



# Vision Design

## Putting a Design on the Future of the Silver City District

The Silver City District, a new Main Street Milwaukee business district, is exploring exciting opportunities that could set the stage for its future and the character of its physical and economic environment. Silver City Main Street, a program of Layton West Boulevard Neighbors, is taking bold steps to redevelopment and revitalization efforts that will reinvigorate the Silver City district as a vibrant and diverse neighborhood business district.

The Silver City District is one of four Milwaukee commercial districts to be awarded Main Street Milwaukee designation. Main Street Milwaukee is a collaborative effort between the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). The program uses \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds and matches it with private resources contributed by partners. The program is a comprehensive, city-wide approach to neighborhood economic development that utilizes a proven method to increase investment in urban neighborhoods, create new businesses, create jobs, and create wealth in urban communities.

Silver City visioning and strategic planning were highlighted by a three-day Vision Design technical visit, conducted May 16 – 18, 2005. The Vision Design process incorporated a series of public input, visioning and strategic planning activities that engaged residents, business persons, civic leaders and other stakeholders in fun and creative planning exercises designed to:

- ◆ Identify and summarize critical needs, issues and opportunities in the Silver City district.
- ◆ Articulate a vision for the Silver City district and illustrate various development and design-oriented concepts that depict possible improvements and the character of the neighborhood's vision for the business district.
- ◆ Establish priorities in the areas of Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring



## Vision...

### A Vision for Silver City

Silver City of the future is a thriving business district that has established itself as an authentic, culturally diverse neighborhood business district. Known as the “Heart of the Southside,” Silver City has evolved as a vibrant, full-service retail, service and entertainment attraction that brings residents and visitors together to experience a rare brand of Milwaukee culture and hospitality.

The enriching hometown qualities of a community where people pull together to maintain a fun, safe, healthy and highly active environment are on display every day in Silver City. The district's clean, lush, attractive and interesting streetscape helps to tell a story, with chapters reciting its proud history and celebrating its cultural and ethnic diversity. The facades of attractive, well-maintained buildings and storefronts lining National Avenue help to trace the district's evolution and serve as the backdrop to a highly active street scene where people of all kinds interact to create a fun, vibrant and active atmosphere throughout the day and into the evening.

Silver City is home to a diverse mix of businesses that cater to the everyday needs and distinct tastes of neighborhood residents and visitors alike. A collection of quality, ethnically diverse eating & drinking establishments serve as an anchor for an experience that extends into the evening hours. The lively nature of the Silver City district is amplified by signature events and family-oriented activities that celebrate the district's International mix of sights, sounds and flavors.

Nature and industry are visible elements of the Silver City environment that forge important visual and physical connections to the beautiful and robust Menomonee Valley, important employment centers and Miller Park. People living in a variety of housing styles and that span the full demographics spectrum of age, race, culture and income live in well defined, healthy and attractive neighborhoods that have become interwoven with the Silver City business district, serving to emphasize the small town, hometown qualities of Silver City.

Momentum for Silver City enhancement efforts is rooted in the positive attitude and “can do” spirit embraced by Silver City residents and business persons – a basis upon which the people of Silver City have come together to methodically plan and implement projects that have led to dramatic improvements. Teamwork is the foundation upon which Silver City advocates continue to work together to build and maintain an attractive, safe, wholesome and vibrant place for future generations of Silver City residents and visitors.

## Direction...

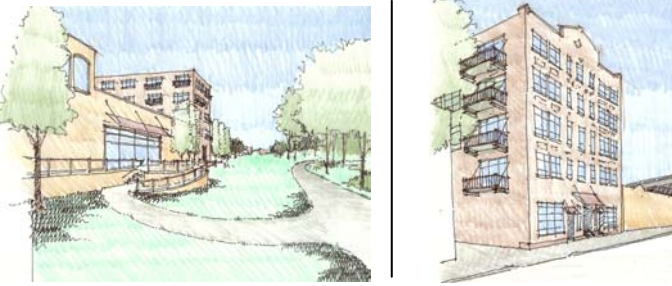
The community's vision for the Silver City district provides a basis for planning and implementing projects and activities.

The vision for the Silver City district will not be realized overnight, or even in a week, a month or a year. The vision will take shape as the community works together to plan, design and implement projects and activities that provide a glimpse of the future and that will incrementally, over time, achieve the vision for the Silver City district.

# Directions

The collective input of stakeholders participating in the Vision Design process provides a basis for concepts that begin to visualize and contemplate the nature and character of the district in the future.

## Connections and Links

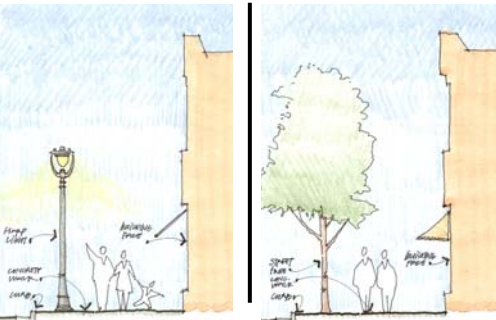


Existing industrial buildings lining the north side of West Pierce Street, and backing to the railroad corridor, could someday house condominium and loft-style housing units. The redevelopment of these sites could also help to facilitate connections to, and the transition from, the Menomonee River Valley, existing neighborhoods, and the Silver City business district.

## Streetscape



Streetscape enhancements could help to promote the conduct of legitimate uses and activities necessary to enhance the district's business climate and attract new investment.



Improving the environment for the pedestrian should be an underlying goal of all streetscape improvements and, as such, streetscape improvements and features should be of a pedestrian scale.

## Potential Catalyst Projects



A Public Market, developed and operated by a public or non-profit entity, might house small businesses and entrepreneurs producing local products or offering specialty products and services in a festive environment. A Public Market could also serve as an incubator for businesses that could grow to someday occupy storefronts in the Silver City business district.

# Principles

The Vision Design process helped to identify basic principles and common causes upon which stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and varied interests can generally agree, and that provide a foundation – and direction – for Silver City redevelopment and revitalization strategies.

- ◆ Promote developments, improvements and programs that promote a fun, safe, healthy and highly active environment.
- ◆ Preserve, create and maintain the district's small town character and authentic features that help to distinguish the Silver City district as a special place.
- ◆ Embrace and promote the cultural and economic diversity of the Silver City district.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a vibrant mix of businesses that includes quality retail, service and entertainment establishments.
- ◆ Enhance and promote links between the Silver City business district and surrounding neighborhoods, the Menomonee River Valley, and area gateways and attractions.
- ◆ Target underutilized and underdeveloped properties in the Silver City district and surrounding area for development that supports the vision for the Silver City district.

## Silver City Main Street—Springing Into Action Potential Start-up Initiatives

### Organization

- ◆ Create a policies & procedures manual
- ◆ Develop an administration, operations and project budget
- ◆ Develop and manage a fundraising program
- ◆ Recruit and train volunteers for committees and projects
- ◆ Develop a volunteer recognition program
- ◆ Publish a periodic news bulletin (print and/or electronic)
- ◆ Create / maintain a Silver City Main Street website

### Promotion

- ◆ Brainstorm and select new events:
  - ◇ Special events / festivals
  - ◇ Retail events
  - ◇ Image-building events & activities
- ◆ Plan, promote and stage events
- ◆ Develop/execute a Silver City District marketing campaign

### Design

- ◆ Provide design assistance to district building owners
- ◆ Work for enforcement of minimal maintenance standards
- ◆ Work toward development of district-specific design guidelines / standards
- ◆ District Clean Up maintenance program
- ◆ Design and development of streetscape improvements

### Economic Restructuring

- ◆ Business seminar series
- ◆ Business Visitations
- ◆ Business-to-Business Networking Opportunities
- ◆ Develop marketing strategy & materials
- ◆ Develop and market incentives for target projects
- ◆ "Package" and distribute existing incentives
- ◆ Update Market Analysis
- ◆ Produce comprehensive District Inventory