



Department of City Development
News Release

For Immediate Release
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UWM To Partner with Main Street Milwaukee Program Extends Resources Beyond Four Districts

The Main Street Milwaukee Partners Board announced today a new partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee that will extend the resources of the program beyond four designated districts. The announcement was made following the board's regular meeting in which four districts were chosen.

UWM is partnering with Main Street Milwaukee to provide the services of graduate students from the School of Architecture and Urban Planning. The interns will provide 20 hours of service a week to each of the eight applicants to the program. UWM developed a course offering to graduate students that combines an internship with a seminar on the program's planning efforts.

"Everybody wins in this relationship," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "Our community development groups will benefit from the services of these urban-planners-in-training and the UWM graduate students gain valuable experience in the heart of Milwaukee. We are a stronger city when we learn to combine our efforts whenever possible."

Main Street Milwaukee is a collaborative effort to revitalize Milwaukee's older, traditional neighborhood commercial districts. Milwaukee has taken a proven national model and crafted a unique program that will help build sustainable, walkable, thriving commercial districts as anchors to our city's residential neighborhoods.

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The UWM partnership compliments the range of services made available to community development groups that are interested in revitalizing their neighborhood main street. The Department of City Development (DCD) is collaborating with the Milwaukee Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to provide a comprehensive range of support services to groups within the federal block grant boundaries. The program concentrates financial and technical assistance, offering expert guidance in architectural design, marketing, district planning, urban planning and small business development.

Under the program, \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds will be matched with private resources contributed by LISC, State Farm Insurance, Bank One, the Helen Bader Foundation, the Bradley Foundation, Potawatomi Community Foundation and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

Four 'main street districts' were designated today. While all eight applicants will be eligible for interns, workshops and technical assistance, the four districts will additionally benefit from a 'Main Street Manager.'

"The Main Street Milwaukee Partners Board had a tough job to do in choosing four out of eight wonderfully dedicated applicants," said Mayor Barrett. "I commend the Board on its work and welcome all groups to take full advantage of the resources offered by Main Street Milwaukee. Now the real work begins!"

Main Street Milwaukee Districts

The Main Street Milwaukee Partners Board voted to designate the following streets as 'main street districts':

Burleigh Street – Sherman Blvd. west to 60th Street

West National Avenue – 31st Street west to 39th Street

Lincoln Avenue – 5th Street west to 20th Street

North 27th Street – W. Highland Blvd south to St. Paul Avenue

The designations were based on criteria established by a national model of the Main Street program. The criteria included level of support for a main street program among stakeholders and level of organizational capacity of the community development group which applied to the program. For more information visit www.mkedcd.org . A description of all eight applicants follows.

LIST OF MAIN STREET MILWAUKEE APPLICANTS

Burleigh Street – Sherman Blvd. west to 60th Street

Applicant: Burleigh Street CDC

The Sherman Park neighborhood is known for its working middle class and culturally diverse population. A bastion of block groups and community organizing, Sherman Park is characterized by rich housing stock and committed residents. The vision for the Burleigh Street Commercial Business District is to create a “village shopping district” utilized by the residents of the greater Sherman Park community. Burleigh Street is on an upswing of revival as a result of dedicated manpower, encouragement, and enthusiasm of residents and business leaders.

West National Avenue – 31st Street west to 39th Street

Applicant: Layton Boulevard West Neighbors

Today, the Layton Boulevard West Neighborhood is comprised of mainly Latino and white residents, with a growing Asian and African-American community. Shopping on National Avenue, the Silver City district, is truly an “Inter-National Experience.” Serving as a gateway to Milwaukee’s Near South Side, the Silver City district is just beginning to transform into a blossoming commercial district. Community leaders and residents are currently implementing neighborhood improvement projects and forming block watches, creating a strong momentum for further improvement.

Lincoln Avenue – 5th Street west to 20th Street

Applicant: Lincoln Village Business Association

Lincoln Village developed overtime as a mostly Polish and Eastern European immigrant settlement with the bulk of employment based on manufacturing and fishing industries. A combination of factors has sparked the resurgence in the neighborhood: new Latino immigration, long-time prominent businesses adapting to the changing market, and an increase in home ownership. Today, Lincoln Village has a majority immigrant Latino population, and the community is characterized by an emphasis on family, faith, cooperation, and a strong work ethic. A variety of distinctive businesses serve the entire community.

North Avenue 30th Street west to Sherman Blvd.

Applicant: North Avenue CDC

North Avenue’s peak construction period occurred between 1905 and 1920, and the area became known as a mixed-income, blue-collar neighborhood where good paying jobs stabilized the housing stock and supported local businesses. A combination of factors – a proposal for the Park West Freeway, suburbanization, and a loss in manufacturing jobs -- contributed to North Avenue’s decline. Boasting diverse architectural styles, today North Avenue is being revived as a shopping hub for the neighborhood.

Mitchell Street – S. 5th Street west to S. 15th Street

Applicant: Historic Mitchell Street

The main settlement of Mitchell Street began in the 1870s when the area began to attract Polish settlers. It was an important center of Polish commercial, religious, and cultural life and served as one of Milwaukee's most important retail areas until the 1970s. Today the neighborhood is fifty percent Latino and the stores on Mitchell Street are diverse -- Korean, Arab, Latino, and franchise businesses – known as the “Grand Avenue of the south.” Many new storeowners recently immigrated from developing countries, and serve as a challenge and an asset to the development of a cohesive business district.

S. Cesar Chavez Drive – W. Pierce south to W. Greenfield

Milwaukee Alliance

Cesar Chavez Drive, on Milwaukee's Near South Side, is a densely populated area with strong purchasing power. Over half of the population is Latino and the percentage of families of Asian and Middle Eastern descent has been steadily increasing. Cesar Chavez Drive is characterized by colorful, charming buildings with potential. The physical assets of the neighborhood are enhanced by the heavy foot traffic of residents. The residents of the Near South Side promote an open, friendly atmosphere and a commitment to positive community change. Hardworking families frequent the diverse shops and restaurants of Cesar Chavez Drive, most of which are locally owned.

West Villard Avenue – N. Teutonia west to N. Sherman Boulevard

Applicant: Northwest Side CDC

Historically, Villard Avenue has had a reputation for blue-collar trade, a manufacturing suburb that doubled as the political anchor of north Milwaukee. Today, Villard Avenue is still a working-class community. Over half of the businesses on the street are African-American owned. Independent retailers say the constant influx of new enterprises and the low commercial vacancy rate on Villard Avenue attest to the street's strength as a commercial draw. Villard Avenue has a dynamic, evolving quality that welcomes change and new investment.

North 27th Street – W. Highland Boulevard south to St. Paul Avenue

Applicant: West End Development Corporation

South of Highland District (SOHI), located on North 27th Street, developed as a retail center between 1880 and 1920. A crossroads to the six neighborhoods that surround it, SOHI has recently benefited from revitalization efforts in these neighborhoods, as well as the strong social connections that go beyond block clubs and neighborhood associations. Evoking the feel of a small downtown, SOHI is characterized by three and four-story buildings housing high intensity uses. With a mix of retail and service businesses, North 27th Street is part of the daily experience of neighborhood residents, employees, and commuters, serving as a Western gateway to downtown.