

Ideas to “equitably distribute the benefits accruing to downtown through investments and development projects in downtown to economically-challenged areas of the city outside of downtown” (Council file 190588)

Raise money for investment in neighborhood development activity.

- Seek State legislation to allow Milwaukee to establish a short-term occupancy tax on properties rented through Air BnB-type entities, and contribute the proceeds to a neighborhood development fund.
- Seek State legislation to allow Milwaukee to establish a surcharge on tickets for events at entertainment venues and contribute the proceeds to a neighborhood development fund. (State law change would be required.)
- Work with a securities firm to create and market a socially-conscious investment fund that invests in downtown projects likely to generate a healthy return. Investment returns would be shared between the investors and the neighborhood development fund. Encourage the Employee Retirement System to invest in the fund.
- Seek State legislation to allow creation of parallel downtown/neighborhood tax increment districts, allowing increment from the downtown project to be used intentionally for neighborhood improvements.
- Seek State legislation to expand the geography in which TID increment can be spent for infrastructure improvements, and broaden the uses of increment outside the TID boundary to include neighborhood amenities and safety investments. Current law restricts such expenditures to the area within ½ mile of the TID boundary.

Establish mentor/protégé relationships

- Establish mentor/protégé program in which successful downtown businesses and developers offer mentoring to smaller-scale neighborhood businesses in the same business sector. Establish a “legacy business partnership,” through which long-established downtown businesses are paired with long-established neighborhood businesses.
- With the assistance of experienced property management professionals who manage thousands of downtown residential units, establish a property management firm and training program, employing residents of economically-challenged neighborhoods, to provide high-quality management services in neighborhoods outside of downtown.

Improve access of neighborhood workers to downtown job opportunities

- Establish a targeted training and recruitment program for neighborhood residents who are working in “opportunity occupations”¹ downtown. Purpose of the program would be to provide a path for these workers to move up the ladder and pay scale in their firms.

¹ “Opportunity occupations” are those that do not require a college degree and pay above the national annual median wage of \$37,690. A recent Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland study found that 28.8% of jobs in Milwaukee are classified as opportunity occupations. Five of the 10 likely have significant downtown employment. These include customer service representatives; maintenance and repair workers; bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks; sales representatives, and secretaries and administrative assistants.

- Focus planning and investments for the streetcar, bus system and bicycle infrastructure in ways that strengthen connections between neighborhoods and downtown employment nodes.

Encourage downtown residents to invest in near-downtown neighborhoods

- Establish a “live in the city” home buyer marketing campaign, targeting downtown workers who are ready to move from a rental or condo unit to a home. Market the affordability of single-family and duplex homes in city neighborhoods, and expose workers to the amenities of city neighborhoods. Provide low-interest financing for buyers.