This chapter describes the broad policies and strategies to direct the future development and redevelopment of the entire planning area. The chapter begins with overall land use policies and then discusses use, form and redevelopment strategies for residential, commercial, industrial, parks and open space, civic and institutional and transportation land uses.

OVERALL VISION

The overall land use policies are broad based and apply to all land uses in the planning area. The policies are intended to reinforce the traditional patterns of development that are characteristic of older Milwaukee neighborhoods and address the uniqueness of the Near South Side. The overall land use policies enhance the historic resources of the community while celebrating the area’s rich cultural make-up. At the same time, the policies encourage growth by building upon the area’s existing assets and creating a framework for new developments.

USE POLICIES

- Preserve traditional neighborhood use patterns except where changes in the plan call for a change in use.
- Non-conforming uses and/or structures may remain if the use remains economically viable, if the structure is maintained in good condition, and if it is not detrimental to surrounding properties.
- Follow current zoning unless a zoning change is specified in Chapter 4, District and Corridors.
FORM POLICIES

- Preserve the overall neighborhood character as a compact, interconnected and walkable community.
- Small-scale infill development should not make radical departures from the existing building types, densities, and building characteristics surrounding the site.
- Larger-scale infill developments should include a pattern of blocks and streets that is compatible with the surrounding area.
- Make walking safe, attractive, and convenient by maintaining the street and block system, promoting pedestrian friendly street frontages, locating buildings so they define the street edges and pedestrian walkways, and fit the surrounding context.
- Place buildings and site elements in a way that creates a strong visual/physical relationship between the public and private realm, and supports good urban design.
- Maintain and expand the public realm for pedestrians and minimize conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians in the public realm.
- Minimize conflict between uses by creating buffers or transitions. A gradual change in use can be achieved by transitions in intensity of use, building typology or design (scale, massing, height and area). An abrupt change in use can be mitigated by placement of a landscape buffer.
- Demolition of buildings for the sole purpose of constructing surface parking lots is discouraged.
- Educate residents and businesses about the city’s sign ordinance to improve sign standards and encourage enforcement. No new billboards or off-premise signs should be permitted in the area.

REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Permit selective demolition of blighted structures that no longer contribute to the surrounding area.
- Assemble parcels for public purposes such as neighborhood improvement, redevelopment, open space and public amenities and long term reinvestment.
- Consider historic buildings, sites and districts as valuable irreplaceable assets to be used as key pieces of larger redevelopment efforts.
- Support the creation of National Register Historic Districts to make owners eligible for federal and state tax credits that promote the redevelopment and reuse of historic structures.
- Develop public-private partnerships to coordinate and maximize investment and initiatives.
- Cluster new development to create a positive impact on surrounding properties.
- Develop catalytic projects that spur investment, leverage resources, maximize assets, and enhance the identity of important districts and corridors.
- Create safer neighborhoods by encouraging Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. This includes:
  - Maintaining good visibility and sightlines between buildings and their surroundings;
  - Making all parts of the property visible from the building;
  - Creating a physical and visual sense of ownership and responsibility for public, private and semi-private space;
  - Discouraging common areas that have no obvious connection to a responsible party;
  - Avoiding security measures such as steel grates and roll-down shutters, fences topped with barbed or concertina wire, and threatening signs that send a message that the area is unsafe and should be avoided; and
  - Maintaining a clean and orderly appearance by eliminating board-ups, broken windows, graffiti, litter, unkempt vacant lots, illegally parked or abandoned cars, etc. Adequate lighting, police enforcement and resident participation are also critical to making neighborhoods safe.
• Encourage the beautification and greening of the area by increasing the amount of landscaping and trees within the public right of way and on private properties.

• Support sustainable land use and site design principles to reduce stormwater runoff, reduce the urban heat island effect, and protect natural resources.

• Encourage nonprofit organizations that provide a service to the community.

• Encourage the enforcement of building codes and zoning for all properties.

RESIDENTIAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION

The Near South Side residential policies and strategies are intended to preserve and enhance existing residential areas, create new market-rate and subsidized housing opportunities for existing and new residents, and provide housing for families and people of diverse incomes throughout various life stages.

USE POLICIES

APPROPRIATE TYPES AND MIX

• Vary building types to include single-family, duplex units, row houses, town homes and multi-unit mid rises to accommodate various types of households and a range of income levels.

• Preserve single family and duplex homes in areas where these uses are currently concentrated.

• Encourage building types that support a sense of individual ownership and responsibility (i.e. town homes that have individual entrances and balconies)

• Provide housing that is appropriate for the size and makeup of Hispanic and other ethnic groups that tend to have larger family sizes and extended family living in the same household.

• Add new affordable and subsidized housing options that include single-family and multi-family living arrangements.

• Allow the conversion of former warehouse and industrial buildings that are no longer viable to residential and mixed uses.

• Discourage and gradually eliminate incompatible land uses located within residential neighborhoods.

• Allow mixed uses or special uses within predominantly residential areas, provided they are not detrimental to surrounding property values and provided they contribute to the traditional pattern of development. This may include live-work units, home offices, bed and breakfast establishments and existing small commercial uses within residential neighborhoods.

• Locate residential land uses next to compatible land uses.

• Focus new single family and duplex units in areas that have existing concentrations of similar uses.

• Focus higher density units along commercial corridors or in areas with larger parcel sizes.

• Encourage multi-family residential uses along commercial corridors where specified in the plan and to support primary retail districts.

• Encourage residential or office uses above retail along commercial corridors where preferred.

• Locate housing for seniors and persons with disabilities near neighborhood goods and services and near transit routes.
FORM POLICIES

BLOCK AND PARCEL

- Streets and blocks for new residential developments should follow the established pattern for older Milwaukee neighborhoods. Residential blocks should be short and narrow with alleys in the middle.
- On primary streets, promote alley or side street access to minimize vehicular curb cut access.
- Landscaped greens, plazas or islands are encouraged as a way to provide community gathering commons and green space.
- For single family and duplex units, typical city lot dimensions (30 or 40 feet wide and 120 feet deep) should be maintained. Larger lots for larger single-family homes are allowed as long as they are proportional to the size of the home.
- All subdivided lots must have street access.
- New construction setbacks must be consistent with, but no greater than, the average existing neighborhood conditions.
- Infill development should blend with the existing scale and massing of blocks and parcels.

BUILDING AND SITE ELEMENTS

- Residential development should blend with the existing context and include architectural elements that are compatible with the area. Front porches, sidewalks, windows facing the street and façade articulation should be included.
- Building heights should be close to what is typical for the residential area and should not increase more than 50% of the area’s average building height unless otherwise specified in the plan.
- Building size should be proportional to lot size.
- Design infill development and new construction to blend with existing context.
- Courtyards, porches and planting zones should be incorporated into residential site design.
- Locate garages so they are not the dominant feature on the front façade. Where possible, encourage side- or rear-loaded garages.
- Design and locate new buildings to maximize wind and solar patterns to reduce energy consumption.
- Off-street parking should be provided at the rear of residential structures.
- All new residential development must accommodate sufficient parking on-site, unless the developer or builder can demonstrate off-site parking is available to and will be utilized by residents.
- Assure accessibility in housing developments that facilitate age in place.

REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Use existing programs such as the Target Investment Neighborhood program where appropriate to reverse neighborhood decline.
- Replace severely dilapidated housing and replace with new residential units.
- Couple new construction with rehabilitation, renovation and preservation of surrounding properties.
- Use neighborhood conservation districts in select areas to preserve neighborhood character.
- Increase code enforcement efforts to improve appearances of residential buildings and to avoid illegal building divisions.
- Discourage problems associated with absentee landlords by improving code enforcement and forming landlord compacts.
- Promote programs and policies that increase owner-occupied housing.
- Encourage programs that develop affordable housing projects including subsidized, tax credit, and supportive housing types to support the workforce and income levels in the area as well as the increasing need for such housing.
- Do not over concentrated subsidized housing units in an area and where possible mix subsidized housing units with market rate housing units.
• Promote adaptive reuse of former warehouse and industrial buildings in areas that are planned for a conversion of uses.

• Couple new housing investment with parks and open space as a way of adding value and increasing the impact of housing reinvestment in the neighborhood.

• Minimize the effects of rapid property value increases on residents by implementing a program, such as a community land trust, that focuses on promoting home ownership, maintaining properties, and avoiding displacement due to gentrification.

• Develop new housing where it will have the greatest benefit on neighborhood retail and community development. This includes:

  • Placing multi-story mixed-use buildings with office or housing above retail on the commercial streets of the Near South Side.
  • Increasing residential density around key retail nodes by focusing on a mixture of town homes, duplexes, or 2- to 4- story apartment buildings.
  • Expand housing programs and services that council first-time home buyers, provide assistance in securing fairly priced housing renovation work, and provide rehabilitation financing. Intensively apply these programs in the blocks within walking distance of neighborhood shopping districts.

COMMERCIAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION

The commercial land use policies and strategies are intended to strengthen the area’s existing commercial corridors and encourage new businesses that create jobs, provide goods and services for local residents and attract customers from the region.

• Focus neighborhood scale commercial uses within existing and new commercial corridors.

• Larger scale commercial uses should be located along main arterials and in areas with larger parcel sizes. Larger commercial developments should utilize existing vacant land or adapt to an existing structure.

• The expansion of commercial uses into existing residential areas is discouraged.
• Automobile-oriented uses, such as gas stations and drive-thru establishments, should be placed near, but not on pedestrian oriented commercial corridors. Automobile oriented uses should also be avoided on neighborhood gateway intersections.

FORM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
BLOCK AND PARCEL
• Design and maintain commercial corridors and districts with sidewalks, on-street parking, two-way traffic, and a maximum speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Keep curb cuts to a minimum and shared whenever possible.
• Maintain the traditional street grid pattern of the area and provide alleys for off-street deliveries.
• Buildings along traditional commercial corridors should generally be built in a continuous row and should be built to property lines. Where gaps between buildings exist, landscaping or fencing should be used to continue the build-to line from one property to the next.
• For larger commercial, office or mixed use centers, shared road access should be encouraged instead of linear development patterns with multiple individual driveways.

BUILDING AND SITE ELEMENTS
• New developments in traditional Milwaukee commercial corridors should be compatible with the established pattern of two to four story mixed-use structures and be oriented to the street.
• Traditional commercial street facades should have welcoming storefront windows (typically covering 60% to 80% of the street level façade), recessed entries, canopies, pedestrian oriented signage, and articulated architectural elements.
• The use of bars in windows and scissor gates is discouraged. Businesses that utilize these safety accessories should hide them from view during business hours.
• Include site amenities like outdoor dining areas, planters, and benches that encourage pedestrians to spend more time in traditional commercial corridors.
• Blank walls with no windows or architectural articulation along street frontages is prohibited.
• The front facade of the principal building on any lot shall face the public street and have a clear entrance facing the primary street frontage.

• Building signage should be compatible with and integrated into the facade. In historic areas, signage should follow the historic pattern of signage and shall not destroy or cover up architectural detail.
• Encourage large single use tenants to locate in or construct multi-story buildings rather than single-story buildings that occupy large portions of the street frontage.
• Permanent outdoor storage of merchandise is not permitted.

REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
• Focus resources to encourage clusters of neighborhood commercial uses in areas that are walkable, have stable retail businesses, a large number of households and relatively high purchasing power.
• Support branding and marketing initiatives for key commercial corridors and capitalize on the historic and ethnic identity of the area.
• Support the use of tax increment financing to attract and retain businesses and improve the physical appearance of commercial corridors.
• Promote the use of Business Improvement Districts to enhance the area’s aesthetics, prevent crime and improve business development.
• Utilize the Milwaukee Main Street program along additional commercial corridors.
• Introduce mixed use developments into commercial districts as a way of adding a stable customer base for commercial goods and services.
• Encourage coordinated streetscape elements that improve and add value to the area such as public art, way-finding devices, kiosks, benches, pedestrian lighting, planters and paving patterns.
• Existing and new neighborhood commercial districts should:

  • Work with market trends to encourage commercial activities to phase out along some blocks of arterial streets and to grow in increasingly dense district clusters.
  • Capitalize on the fact that each viable neighborhood shopping district in the Near South Side has two major functions and commercial identities: first, as a convenience shopping center for local residents; second, as a point of destination for visitors who want to experience that neighborhood.
INDUSTRIAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION

Near South Side Area Plan policies that address industrial development are intended to improve industrial employment opportunities within the area, connect labor force with industrial jobs outside the planning area and provide workforce development opportunities for Near South Side industrial workers.

USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Support existing industrial uses within the area that provide jobs for the Near South Side workforce and the metropolitan region.
- Encourage reuse of underutilized and vacant industrial areas for industrial or other uses in accordance with Chapter 4 (Districts and Corridors).
- Older multistory industrial buildings are permitted within existing mixed-use areas. Newer, single story, manufacturing plants should be located within designated industrial parks.
- New industrial buildings should be part of a unified campus that is compact, walkable and contains supporting uses.
- Residential uses are usually discouraged within industrial districts, as manufacturing operations may have environmental impacts detrimental to the health of nearby residents; furthermore, residents often find manufacturing uses noisy, dirty or unsightly. However, in the case of clean industry where there are no environmental hazards or negative impacts, it is acceptable for residential and residential mixed-use to be located nearby.

FORM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Industrial buildings should fit the traditional pattern of walkable neighborhoods by locating close to the street (build-to lines within ten to twenty feet of the public right-of-way) with façades that are human in scale and pedestrian-friendly.
- Provide landscape buffers between industrial buildings, parking lots and adjacent land uses.
- All facades visible from the street should be attractive, utilize quality materials and be consistent with adjacent uses.

- Service loading docks should be located at the side or rear of the building and screened from public view.
- Prohibit outdoor industrial activities that are a nuisance and screen any outdoor industrial areas from surrounding areas.
- Do not locate parking or waste facilities within 10 feet of the front line of the property, and screen these areas from view. Contain all refuse in an appropriate receptacle further enclosed by a 6-foot fence of solid material.
- Provide appropriate traffic control measures at all entrances to public rights-of-way.

REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Use available federal and state brownfield funds to remediate and market environmentally contaminated sites.
- Promote the reuse of vacant industrial buildings and lots with new industrial businesses or other uses as specified in Chapter 4, Districts and Corridors.
- Encourage business associations in industrial areas to promote aesthetic improvements, crime prevention and business development.
- Recognize and market the Near South Side’s concentrated, large and quality workforce as a major community asset to attract prospective employers to the City and to obtain public financial resources.
- Enhance the efforts of Near South Side community organizations and Milwaukee area institutions to train and place Near South Side workers in well-paid industrial jobs and ensure their transportation to work, particularly through the interface of temporary and permanent employment.
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION
Weave accessible interconnected open space into the existing fabric of neighborhoods to provide an amenity for residents and to enhance the economic development potential of the area. Use different types of open space that are compatible with homes, businesses, and institutions that serve the social, cultural, economic, recreational and environmental needs of the community.

USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Encourage a network of public spaces that includes the following: pocket parks, landscaped spaces between and in front of buildings, publicly accessible community gardens, play areas and tot lots, recreational services, public spaces for social interaction, boulevard medians, streetscape enhancements such as benches, planters, street trees, public art, and pedestrian pathways that connect these places to each other.
- Locate public squares in high activity areas that are most intensely development or are planned for intense development.
- Provide a range of recreational and educational opportunities (both active and passive) within public spaces to serve a diverse group of people.
- Integrate neighborhood tradition, culture and history into public spaces.
- Support the extension of planned bike trails and lanes.
- Support the restoration of rivers and creeks to enhance environmental corridors and provide public access.
- Create well marked and visible access points to all trails and parkways.
- Improve amenities at existing parks and expand active recreation opportunities (i.e. soccer fields) where possible.
- Create distinctive, inviting and well landscaped entries to public parks to provide a seamless transition from public sidewalks to park pathways.
- Maintain and improve visibility between parks and surrounding properties.
- Create focal points and community gathering spaces for high-visibility or high-traffic areas, including signage, landscaping, art sculptures, and wayfinding elements.
- Perimeter fencing in parks should generally be avoided. Where necessary, fencing height should be minimized.
- Where possible, use open spaces to address large-scale ecological concerns of providing habitat, minimizing stormwater runoff, infiltrating groundwater, etc.
REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Use open space to enhance surrounding property values, and to add value to districts and corridors.
- Use open space to add balance to densely developed housing or mixed-use complexes.
- Provide easily accessible and safe play spaces for children by creating shared community greens within residential blocks. Green space improves the marketability of homes adjacent to the green space.
- Reclaim alleyways from trash and criminal activity by vacating the alley and gating each outlet. Blocks with “alleygates” are safer and more secure because neighbors are far more likely to interact with one another. Residents can take advantage of this new green space to beautify, recreate and socialize in this space.
- Open space sites, materials and programming should be designed to reflect community values, history and cultural linkages.
- For an industrial campus or large-scale complex, include parks or plazas that serve area residents, visitors, and workers.
- Parks managed by private homeowner associations are encouraged to add value to residential subareas.
- Seek long-term community partnerships (e.g., park professionals, community organizers, merchants associations, public officials) and collaborative processes to carry out strategies for acquiring, funding and managing open space.
- When alleyways are reconstructed, porous pavement should be considered to improve the absorption of stormwater into the ground and reflective materials should be encouraged to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Support efforts to improve school playgrounds by adding greenery and public accessibility.
- Protect view sheds and improve public access to rivers.

CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION

Civic and institutional uses in the Near South Side provide a foundation for the community to gather, worship, learn and interact. Many institutions also provide programs that enrich the lives and economic well being of residents and help new immigrants integrate into the greater community

USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Locate civic/institutional uses at prominent locations, gateways or key intersections where they are easily accessible on foot, by car, bicycle, bus or other means of mass transit.
- Locate high intensity civic/institutional uses within or near commercial corridors and away from predominantly single family neighborhoods.
- Encourage connections between schools, libraries and parks to allow children to walk between places.
- Consider parking as an accessory use that should not exceed what is necessary to accommodate visitors and employees.
- Promote additional health care facilities, urgent care facilities, and clinics that are accessible to residents.
- Encourage higher-education facilities within the area to serve the local and outlying population.
- Encourage civic and institutional uses to incorporate park and open space that are open to the public.
FORM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Employ good civic/institutional design that creates buildings with inviting public entrances and views to corridors that connect civic uses to neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Develop special landscape treatments and related pedestrian-realm enhancements that distinguish civic/institutional uses.
- Encourage civic/institutional uses to integrate public art into the design.
- On major and minor arterials, create an effective multi-modal public right of way for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and transit.
- Incorporate design features into all arterials that calm traffic and improve safety, particularly for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Where feasible, provide wider sidewalks along commercial districts that have high volumes of pedestrian traffic.
- To gain the most transit ridership, place routes through compact, walkable and densely developed neighborhoods and along major commercial corridors.
- Encourage the development of a fixed-route transit system with guideways or rails embedded in the streets to encourage transit oriented development, improve transit ridership, and reduce transit travel times.
- Encourage transit-oriented development along transit routes and encourage all development projects to incorporate site design measures that enhance access to the transit system (for example, walkable connections and wayfinding signage).
- Provide efficient transit serves that connect people to jobs by connecting residents with major employment centers.
- Encourage Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Technology in bus stations along heavily traveled transit routes, including technology that identifies the arrival time of buses.
- Encourage mixed-use parking structures over single use parking structures and surface parking lots.
- Encourage shared parking facilities to minimize the number of surface lots or parking structures needed to serve an area.
- Locate off-street parking between or behind commercial buildings.

REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Locate tax-exempt uses in buildings previously occupied by tax-exempt uses whenever feasible.
- Encourage nonprofit organizations to locate on the upper floors of commercial districts to preserve first floor retail space where feasible.
- Higher education facilities libraries, etc. can help raise education levels for future generations.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

VISION

The Near South Side transportation policies and strategies promote a safe, multi-modal system that is well integrated into the region. The diverse transportation network facilitates economic growth and provides access to goods, services and employment.

USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Maintain the traditional street system based on the one-mile grid, clearly differentiated into major and minor arterials supported by collector and access streets.
- Where feasible restore any areas that have a disrupted street grid.

- Design public right-of-ways for mass transit, buses, trucks, automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians, and adjust the design to fit the needs, character, and intensity of adjacent land uses.
- Provide good pedestrian connections between local neighborhood workplaces, shopping areas, recreational/open space, civic/institutional sites, and other lands.
• Require continuous sidewalks and adequate sidewalk connections on all major corridors.

• Improve the aesthetics of arterials by implementing streetscape enhancements such as trees, plantings, lighting and street furniture.

• Maintain and promote two-way traffic on streets.

• Parking structures should have street-level retail uses, storefront windows, level decks, veneer (e.g., brick or finished concrete, architectural-finished metal panels, glass or glass block, cut stone, decorative masonry block), compatible with the surrounding buildings.

• Integrate landscaping into parking lots and structures to soften, screen and buffer from surrounding uses. Landscape islands should be used in the interior of lots and a tree-shrub groundcover, fencing or a combination of the two should be used along the perimeter of lots.

• Transit routes should be well defined and aesthetically integrated into neighborhoods with special paving features, signage, bus shelters, benches, historic markers, and public art at key nodes.

REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

• Include Near South Side community organizations and community leaders in the planning and development of new transit systems to promote improved transit within the Near South Side.

• Prohibit increasing the traffic capacity within right-of ways if expansion would negatively impact the majority of adjacent land uses.

• Maintain access to the regional freeway system and enhance the existing entrance and exit ramps to be more sensitive to local conditions and provide safer and more attractive connections to the local street system.

• Maintain local streets on a regular basis to create a clean orderly appearance.

• Establish fixed guideway transit to serve the most densely populated portions of the area.

• Develop centralized temporary worker/day laborer pick up locations.

• Add pedestrian safety amenities to high traffic volume intersections.