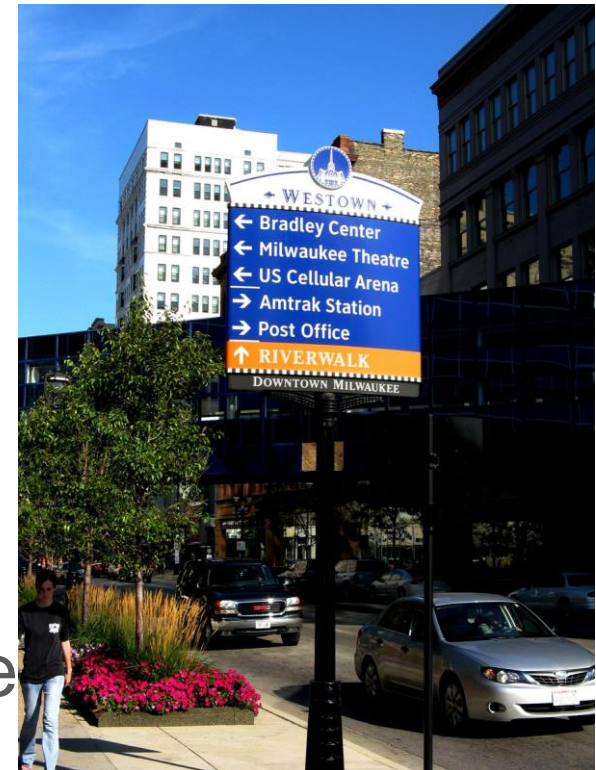
- ◆ WAM DC is a development corporation affiliated with the Milwaukee Development Corporation, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, working to revitalize West Wisconsin Avenue for the benefit of the entire Milwaukee community.

## VISION

- ◆ We envision a redeveloped West Wisconsin Avenue playing a central role in Milwaukee: **economically**, with strong companies and jobs near workers' homes; **socially**, with responsible opportunities for living, working and playing for the entire Milwaukee community; **creatively**, with artists integral to the success of the area; and **culturally**, honoring Milwaukee's rich heritage.

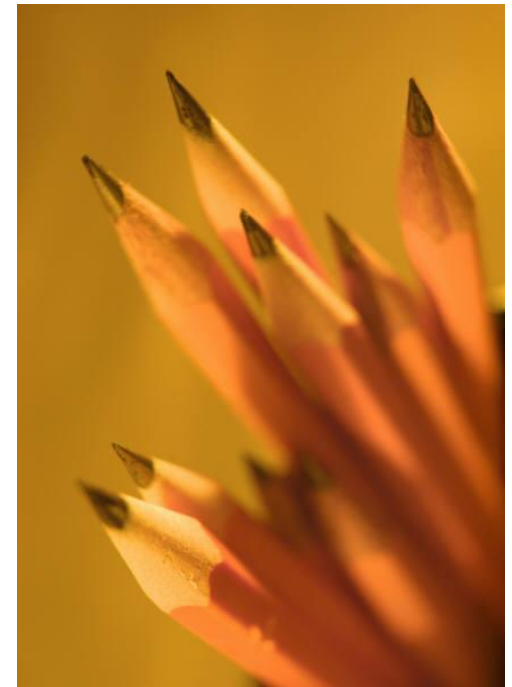
# Areas of Focus

- 🟢 4<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin
- 🟢 Housing
- 🟢 Transportation
- 🟢 Grand Theatre
- 🟢 The Shops of Grand Avenue



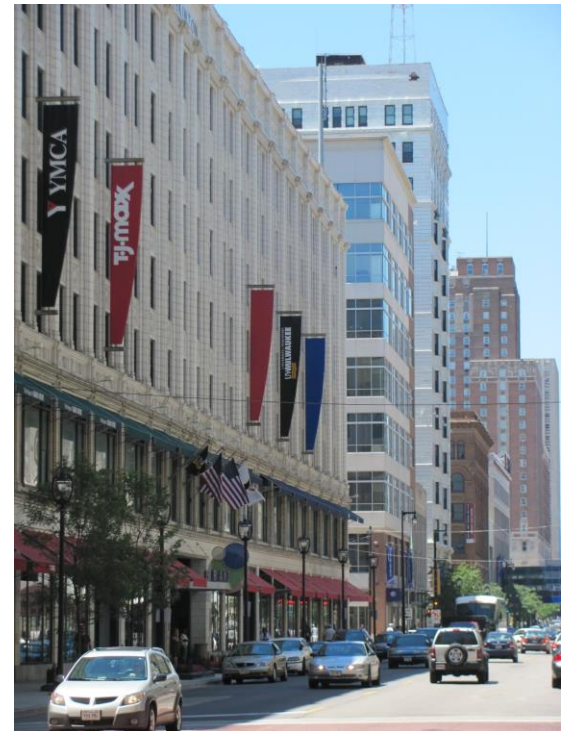
# How We Got Here

- ◆ 1977 – Wisconsin Avenue Demonstration Project
- ◆ 1982 – The Shops of Grand Avenue Open
- ◆ 1999 – Milwaukee Downtown Plan Catalytic Projects
- ◆ 2000 – ULI Advisory Services Panel Report on The Shops of Grand Avenue
- ◆ 2005 – Brookings Institution 12-Step Plan
- ◆ 2007 – Milwaukee Downtown Market Analysis
- ◆ 2010 – Comprehensive Milwaukee Plan



# History of WAM DC

- 2011 – Mayor Barrett requests private sector form West Wisconsin Avenue Task Force
- 2013 – Greater Milwaukee Committee receives ArtPlace America funding for Creational Trails
- 2013 – Strategic Actioning Study completed (SAS)





# Strategic Actioning Session (SAS) Brought Stakeholders to the Table

- Attended by 40 individuals from a variety of sectors:
  - Property owners
  - Young professional groups
  - Non-profit organization leaders
  - Elected officials
  - Business owners
  - Arts groups
  - Municipal employees
  - Residents



# SAS Developed 9 Key Points

- ◆ Establish WAM DC
- ◆ Identify and implement “quick wins”
- ◆ Provide the opportunity to establish a larger residential base in Westown
- ◆ Develop Westown Commons at 4<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin



# SAS Developed 9 Key Points

- ◆ Develop Plankinton Building separately from new arcade
- ◆ Re-purpose the new arcade
- ◆ Find a new purpose for the Grand Theatre
- ◆ Provide new green space on Wisconsin Avenue
- ◆ Improve Wisconsin Avenue to accommodate pedestrians and motorists

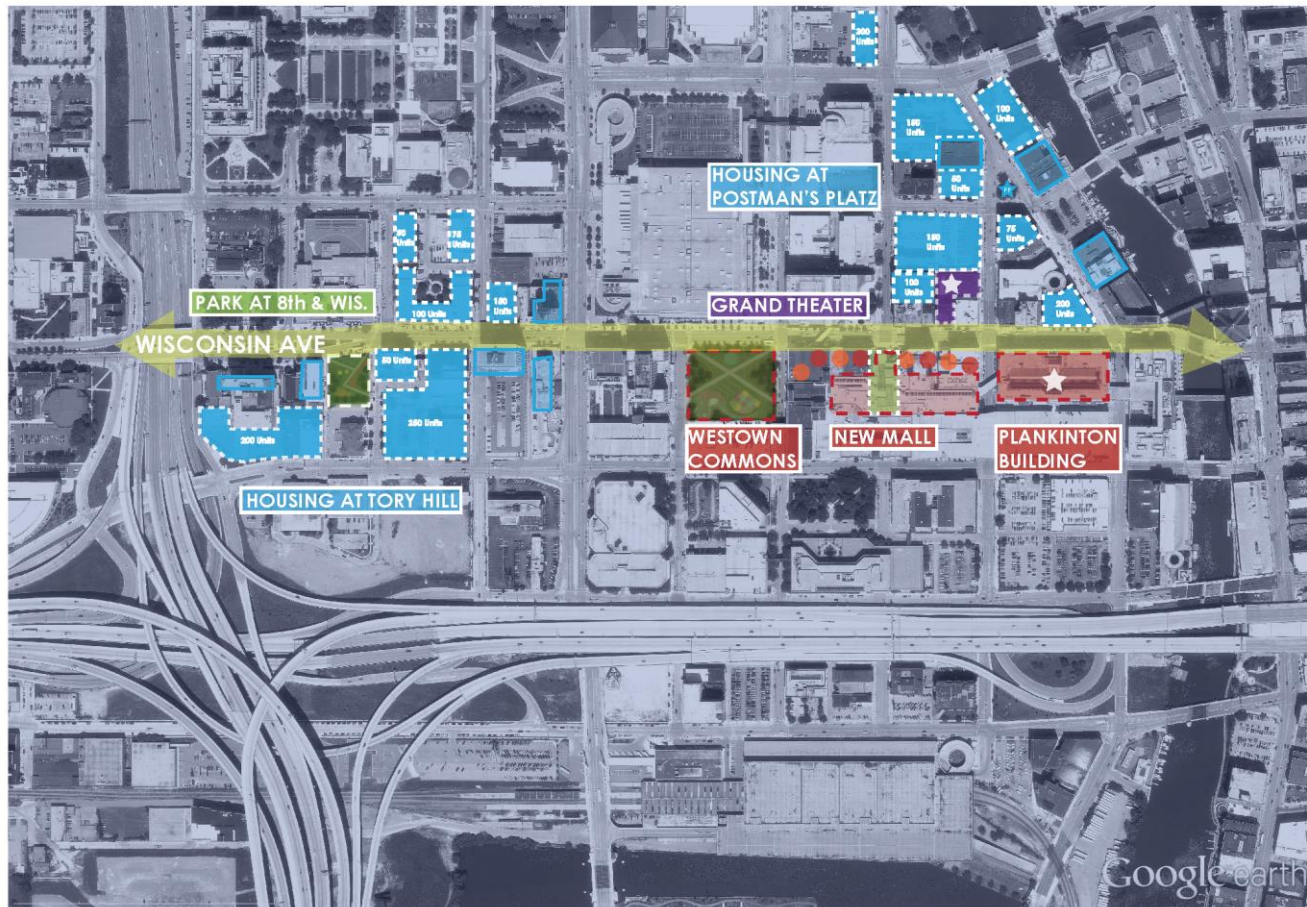




# Neighborhood Strengthening Projects Identified

## SUMMARY OF PROJECTS THE WESTOWN PLAN

"West Wisconsin Avenue: The outdoor room, unique to the city!"



# Implementation Begins

- 2013/14 – West Wisconsin Avenue Task Force meets bi-weekly to implement SAS strategies
- 2014 – WAM DC formed
- 2014 – Creational Trails artist call completed and art installation selected



# New Housing Opportunities



# Proposed Apartment Projects

- ◆ Posner – 105 units, 20% affordable
- ◆ Germania – 78 affordable units
- ◆ 700 W. Michigan St. – 50 units, 84% affordable
- ◆ 401 W. Michigan St. – 188 units, market rate
- ◆ Total of 421 units in development

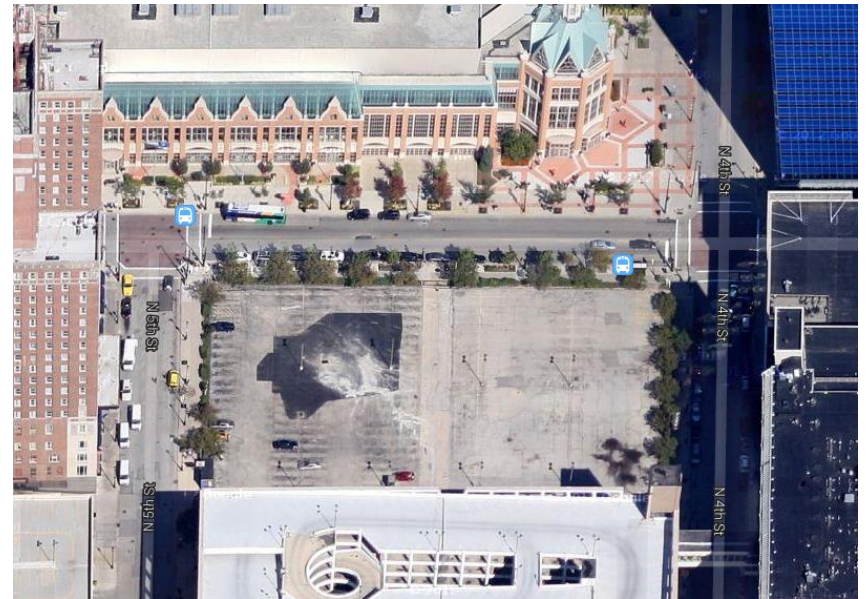




4<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin

# 4<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin

- Creative Alliance Milwaukee is beginning creative placemaking process for underutilized surface parking lot
- Process includes community participation, national expertise and consensus building to develop a realizable, fundable and community-supported solution



# Creative Placemaking Process

## 4<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin

- ◆ Provide leadership and framework for a cross-disciplinary, cross-sector process that reveals and advances a shared community vision
- ◆ Embed arts and culture in this larger community revitalization initiative
- ◆ Identify and enhance benefits to all stakeholders
- ◆ Engage residents, stakeholders and community at large
- ◆ Honor and augment the community distinctiveness and authenticity

# Creational Trails: The Avenue, Pioneering Spaces



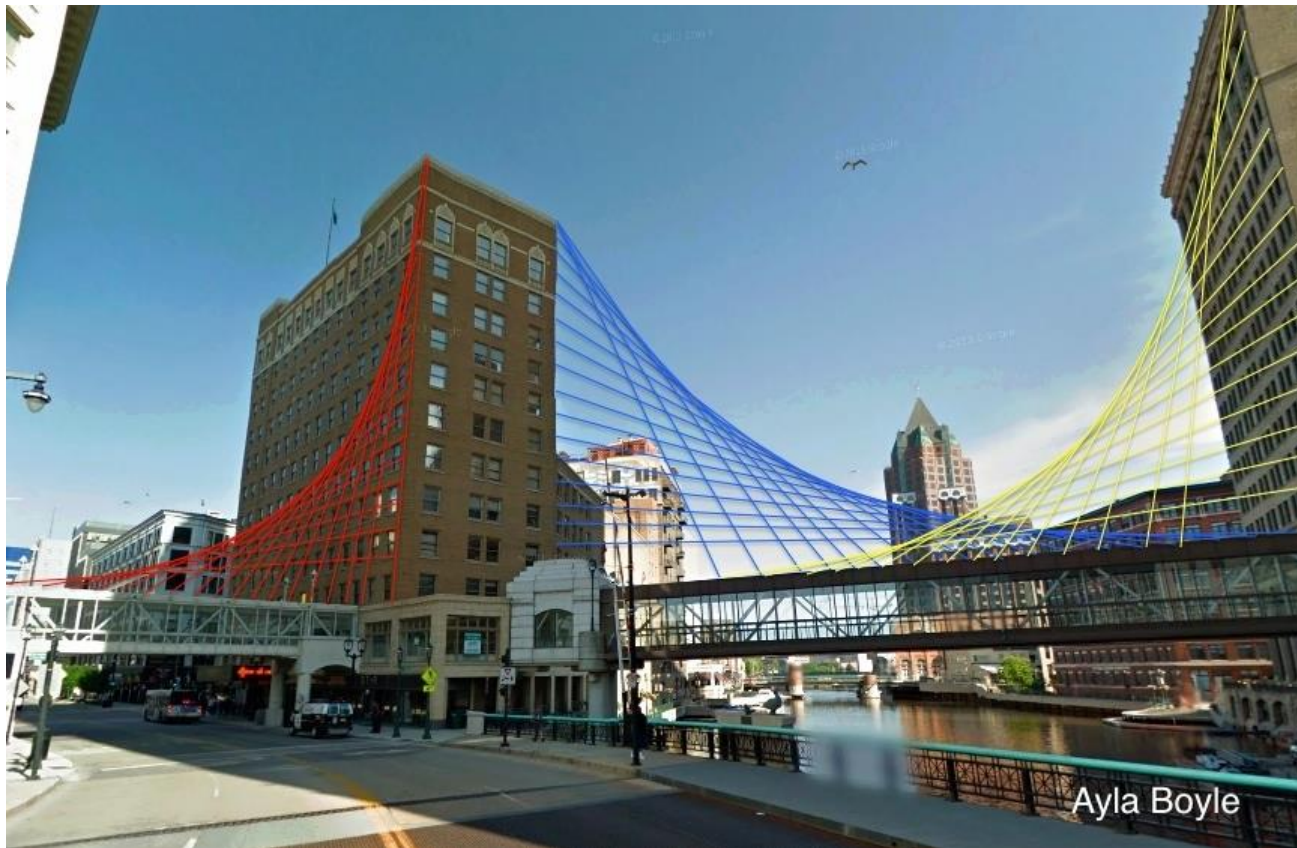
# Creational Trails: The Avenue, Pioneering Spaces

- ◆ Interactive art projects will enliven West Wisconsin Avenue June 13-15, 2014
  - ◆ Paul Bestul's Moire Pavilion
  - ◆ Ayla Boyle's Dream Catcher
- ◆ Sections of The Avenue will be closed
- ◆ Activities include art construction, night markets, music performances, overnight tent camping and dining

# Moire Pavilion



# Catching the Dreams of a Hopeful Future





# Our MECCA



# Our MECCA Sculpture

- World's largest pop art painting
- Designed by Robert Indiana in 1977 for Milwaukee's MECCA Arena
  - Former home of Milwaukee Bucks and Marquette's Golden Eagles men's basketball
- Purchased by Greg Koller in 2010
- Our MECCA now funding its transformation into a traveling sculpture





# Grand Theatre



# Redevelopment of Grand Theatre

- ◆ Sammis White's graduate school course UP810 Planning Policy Analysis conducted two-week study
- ◆ Students developed 21 options and made seven recommendations for redevelopment
- ◆ Each had a precedent study and financial and market analysis







# Ideas That Bubbled To the Top

Student/Faculty housing

Live theatre

Movie theatre

Hostel

Nightclub

Restaurants

Winter garden

Harmony initiative



# Other Student Ideas

Digital entertainment  
technology cluster

Public Aquarium

Sports complex

Mixed use entertainment:  
Grand Avenue *LIVE!*

Visual and performing arts  
school

Incubator complex

Indoor ice rink

Theatre renovation

# Transportation & Milwaukee Streetcar

# Milwaukee Streetcar

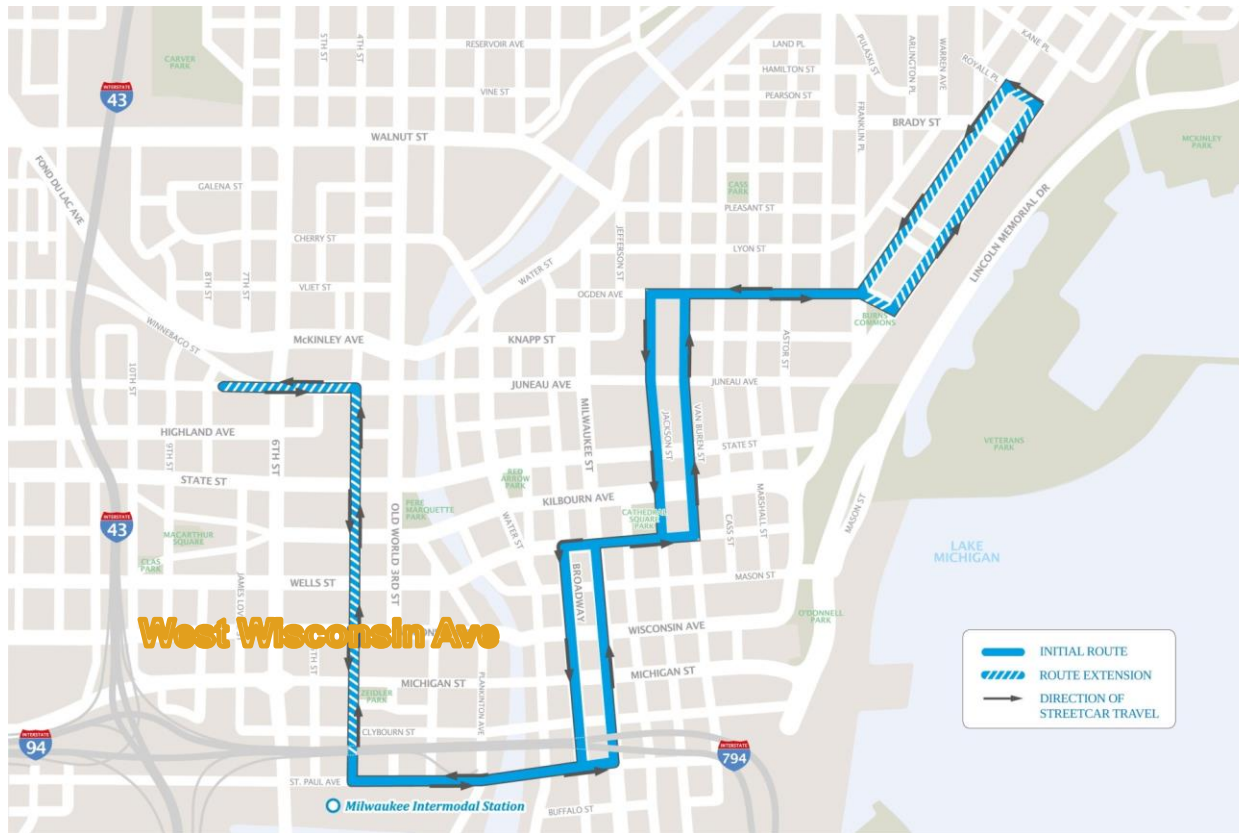




# The Starter System

- ◆ Fixed guideway rail system
- ◆ Modern vehicles
- ◆ Stops every one to three blocks
- ◆ 10-minute minimum frequency
- ◆ Preserves most on-street parking
- ◆ Over 1 million annual riders





Downtown Streetcar route is within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of route:  
 100% of hotel rooms,  
 91% of retail space,  
 90% of office,  
 77% of housing,  
 77% of parking,  
 Lakefront and Riverwalk

# Milwaukee Intermodal Station



# The Shops of Grand Avenue



# The Shops of Grand Avenue

- 💧 1982 construction
- 💧 Centerpiece of downtown
- 💧 Retail, food, office, housing
- 💧 Leasing underway
- 💧 Next iteration



# Public Relations

IN WISCONSIN.



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Apr 15, 2014, 12:52pm CDT

## Grand Avenue could get lift from new downtown development group

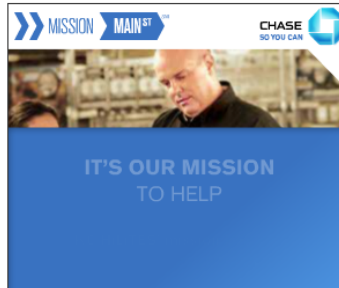


Stacy Vogel Davis  
Associate editor-  
Milwaukee Business Journal  
Email | Twitter | Google+

The Shops of Grand Avenue could get the lift it needs should a new economic development group focused on West Wisconsin Avenue try to take over ownership of the struggling downtown



Enlarge Photo



Videos



MILWAUKEE-WISCONSIN  
JOURNAL SENTINEL



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## Nonprofit group hopes to help revive Wisconsin Ave. downtown

By Tom Daykin of the Journal Sentinel

April 11, 2014

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EMAIL PRINT (27) COMMENTS



Steve Chernof, a partner at Godfrey & Kahn

A few years ago, real estate attorney Steve Chernof was chatting with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, who was lamenting the empty and underused properties along downtown's W. Wisconsin Ave.

Barrett "realized that city government simply trying to push things along would not work," Chernof said. "You have to engage the private sector."

Chernof said he was interested in helping with that work. Barrett responded without hesitating.

"He said, 'It's yours. Go do it,'" said Chernof, a partner at Godfrey & Kahn.

Chernof organized a group of city and county officials, downtown business operators, developers and others, who last June met for two days to discuss ideas for reviving the area centered on Wisconsin Ave. between the Milwaukee River and I-43. The meeting resulted in some general strategies and the creation of a nonprofit, private development group that will help encourage those efforts.

The group, WAM DC LLC, is to have its first board meeting on April 22. WAM DC LLC — the letters stand for Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee Development Corp. Limited Liability Co. — creates a formal structure for

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Dec 10, 2013, 2:56pm CST

## West Wisconsin Avenue group creates economic development corporation



Stacy Vogel Davis  
Associate editor-  
Milwaukee Business Journal  
Email | Twitter | Google+

The group of civic leaders tasked with improving West Wisconsin Avenue has reached an agreement to form an economic development group under the banner of the Milwaukee Development Corp.

The organization will be called WAM DC LLC, an acronym for Wisconsin Avenue



Enlarge Photo

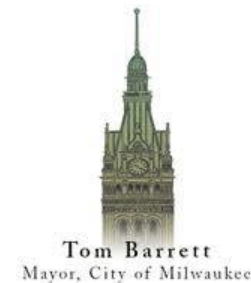
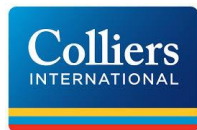
A committee looking for ways to improve West Wisconsin Avenue, including The Shops of Grand Avenue, will create an economic development organization.

Sharing Our Story

# Connections We Are Making



The Marcus Corporation





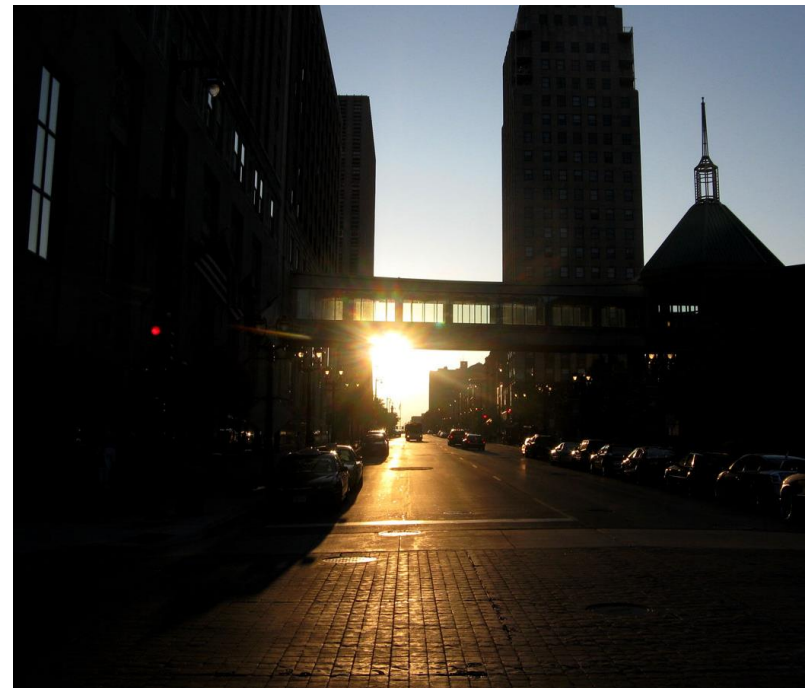
# Keeping the Momentum Going

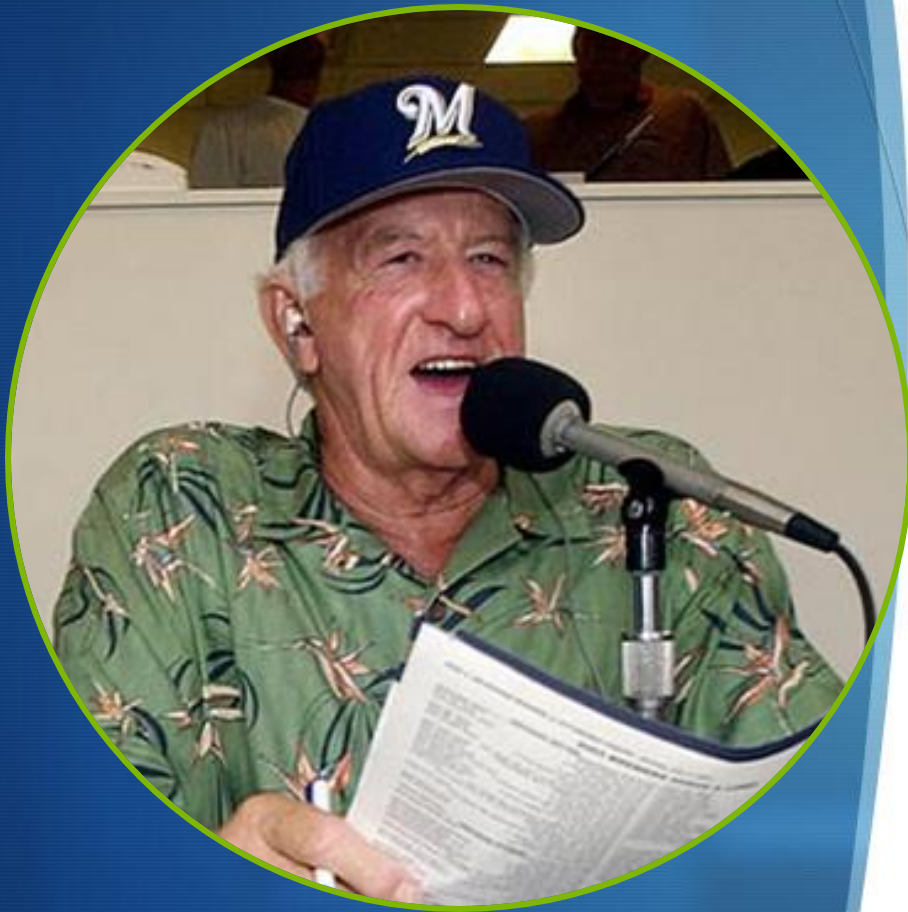
- 💧 Volunteer and financial opportunities to support Creational Trails exist
- 💧 Creative Alliance Milwaukee's process welcomes creatives for planning the hub
- 💧 Ready to assist property owners in developing housing and retail



# Keeping the Momentum Going

- Historically, Westtown has been the retail, entertainment and convention district
- West Wisconsin Avenue is the activity/entertainment hub with connections to other areas of the city
- What better place to address and instill pride in





This pitch is a strike  
“right down  
Wisconsin Avenue.”  
– Bob Uecker

# Questions & Dialogue



