

Martha L. Brown
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Professional experience

October 2004 – May 2020: Deputy Commissioner, Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD)

In this position, I am responsible for the day-to-day operation of the City government department that oversees planning, economic development, redevelopment, housing and neighborhood projects, and management of the City's real estate portfolio. The department, which has about 80 employees, also provides staff support to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, City Plan Commission, Milwaukee Arts Board, Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation, and Milwaukee Fourth of July Commission. I report to the Commissioner of City Development, and interact frequently with Mayor Tom Barrett and members of the Milwaukee Common Council. I am responsible for preparing the department's agenda and presentation for bi-monthly Accountability in Management meetings, and play a key role in programmatic decisions that shape the department's budget.

My direct reports include managers of finance and administration, city planning, neighborhood and business development, housing preservation and development, and foreclosed property disposition, as well as the department's press officer, outreach coordinator, and Common Council liaison. I provide direction and ongoing feedback to these staff members and frequently convene a variety of intra- and inter-departmental groups to foster joint response to opportunity and mutual problem-solving.

Key accomplishments and special assignments

- Oversaw establishment of new unit within DCD to handle budgeting, accounting, personnel and payroll duties and information technology, after Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee chose to no longer provide these services to the department. This transition required more than a year for planning and full implementation.
- Lead the City's partnership with Milwaukee County to develop affordable permanent supportive housing for individuals at risk of homelessness because of mental illness or other disabilities. Served as co-chair of the City-County Special Needs Housing Action Team, which established development strategies. Provide ongoing staff support to the permanent City-County Commission on Supportive Housing, which was formed to implement recommendations of the Special Needs Housing Action Team. As of December 31, 2017, 632 new units of permanent supportive housing have been constructed and occupied in Milwaukee County, and construction of 140 additional units is underway.
- Serve as Mayor Tom Barrett's liaison in activities that build relationships between the City of Milwaukee and the People's Republic of China, particularly the city of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province.

- Led the development of Growing Prosperity, Milwaukee's 10-year action agenda for economic development. Plan was adopted by the Milwaukee Common Council in 2014.
- Led City collaboration with Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp. to establish Milwaukee as a "Kiva City." This designation, achieved in February 2015, makes crowd-funded, 0% interest Kiva loans available to Wisconsin entrepreneurs who do not qualify for conventional financing. As of January 31, 2018, 158 borrowers had received loans totaling \$865,000.
- Developed and direct implementation of the Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative, a grant program which will result in the sale, renovation and re-occupancy of 100 blighted, vacant, tax-foreclosed houses and the employment of individuals facing barriers to employment to perform renovation work. MERI will be completed at the end of 2018.
- Lead City's efforts to sell surplus Milwaukee Public Schools properties. A State legislative change in 2015 assigned this responsibility to City government. All transactions must be completed within the framework of strict requirements imposed by the State legislation and meet standards required for Common Council approval.

June 2004 – October 2004: Acting Commissioner, Milwaukee Department of City Development

January 1999 – May 2004: Manager, Milwaukee Development Center

The Development Center is Milwaukee's "one-stop shop" for development permitting. I was the founding manager of the Center, responsible for turning a conceptual plan into a well-functioning unit of City government. In this position, I reported to the Director of City Planning.

Key accomplishments

- Built a 25-member team of individuals who previously had worked in multiple City departments (Building Inspection, Public Works, Office of the City Engineer, Water Works). Oversaw remodeling of permanent space to house the Development Center. Planned and directed implementation of major technology improvements, including Milwaukee's first internet-based "ePermits" system that was used to issue electrical, plumbing, and heating and air conditioning permits. The original system has more recently been replaced with a proprietary online permitting system.

1995 – 1998: Economic Development Marketing Manager, Dept. of City Development

1988 – 1994: Senior Staff Assistant to the Commissioner, Dept. of City Development

1979 – 1988: Various positions in marketing and public relations office, Dept. of City Development

1977 – 1979: Public Relations Manager, Appleton Memorial Hospital, Appleton, WI

1973 – 1977: Reporter and news producer, WBAY TV-AM-FM, Green Bay, WI

Education

Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Analysis, awarded summa cum laude, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 1975. Other major coursework in journalism and organ performance.

Awards

Charles M. Hill, Sr. Award for Housing Excellence, presented by the Wisconsin Collaborative for Affordable Housing, July 2019

CLAIR Local Government Exchange Fellowship to Okayama, Japan, October 2018

Norman Gill Award for Individual Excellence, Awarded by the Wisconsin Policy Forum, June 2018

National League of Cities Equitable Economic Development Fellow, June 2016- May 2017

Milwaukee Public Policy Forum Innovation in Government Award, 2009, for collaborative City-County work on permanent supportive housing

Milwaukee Public Policy Forum Innovation in Government Award, 2008, for development of ePermits system

City of Milwaukee City Innovation Award, 1998

Memberships and Board Service

Member, Board of Directors, Presbyterian Homes of Wisconsin, since 2020

Member, Board of Directors, Collegium Laydes, since 2020

Board president, PianoArts of Wisconsin, Inc. Board member since 2013

Member, Executive Committee, Community Development Alliance, 2015-2020

Member, Executive Committee, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 2008-2020

Director, Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation, 2004-2020

October 2020