

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Near South Side Area Plan is a community led comprehensive plan facilitated by the City of Milwaukee and its community partners. The plan enhances the existing assets of the area and provides policies and implementation strategies to guide and enhance the community's future development.

The Near South Side is a culturally diverse area and the heart of the Hispanic community in Milwaukee. This vibrant area is dominated by urban residential areas that are bisected by commercial corridors with many small family owned retail shops and ethnic restaurants, cafes and delis. The area has numerous community and religious institutions that add to its fabric. The cultural history, entertainment venues and retail opportunities are assets to residents and businesses and an attraction to the City and the region. Keeping with the area's history of reinventing its vitality and role in the regional economy, the northeast corner of the planning area is undergoing a surge of new large scale mixed use developments that are reinvigorating this former industrial area.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING CONTEXT

At the time this plan was completed, the City of Milwaukee was undergoing a comprehensive planning process that included two components: a Citywide Policy Plan and a series of thirteen Area Plans. The Near South Side plan is one of the 13 Area Plans that are part of the comprehensive planning series. The plans were developed under the State of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, Wis. Stats. 66.1001 that requires all municipalities to complete comprehensive plans. The law provides the framework for developing comprehensive plans and procedures for adopting the plan. The law also requires all actions taken by a city relating to official mapping, subdivision regulations, and zoning activities to be consistent with the community's comprehensive plan. As a result, any decisions regarding these matters must be consistent with this plan.

PURPOSE OF NEAR SOUTH SIDE AREA PLAN

The Near South Side Area Plan was created to provide a framework for the future development of the area. The overall goals of the Near South Side Plan are to:

- Build upon the strengths of the neighborhoods within the plan area;
- Provide a predictable regulatory process;
- Optimize the long-term value of public and private investments; and
- Generate consensus among businesses, property owners, residents and associations.

The plan provides tools and solutions to enhance the community's existing fabric and economic development initiatives. Also, it appropriately directs new development and creates strategies to help the community address issues they are facing. Specifically, the plan provides land use recommendations, strategies for key districts and corridors and identifies catalytic projects and initiatives.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Near South Side Area Plan is the outcome of a collaborative planning process consisting of six project phases. Exhibit 1 illustrates the planning phases.

During the start up phase, City staff and the Contract Management Team selected a project consultant, refined a project approach and created a Plan Advisory Group. The analysis phase included an extensive review of the area's existing conditions and identified opportunities and challenges. In addition, a market analysis was completed to understand the area's commercial, residential and industrial marketplace.

apr07 > may07	jun07 > nov07	dec07 > mar08	apr08 > oct08	nov08 > mar09	apr09 > may09
PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5	PHASE 6
Start Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select consultant • Negotiate contract • PAG project initiation meeting 	Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing conditions and identify opportunities and challenges • Conduct market analysis • Initiate surveys • Key stakeholder interviews • Focus group meetings • Present results of analysis phase to PAG 	Visioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify redevelopment corridors and districts • Identify catalytic projects • Present workshop presentation to CMT • Public workshops • Small-group meetings 	Synthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plan recommendations • Present draft recommendations to CMT • Draft plan chapters 	Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present draft plan to PAG • Publish draft plan • Conduct public open house 	Adoption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare final plan • Conduct plan adoption meetings with Plan Commission and ZNDC

EXHIBIT 1: PROJECT SCHEDULE AND PROCESS CHART

During the visioning phase, public workshops were conducted to identify growth and preservation opportunities that served as the foundation for district recommendations and potential catalytic projects. The synthesis and documentation phases utilized the planning information gathered in the previous phases to formulate recommendations and policies that were detailed in a draft plan document which were presented at a public open house. The Final phase, adoption, included preparing the final plan and presenting it to the City's Plan Commission and Zoning and Neighborhood Development Committee. The final step was to officially adopt the Near South Side Area Plan by the City of Milwaukee Common Council.

Throughout each phase public involvement activities were conducted and the planning staff worked closely with the Contract Management Team and Plan Advisory Group.

The role of these groups is discussed below.



NSS CONTRACT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Contract Management Team (CMT) was the core group responsible for carrying out the technical and fiscal management activities of the planning process. CMT members include key city staff and community organizations with broad constituencies and community organizing capabilities that will move the plan recommendations forward. Over the course of the planning period, the CMT met to review the information gathered, provide direction for public participation, offer guidance on plan development, and provide feedback about draft and final versions of the plan. In addition to providing a portion of the funding for the plan, many of these organizations also donated staff time to attend coordination meetings with city staff and the consultant.

PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

The Plan Advisory Group (PAG) consists of community stakeholders who served as plan advisors. The PAG met throughout the planning process to review the progress of the plan at all major milestones. Members were asked to provide feedback on the plan's recommendations and attend public outreach meetings.



PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES AND CONTEXT

The Near South Side planning area is generally bounded by the Menomonee Valley to the north, the city's municipal boundary with West Milwaukee to the west, the Union Pacific Railroad (south of Cleveland Avenue) to the south and the Milwaukee and Kinnickinnic rivers to the east. Map 1 shows the planning area's boundaries.

The planning area is a cohesive area that is made up of residential and commercial uses that are surrounded by existing and former industrial properties. Immediately to the north of the project area is the redeveloping Menomonee Valley that provides employment and recreation opportunities. Key landmarks that anchor the northern study limits include Miller Park, Mitchell Park Domes, Potawatomi Casino and the Harley Davidson Museum.

To the west, the former 43rd Street industrial corridor has transformed into a large format retail district that provides goods and services to area residents. The eastern fringe of the planning area contains larger parcels that were former warehouse or industrial uses. Many of these properties are now vacant or underutilized properties, which has created an opportunity for new mixed-use developments. Neighborhoods to the south of the planning area consist of stable residential and retail corridors.



NEAR SOUTH SIDE
AREA PLAN

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The earliest of settlement in the plan area was Walker's Point. That and the area directly to the north, described as the Fifth Ward, grew quickly to transform Milwaukee's economy. Walker's Point

functioned as Milwaukee's industrial incubator through the turn of the century, a place where Polish and German immigrants with new ideas and the talent to turn them into realities. The S. 1st. Steet corridor is part of a nationally recognized historic district, containing the highest concentration of Civil War-era commercial buildings in Milwaukee, representing the city's first important era of commercial expansion. The city's first major train station, Union Depot, was just west of the Burnham building on Seeboth Street

The historic district extends west to S. 2nd Street and south from the river to Oregon Street. The connection to the city already was strengthened by the reconstruction of the Sixth Street Viaduct and the redevelopment of the Menomonee Valley.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND NOTABLE INITIATIVES

The planning area is constantly evolving. New initiatives and developments occur every day that influence the area's development and quality of life. Many recent developments and notable initiatives were already underway as the Near South Side Area plan was being created. The Near South Side plan seeks to enhance and build upon the impact of these initiatives. Recent developments include:

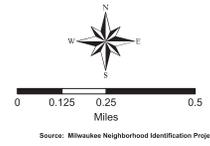
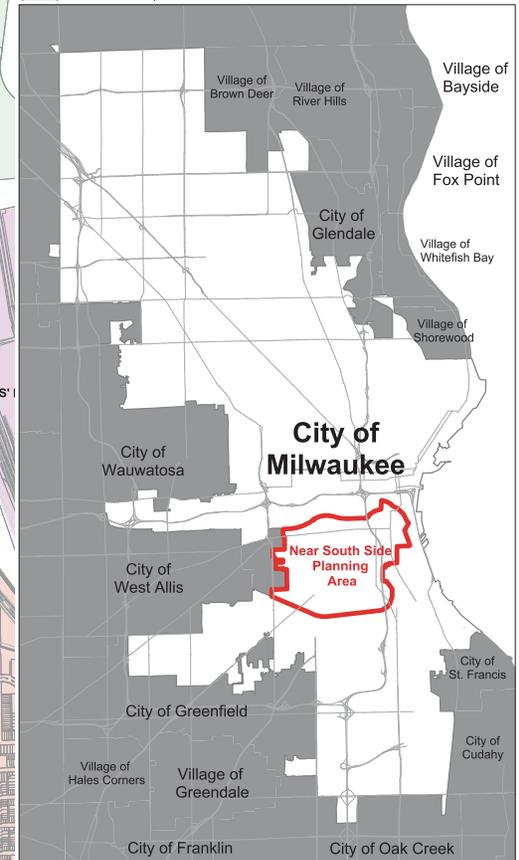
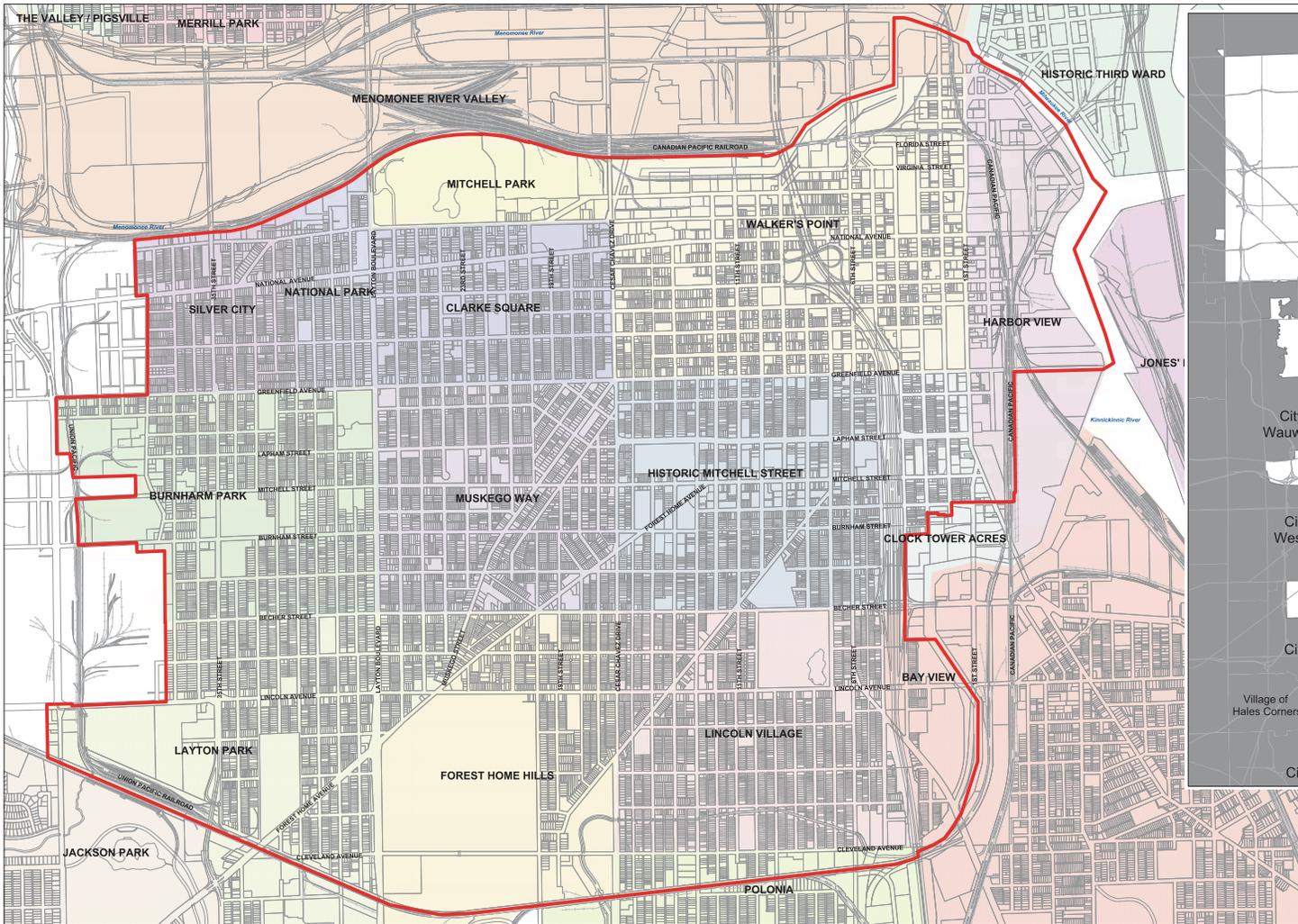
BURNHAM STREET HISTORIC RESTORATION PROJECT

In 2006, the Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin Program purchased two American System-Built Homes on Burnham Street that will be restored in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin School of Architecture and Urban Planning. The project also seeks to preserve and protect the entire American System Build Homes Historic District, create regularly scheduled public access, and provide educational opportunities for students.

SILVER CITY MAIN STREET DISTRICT

The Silver City District on National Avenue, from 31st to 39th streets was awarded a Main Street Milwaukee designation in 2005. Businesses in this area follow a proven framework for economic development and receive support from the City of Milwaukee and its community partners. Silver City volunteers are working to facilitate physical improvements for the area, address crime issues and create an international dining destination.

MAP 1: PLAN AREA BOUNDARIES



MITCHELL STREET TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT

In 2007, a \$3.1 million tax increment district (TID) was created for the area one block north and one block south along W. Mitchell Street from S. 5th Street to S. 16th Street and the commercial area south of W. Forest Home Ave between S. 13th and S. 15th Streets. The TID was created to assist with attracting and retaining retailers and businesses, improve key properties, update the streetscape and improve public safety.

EL REY SUPERMARKET EXPANSION

El Rey expanded its operations in the Near South Side in 2006 with the construction of a new \$5.5 million supermarket at 916 S. Cesar Chavez Drive. The new store will eventually replace the existing supermarket across the street.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS HOME PROJECT

In 2002, Layton Boulevard West Neighbors in partnership with Alderman Michael Murphy and other organizations implemented a housing development program for the area of S. 38th Street and S. 39th Street between W. Pierce Street and W. National Avenue. The project improved a blighted area of the neighborhood by constructing new single family affordable housing for low and moderate-income families. Modular home construction was used.

FLORIDA AND THIRD INDUSTRIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

In January 2008, the Wisconsin Historical Society approved a new historic district that includes 12 properties at the northern end of Walker's Point on W. Florida Street from S. 6th Street to S. 2nd Street and S. 3rd Street from W. Florida Street to W. Pittsburgh Street. The Teweles Building on S. 3rd Street was redeveloped over 4 years ago and contains over 100 apartment units. Other renovations underway include the Iron Horse Hotel and the Florida Street Offices. Some of the momentum for development in this area is at least partly spurred from newly constructed \$90 million Harley Davidson Museum that is located on the other side of the Menomonee River from these properties. The museum will likely provide additional synergies and momentum for the continued redevelopment of this area.

CESAR CHAVEZ BID

A Business Improvement District was created in 2007 to facilitate economic development along Cesar Chavez Drive. The BID is undertaking many initiatives to improve the area and promote business development.

CLARKE SQUARE TERRACE

This \$8 million dollar assisted living housing project is located on a one-acre vacant lot west of S. Cesar Chavez Drive on the north side of W. Pierce Street. It will create 50 new affordable multi-family housing units for senior citizens.

FIFTH WARD DEVELOPMENTS

Over the past several years, the 5th Ward has experience rapid growth in residential and commercial development. Over 500 new housing units have been created through new construction or adaptive reuse of existing structures. The area is also becoming a new hotspot for nightlife, restaurants and other businesses. Some examples of recent development include new housing developments such as Water Street Lofts (82 condominium units), First Place on the River (152 condominium units), Waterfront Lofts (60 condominium units), Teweles Seed Tower Apartments (115 apartment units-mixed affordable/market rate), Castings Place Apartments (60 apartment units-mixed affordable/market rate), Reed Street Lofts on 2nd (8 apartment units) and 5th Ward Lofts (99 apartment units-mixed affordable/market rate). New businesses include: Alterra Coffee, The Social, Café Luna, MOCT, Marine Bank, WHEDA, Vetter Denk Architects, First Place Dental and Prudential Real Estate.

FIRST STREET TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT

In 2007, a tax increment district was created to fund the construction of 535 feet of Riverwalk along First Place on the River, a 152 unit condominium project at the junction of the Menomonee and Milwaukee Rivers. The TID will also partially fund four boat slips along with a boat launch for public use. In addition, the District will provide funding for street improvements for S. 1st Street from the Milwaukee River to the railway underpass, and portions of S. 1st Place, E. Seeboth Street, and E. Pittsburgh Avenue that include paving, street-narrowing, sidewalk widening, dockwall repair/replacement, constructing a new stub end roadway to the Milwaukee River for S. 1st Place, pedestrian crosswalks and reconfiguring the right-turn bypasses at S. 1st Street and E. Pittsburgh Avenue. Furthermore, a new public plaza will be created in the triangle at S. 1st Street and E. Seeboth Street. Construction of these public improvements is scheduled to begin in 2009.

LINCOLN VILLAGE

Between 2001 and of 2007, the Lincoln Village neighborhood had a net increase of 29 new businesses, 190 new full-time jobs, 85 renovated buildings and over \$8 million of public and private investment.

CLARKE SQUARE – ZILBER NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

In 2008, the Zilber Foundation announced the Clarke Square neighborhood on Milwaukee's southside would be one of the first beneficiaries of his \$50 million effort to improve low income areas. The area is bounded generally by National Avenue, Layton Boulevard, 16th Street and Forest Home Avenue. A comprehensive plan for the area will be completed.

