



MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Business Improvement District 21 | 301 W Wisconsin Ave. Suite 106 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203
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April 13, 2022

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Dear Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 Board of Directors, we enthusiastically support the community's interest in a roller rink at Red Arrow Park. Beginning in 2020, Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 convened several community stakeholders to begin the process to Reimagine Red Arrow Park, including identifying tactical improvements and a long-range vision. Partners included MGIC, Herzfeld Foundation, Milwaukee County Parks, the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development, and Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, along with input from community members. Throughout the year, we convened stakeholder and community conversations to discuss what programmatic and design improvements could help foster a deeper sense of belonging and welcoming to this central public space in the heart of Milwaukee. As a result, we commissioned a park analysis by TKWA, which is available on our [website](#).

An overwhelming response from our initial research is to activate the rink as a vibrant year-round plaza in the heart of the city, including a roller rink during the ice-skating rink's off-season. While we understand it is crucial to preserve Slice of Ice as one of Milwaukee's most popular and vibrant winter activities, we've researched best practices from our peer cities that have transformed ice-skating rinks into roller rinks, including the Center City District BID (CCD) in Philadelphia. For this [particular rink](#), a temporary frame is constructed over the ice-skating rink that evenly distributes the weight load of the roller rink across the surface, preserving the ice rink's infrastructure and surface, and preventing damage to the subway tunnel below. The roller rink opened in Dilworth Park at the peak of the pandemic, as roller skating experienced a resurgence across the country, from April 27 through June 20, 2021. Given the popularity of the roller rink, CCD extended its temporary roller rink for an additional month this year, from April 27 through July 17, 2022. Particularly, Center City District's leadership cites the diversity of users that enjoy the park's new attraction and sees immense value in providing this activity downtown.

Just as ice skating invigorates Red Arrow Park with energy in the winter, we envision a similar effect for roller skating in the summer. In addition, the program supports several Milwaukee County initiatives, in which Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 is proud to partner, including County Executive David Crowley's "Year of Our Youth" initiative and the Healthy County Initiative. Roller skating offers an opportunity for youth and family engagement downtown, which is a prevailing theme in our community engagement for Connec+ing MKE – Downtown Plan 2040, an update to the 2010 Downtown Area Plan currently underway in partnership with the City of Milwaukee.

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We back Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Marcellia Nicholson and Supervisor Ryan Clancy for their leadership and oversight of this research and planning endeavor. As fierce advocates for creating equitable and vibrant public spaces, we support Milwaukee County Parks staff and their commitment to the very best public park system in the country. We vow to be a community partner to help program the roller rink with themed nights, live DJs, food trucks, and more, to ensure that the roller rink is a vibrant destination for everyone in Milwaukee and look forward to being partners with you on this exciting, game-changing activation of Red Arrow Park.

Sincerely,

Beth Weirick

CEO of Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21

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