

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: March 7, 2025

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Celia Benton, Director of Economic Development, Department of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: An informational report on due diligence underway at 800 W. Wells Street, current location of the Milwaukee Public Museum

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes only.

POLICY

Wis. Stat. §§ 59.17(2)(b)3

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Economic Development has begun due diligence efforts to assess the future potential of 800 W. Wells Street; the current location of the Milwaukee Public Museum. This effort underscores the County's commitment to ensuring that the property's future use aligns with the interests of the community while maximizing its value and long-term benefits.

Economic Development released a Request for Proposals for due diligence services for the analysis of 800 W. Wells Street in August 2024. The team of Graef, Bear Real Estate Group and CG Schmidt was selected unanimously by the review panel, and Economic Development entered into a Professional Services Agreement with Graef at the end of 2024.

The Graef team will provide Milwaukee County with a detailed report of the property's existing conditions and will use the existing conditions to complete a site use development analysis with up to three development scenarios. This analysis will consider multiple scenarios for the site's future and will identify constraints and opportunities for each scenario. Each scenario will also be assessed for its potential impact to the County, its alignment with community needs, and its compatibility with the City of Milwaukee's Downtown Plan 2040. The final deliverables for this team are expected before the end 2025.

The work completed by the Graef team is the beginning of several years of due diligence work that the County will undertake on the site. Economic Development's goal is to ensure that any decision about the property's future is publicly transparent and informed by a rigorous analysis of all options, focusing on maximizing community benefit and operational excellence. No decision will be made on the property in the near future.

The property's location in downtown Milwaukee presents significant potential, particularly given its proximity to key civic institutions. The City's Downtown Plan 2040 has identified this

site as a prime candidate for high-density mixed-use development, with an emphasis on mixed-income housing and ground-floor commercial activity.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

FISCAL EFFECT

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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PREPARED BY:

Celia Benton, Director of Economic Development, Department of Administrative Services

APPROVED BY:

Celia Benton

Celia Benton, Director of Economic Development, Department of Administrative Services

ATTACHMENTS:

[MilwaukeeDowntownPlan-FINAL-web.pdf](#)

cc:

David Crowley, County Executive

MaryJo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive

Liz Sumner, Comptroller

Members of the Committee on Community, Environment and Economic Development

Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors

Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator

Clarence Kinnard, Committee Coordinator

Steve Cady, Director of Research and Policy