

Silver City Main Street Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Visioning and Strategic Planning Report

Prepared For

Silver City Main Street Program

A Layton Boulevard West Neighbors Program

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Silver City Main Street

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Introduction

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 at redevelopment and revitalization efforts that will reinvigorate the Silver City district as a vibrant and diverse neighborhood business district.

The Silver City district spans National Avenue from 31st Street to 39th Street. The surrounding neighborhood features concentrations of Latino and white residents, with growing Asian and African-American populations. The Silver City business district, serving as a gateway to Milwaukee's Near South Side, is evolving as a business district with an International flavor, with products and services catering to the diverse population residing in the surrounding neighborhood.

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 Main Street, in collaboration with Main Street Milwaukee, retained Downtown Professionals Network (DPN) to facilitate a community-oriented visioning and strategic planning process designed to put Silver City Main Street on the "fast track" to implementing meaningful projects and achieving tangible results. The process was tailored to engage Silver City district neighborhood residents, business persons, stakeholders and civic leaders in a series of community-oriented visioning and strategic planning activities.

The outcome of the process provide direction short- and long-term initiatives and a framework for Silver City Main Street's first year work plan outlining strategic actions and projects that are highly relevant to Silver City stakeholders' vision for the district. The process also serves to generate consensus around short- and long-term goals and objectives, to foster a strong sense of ownership in local Main Street program plans and projects, and to instill a spirit of "teamwork" that is critical to building the capacity and sustaining the efforts of Silver City Main Street.

Vision Design

Visioning and strategic planning services provided by DPN were highlighted by a three-day Vision Design technical visit. The Vision Design service site visit conducted for Silver City Main Street May 16 – 18, 2005 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

This report summarizes activities, findings and direction provided based on input received and assessments conducted by the DPN consulting team during the Vision Design technical visit. The report and its contents provide a basis for short- and long-term business district redevelopment and revitalization strategies. Concepts and strategies advanced in this plan include:

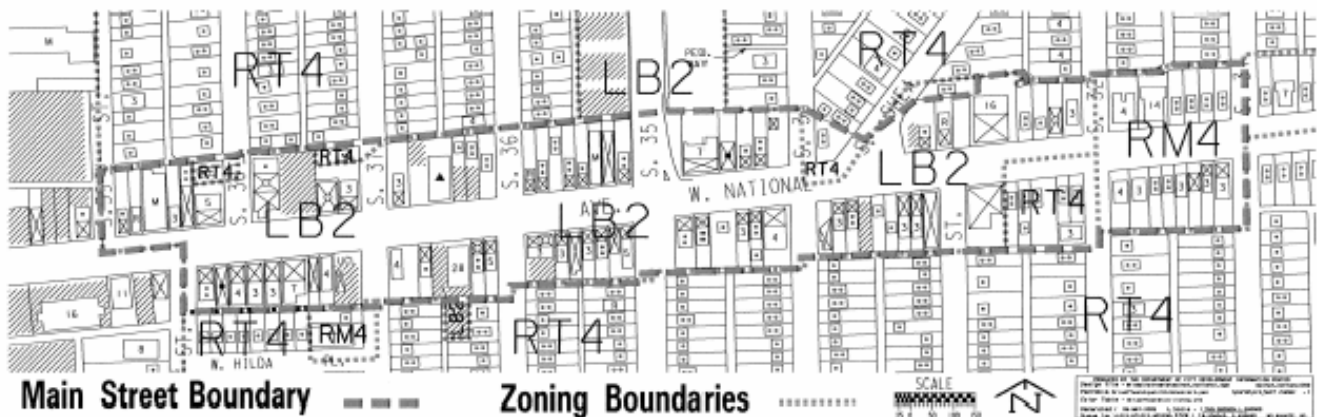
- Community-based efforts and partnerships addressing serious issues related to crime – and the perception of crime – in the Silver City district.
- Physical, visual and emotional connections between the Silver City district, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Menomonee Valley.
- Streetscape improvements that give priority to the pedestrian and promote the conduct of legitimate uses and activities necessary to enhance the district's business climate and attract new investment.
- Business development activities that are focused on creating a quality, vibrant business mix that represents the rich heritage and cultures of the Silver City.

The Silver City district will not – and probably should not – change overnight. The time frame for this plan's vision extends up to ten, fifteen or even twenty years or more. Redevelopment and revitalization strategies advanced in this document recognize the evolutionary nature of neighborhood commercial districts and provide direction for projects and actions that will help stakeholders to capitalize on opportunities that "fit" within the framework of the community's vision for the Silver City district.

Framework

Project Area

The Silver City business district and Main Street program area spans National Avenue from 31st Street to 39th Street. The intersection of National Avenue & 35th Street serves as a center point, as well as a gateway, for the district with 35th Street offering easy access to Interstate Highway 94. National Avenue's intersections with 27th Street to the east, and Miller Parkway to the west, serve in a sense as extended gateways to the Silver City business district. Major employers, Miller Park, Mitchell Domes, and the Menomonee Valley are important landmark and economic features located within close proximity to the district.



Neighborhoods surrounding the Silver City business district feature concentrations of Latino and white residents, with growing Asian and African-American populations. Signs of reinvestment and pride of ownership are evident in neighborhoods lying immediately to the north and south of the business district.

Built Environment

The Silver City district is composed of a mix of uses typically found in an urban neighborhood commercial district environment: retail of varying scales and catering to distinct audiences; eating & drinking establishments, highlighted by a mix of Asian and Mexican specialty restaurants; professional and personal services; and offices. There is little housing within the business district, a pattern that could change as redevelopment occurs.

The character of development varies as widely as uses in the district. Buildings in the district are generally low scale – two or three stories. There are landmark buildings and renovated structures; buildings with historic character, buildings of a more contemporary style, and buildings that are sympathetic to their historic neighbors; and there are buildings in need of attention because they detract from their neighbors, are in obvious need of repairs or maintenance, or utilize treatments and materials that are inappropriate to the integrity of the original structure or its surroundings.

The historic roots of the Silver City district's evolution are still apparent today. Neighborhood primarily built of single family homes, help to frame the business district's north and south boundaries. The railroad corridor and the Menomonee River Valley lying just beyond the neighborhood to the north, and industrial uses abutting the district's west end, are reminders of the business district's industrial roots and offer new opportunities for Silver City's future.

The majority of parking for the district is located in marked spaces along National Avenue and side streets in the neighborhoods to the north and south. Most off-street parking in the district is privately owned and generally restricted for the use of employees and patrons of individual businesses.



The business district's streetscape is in need of repair, maintenance and clean-up. The deteriorating conditions of streets, curbs and sidewalks, the lack of green space, trees or plantings, weeds and litter spread across streets and sidewalks, inadequate pedestrian lighting along National Avenue, and security gates affixed to windows and doorways for various businesses, contribute to perceptions of the district as a place that is unsafe and unworthy of investment.

Other places for attention are as simple as buildings or uses that are unattractive or that do not support the desired character of the Silver City business district. While strategies advanced in this plan do not advocate the elimination of "undesirable" uses, they do advance opportunities to retain and introduce "active" uses that promote open and transparent storefronts and pedestrian interaction within the built environment.

Ultimately, the nature of an urban neighborhood commercial district is evolutionary; the constant change brings renewed life and allows the business district to maintain its vibrancy. Well-considered redevelopment activities will permit the Silver City district to change according to its evolutionary nature, and according to the vision of Silver City stakeholders.

Business Mix and Climate

The Silver City district's business mix is evolving to International dimensions, with products and services catering to the diverse population residing in surrounding neighborhoods. Most businesses located within the district are independent, locally owned establishments.

District stakeholders and business leaders interviewed provided a range of viewpoints regarding the business climate. While some described the Silver City district as being a place with potential, most respondents, overall, generally viewed the current business climate as being "poor to fair." Some suggested that an ongoing transition in the business mix, from traditional retail shops to specialty retail, service and office establishments catering to distinct market segments, is enhancing the "International flavor" of the district, while others suggested that the absence of basic retail goods is minimizing the district's appeal as a shopping district.

Several National Avenue storefronts are unoccupied, and more are occupied by uses that do not contribute to pedestrian flow – such as residential uses occupying the ground levels of some commercial buildings. With few exceptions, windows displays, merchandising and signage is unattractive and, overall, product presentation is generally weak, portraying a sub-par quality image of the business district and the collective business mix.



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.

Silver City District 2015 Headlines



More than 30 participants at a public “Town Meeting & Workshop” held May 16, 2005 provided input and insight that provides a basis for short- and long-term Silver City Main Street program initiatives. The following examples of May 16, 2015 news headlines created by workshop participants offer a glimpse of an evolving vision for the Silver City District.

Silver City #1 Again

Silver City wins National Main Street Award for an unprecedented eight year.

50,000 Tourists Flock to the Silver City Area

International flavor of Silver City area captures national attention. Local restaurants debut on New York critic’s top ten dining experiences.

Voted Most Fun, Diverse Shopping Area

Starting ten years ago, the Silver City Main Street area organized and developed with the help of community residents.

Silver City Business District Founders Celebrate 10 Years of Continued Success

While Silver City Dollar Days was a creation to bring business to the district, special events are no longer needed to do so.

Silver City Shops Shine

100% occupied

Directions

Input provided by Silver City district business owners, property owners, civic leaders and area residents in public meetings, interviews and focus groups conducted as part of the Vision Design process are at the core of the vision defined for the Silver City district. The 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.

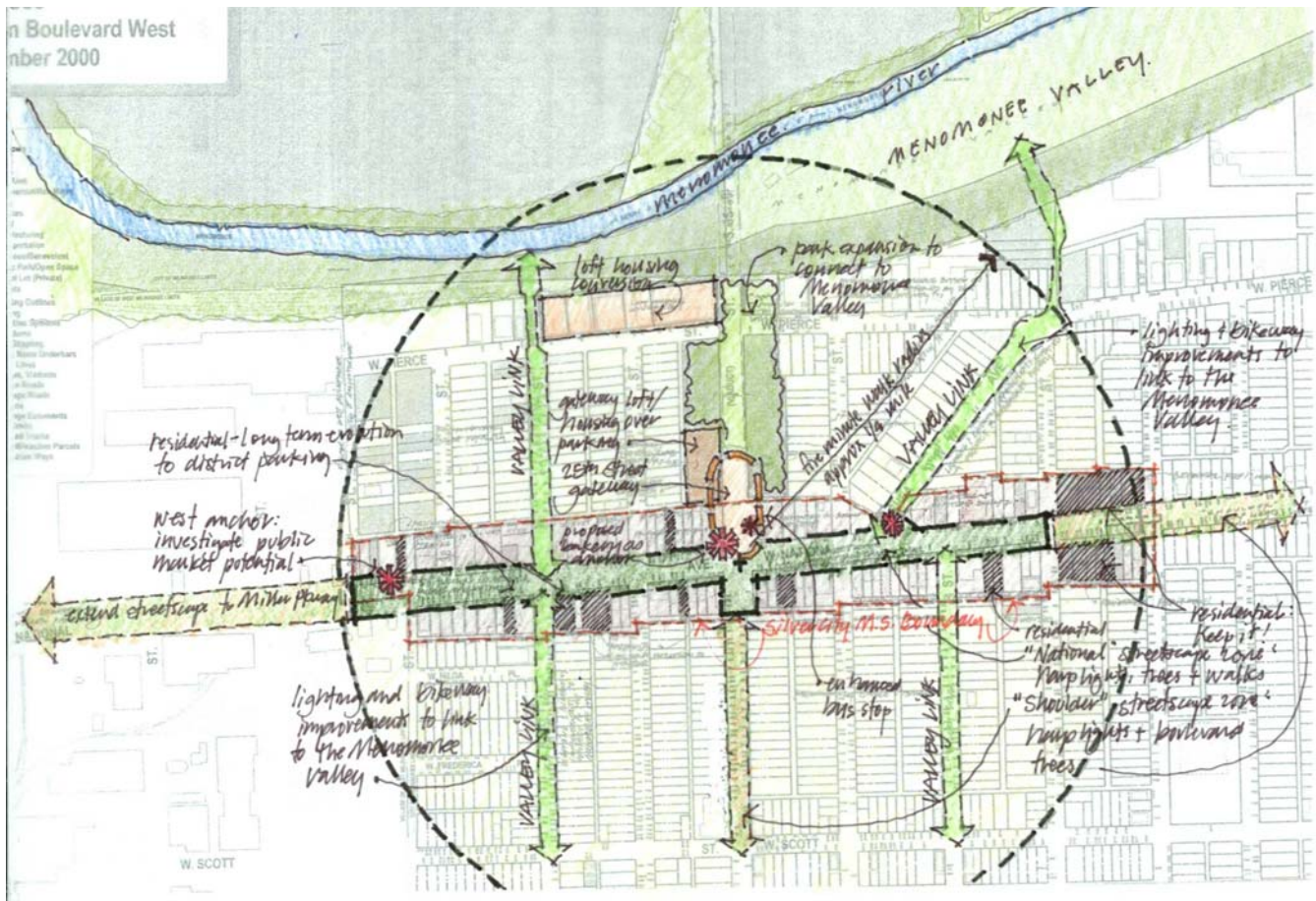
1. Promote developments, improvements and programs that promote a fun, safe, healthy and highly active environment.
2. Preserve, create and maintain the district's small town character and authentic features that help to distinguish the Silver City district as a special place.
3. Embrace and promote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

The collective input of stakeholders also provides a basis for concepts that begin to visualize and contemplate the nature and character of the district in the future. The goal for development in the Silver City district is to create attractive patterns of development that support the community's vision, and result in the highest and best use of the limited land resources in district and surrounding area – understanding that, to great extent, the ultimate vision for the Silver City business district is highly dependent upon conditions and changes that could occur in the area immediately surrounding the business district.

Redevelopment and revitalization concepts offer a look at possibilities for the Silver City district five, ten, or even twenty years or more into the future. While some changes might have immediacy, the goal is to effectuate positive changes in the Silver City business district so that it will evolve in a positive, incremental manner.



Development Patterns



The area depicted in the diagram above illustrates the Silver City business district's relationship to surrounding neighborhoods and important features. From a central point in proximity to the intersection of National Avenue & South 35th Street, a pedestrian can generally walk to any point in the business district within five minutes, as illustrated by the five-minute walk radius depicted in the diagram. The five-minute walk radius and accompanying notes on the diagram also illustrate opportunities to establish and strengthen links between the business district, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Menomonee River Valley.

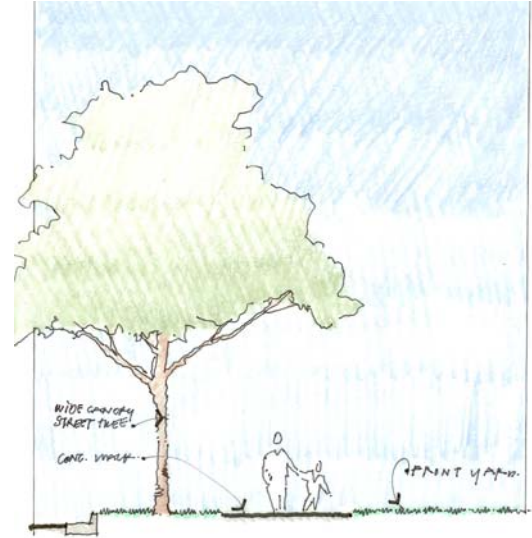
Streetscape improvements and pedestrian features should seek to seamlessly integrate the neighborhoods, the Menomonee River Valley and the business district to provide for physical and visual connections that promote desirable pedestrian patterns and flow, that serve to broaden the variety of experiences one can enjoy as part of the larger Silver City experience, and to help tell a story of Silver City's rich heritage and evolution.

Connections and Links

The redevelopment of the Menomonee River Valley for small-scale industrial & business park uses and outdoor recreational facilities offers incredible opportunities for the Silver City district. The Henry Aaron bicycle and walking trail following the river bed, and other recreational uses that could occur in proximity the corridor, could potentially put a new, captive audience within easy reach of the Silver City business district.

Neighborhood-oriented streetscape improvements extending along stretches of residential streets between the Menomonee River Valley and the Silver City business district could help to create natural and inviting “reaches” that promote desirable pedestrian patterns and, in effect, possibilities for district businesses to capture new markets.

The span of West Pierce Street lying to the north of the Silver City business district also offers intriguing possibilities for the future – possibilities that could positively impact the Silver City district. Current and former industrial buildings and sites located along West Pierce Street, and even along the viaduct corridor at the base of the 35th Street bridge, could someday offer opportunities for higher-density residential uses that cater to populations seeking an urban living experience, amenities and views offered by the Menomonee River Valley, and ready access to products and services offered by Silver City district businesses. Owner and renter-occupied housing units could conceivably cater to a population seeking housing styles not currently offered within or in close proximity to the Silver City district and that spans a wide range of demographic and income characteristics.



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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.



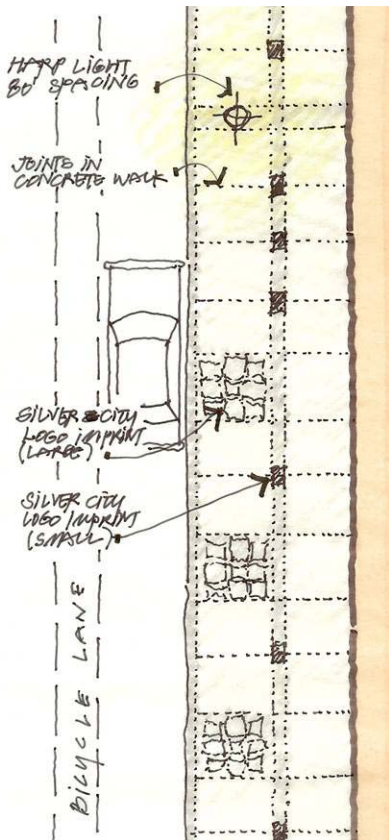
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Streetscape

The enhancement of the National Avenue streetscape was cited as a high priority by stakeholders that participated in the Vision Design process. The timing for consideration of streetscape improvements is ideal given that approximately \$700,000 in Transportation Enhancement Grant funds have been earmarked for improvements in the Silver City district.

Improving the Silver City district’s 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. For example, National Avenue lighting currently consists, primarily, of overhead “cobra” style light fixtures intended to provide the required levels of illumination for the street and motorists, with little consideration given to illuminating the sidewalk and other public areas. While current lighting might meet “road requirements,” it does little to enhance or promote the pedestrian experience and could, in part, actually promote the conduct of illegitimate activities contributing to an image of the district as a place that is unsafe.

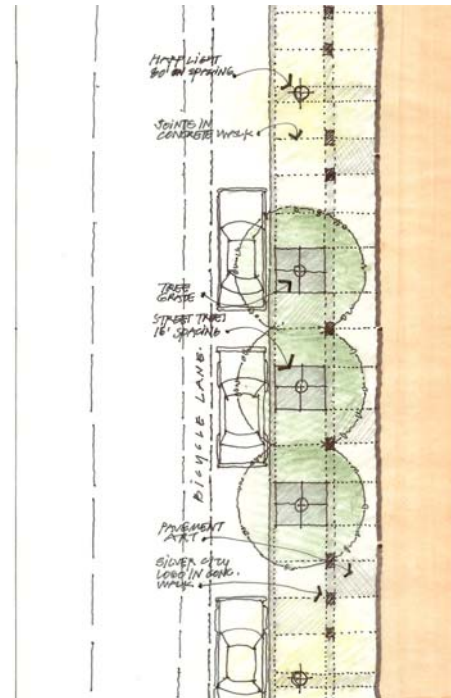
Lighting improvements, along with other streetscape features such as trees, plantings, special crosswalk treatments and designated bicycle lanes, could go great lengths in promoting the district as an attractive and inviting area that portrays pride in ownership. Streetscape enhancements could also help to promote the conduct of legitimate uses and activities necessary to enhance the district’s business climate and attract new investment.



The streetscape should also be viewed as an opportunity to tell the story of the Silver City district’s evolution, its proud heritage, and its diverse culture. Designs for the streetscape might incorporate provisions for decorative and interpretive features that, collectively, create interest and extend the “Silver City Experience” throughout all reaches of the district. For example, a Silver City logo or icon might be used as “stepping stones” or panels placed within the sidewalk area, or an Artist in Residence program might be developed to involve area youth in a multi-year program to design and screen a commissioned piece of artwork on sidewalk sections so that, over time, the sidewalk itself will become a book that tells a story of Silver City and its people.



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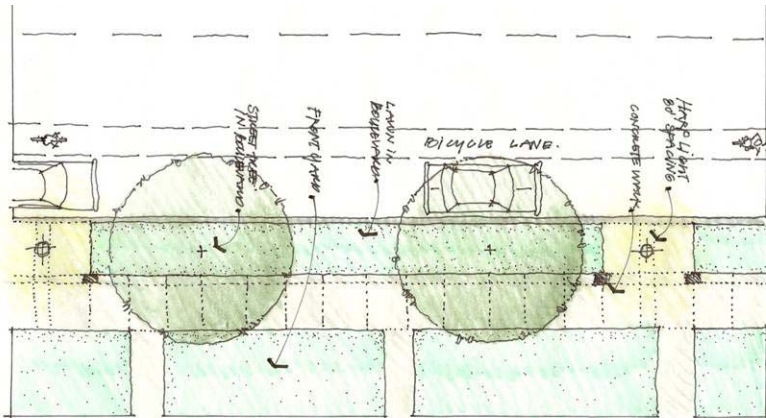
Streetscape enhancements could help to promote the conduct of legitimate uses and activities necessary to enhance the district’s business climate and attract new investment.

Long-term designs and plans for the streetscape should consider and provide for the placement of fixtures and furnishings. For example, while incorporating refuse containers into the streetscape as part of its first phase should be a priority, the placement of benches during the first phase could actually promote some of the undesirable uses that are occurring in the Silver City district today. While benches probably should not be installed during the initial phases of the streetscape's reconstruction, plans should provide for their placement at a later date.

Other items for consideration as part of a comprehensive streetscape enhancement strategy include transit-oriented amenities and traffic-calming features.

Bus stops located within the Silver City district are amenities that should be retained, but the appearance and location of certain public transit stops should be considered within the context of a comprehensive streetscape enhancement strategy. The bus stop and shelter located on the southeast corner of the National Avenue & 35th Street intersection, for example, might actually be better located across the street on the northeast corner of the intersection. The vacant parcel at the northeast corner might present an opportunity to someday create a more substantial transit structure that could even be designed as a gateway feature; the location might also be more efficient and conducive to bus movements, allowing for buses to pull in and out of traffic beyond the busy intersection, rather than in advance of the intersection. Long-term, the area might also serve as an inter-modal transit center with parking for bicycles, or even as a trailhead to the Henry Aaron bicycle and pedestrian route.

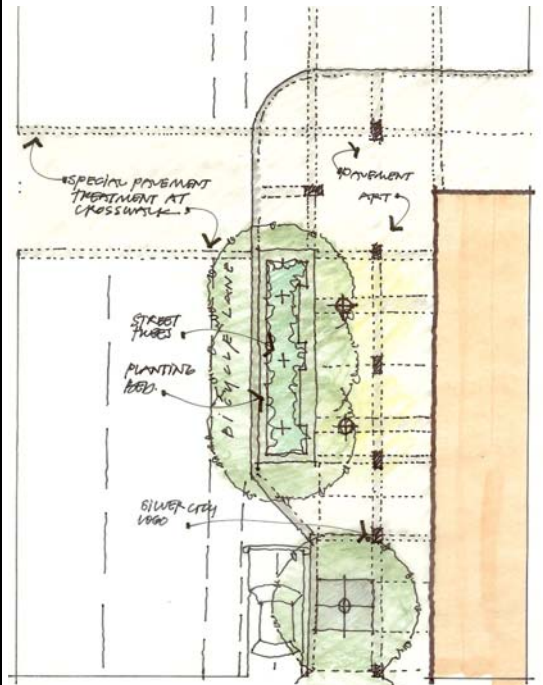
Traffic calming features and pedestrian safety measures will be an important consideration in efforts to enhance the pedestrian qualities of the streetscape and the Silver City district environment. Sidewalk extensions that help to minimize the distance pedestrians travel to cross National Avenue, trees and planting beds that provide a buffer between the street and the sidewalk, and special treatments such as stamped and dyed concrete in pedestrian crosswalk areas, are among a list of options that might be considered.



The proposal to designate bicycle lanes on National Avenue, as is reportedly included in the Transportation Enhancement Grant proposal, should be pursued and implemented as part of a comprehensive streetscape enhancement plan. Additional consideration might be given to the identification and designation of bicycle routes and lanes that connect with the neighborhoods immediately to the north and south of the business district and to the Menomonee River Valley and Henry Aaron bicycle and pedestrian trail.



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Sidewalk extensions that help to minimize the distance pedestrians travel to cross National Avenue, trees and planting beds that provide a buffer between the street and the sidewalk, and special treatments such as stamped and dyed concrete in pedestrian crosswalk areas, are among a list of traffic calming and pedestrian safety options that might be considered.

Potential Catalyst Projects

If redevelopment were to occur at a “satisfactory” pace, and as part of the Silver City district’s ongoing “natural” evolution, it would already be happening. Little has happened in recent history to change the economic conditions of the Silver City business district, and the results are evident in viewing the district’s current condition and performance. An intervention, of sorts, could well be in order.



The notion of an intervention would suggest that a new “force” needs to be added to the equation in order to interrupt the status quo and put the Silver City district on a positive course for the future. Intervening activities and developments, such as the rehabilitation of the building at 3500 West National Avenue spearheaded by Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, can effectively help to catalyze new investment, set a standard for design and development, and create new “activity anchors” that effectively help to build a market for other new and existing businesses.

New housing opportunities, over the long term, are one of those forces. Another compelling direction could revolve around the development of a “Public Market,” an idea that generally met with excitement on the part of local stakeholders participating in the Vision Design process.

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 within the confines of a year-round venue. An emphasis might be placed on businesses that complement and expand upon emerging business clusters in the district, such as specialty foods, and/or to simply enhance the variety of retail goods and services available from Silver City district businesses. Some public market models, for example, contain shared kitchen facilities and serve as incubators for businesses that could ultimately grow to occupy storefronts in the surrounding area.

The Public Market concept is just one among a number of ideas for catalyst projects that might surface and be considered for implementation. Silver City Main Street and its Economic Restructuring Committee should actively work with community development partners and district stakeholders to identify possible catalyst projects that provide the best, most immediate opportunities to bolster activity, attract new investment, and establish a direction for the long-term development of a business mix that aligns more closely with the vision for a revitalized Silver City district. The concept of a “Family Fun & Entertainment Center” anchor that could include bowling lanes, billiards, skeet ball, computer gaming, pinball, mini-hoops, box seat video theaters, outdoor volleyball courts, children’s party & play areas and other family-oriented amenities and activities, is another example of a potential catalyst project that could generate an immediate surge in district activity, that complements emerging business clusters, and that aligns with the vision for the Silver City district.



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.

Organization

A Main Street revitalization strategy thrives on organization. An Organization Committee is charged with the responsibility of building partnerships, support and cooperation among the many stakeholders both in the Main Street district as well as in the strategy itself. The Organization Committee's roles and responsibilities include: policy-making; fundraising and financial management; staff management; volunteer recruitment, training and recognition (all committees will partake in this function in their respective areas); public relations; and community outreach.

Silver City Main Street was formed as a sub-entity of Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc. (LBWN) Community Development Corporation. Founded in 1995, LBWN has led the charge of, among other things, revitalizing the commercial corridors of South 27th Street and West National Avenue. Silver City Main Street will focus its efforts on the defined Silver City District, generally spanning West National Avenue between South 31st and South 39th Streets.

Silver City Main Street is in the very earliest phase of its organizational development. Volunteers are being recruited for the four Main Street committees and an initial slate of members to serve on the Organization Committee, which will also serve in a governing capacity for Silver City Main Street, has been identified. Because the Organization Committee will be responsible for many of the governmental, policy-making and advisory functions typically assumed by a Board of Directors, it will be important to assemble an Organization Committee that is representative of the district's various business sectors and cultures, that is committed to sustaining the Silver City Main Street program for the long-term, and that is comprised of members that bring diverse talents, expertise and experiences to the tasks of organizational development, operations and management. Ideally, the Organization Committee would include individuals with experience and expertise in areas such as:

- Business Management
- Finance
- Insurance
- Law and Law Enforcement
- Management
- Public Relations
- Real Estate
- Retail
- Volunteer Management

Organization Strategies

Policies and Procedures

As a new organization, and particularly based on the organizational relationship between LBWN and the Silver City Main Street, it will be important to establish sound policies and procedures for the efficient operations of Silver City Main Street. It will be important to develop policies and procedure in such a way that "checks and balances" are maintained without creating unnecessary levels of bureaucracy and red tape and so as not to inhibit opportunities for Silver City Main Street to act.

The Organization Committee, working with LBWN, should establish written operational policies and procedures that help to define relationships, roles and responsibilities of LBWN, the Silver City Main Street Program, and Silver City Main Street committees. Items that might be considered for discussion, definition and inclusion as part of operations and procedures handbooks or agreements include:

- Finance policies – including the manner in which Main Street program funds are managed, designated, received and disbursed in relation to LBWN finance policies and procedures.
- Personnel policies – including the articulation of the roles and responsibilities of: Main Street program staff and staff reporting; the level of authority designated to Main Street program staff in relation to the LBWN governing board and staff; and the manner by which Main Street Program staff is hired, evaluated and terminated.
- Decision-making procedures & policies – including the manner for, and level of authority maintained by, the Main Street program and the organization committee to: plan and execute projects; budget, commit and expend funds; take and publicly express positions on issues; and manage decision-making processes involving a potential for a conflict of interest.

Representatives from LBWN and Silver City Main Street should work together to craft a written policies and procedures document that addresses items such as those listed above based on what is known and anticipated today, and that allows for the evolution of policies and procedures based on experiences and issues encountered in the future.

Financial Management

Funding to support Silver City Main Street staffing and operations is provided for a three-year term by the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC) as a benefit of Silver City's participation in, and designation as, a Main Street Milwaukee Program district. Silver City Main Street is responsible for generating at least \$10,000 from private sources through its own fundraising activities as part of its agreement with Main Street Milwaukee. Fundraising activities could consist of a membership program, a pledge drive, a corporate investment program, and other sources, or any combination thereof.

Consideration might be given to staging a three-year pledge drive whereby businesses, corporations and residents with and outside of the Main Street district are provided an opportunity to pledge an amount to be contributed over a three year-year period, potentially minimizing the need to repeat the process each year during the three-year program start-up period. Such a pledge drive could also be used in tandem with a membership program that provides opportunities for members to invest at different monetary levels.

LISC and the City of Milwaukee are also providing technical assistance and additional resources for specific Silver City Main Street activities and projects as part of their commitment to the Main Street Milwaukee Program. Silver City Main Street must work closely with Main Street Milwaukee partners (LISC and the City of Milwaukee) to identify how funds designated by Main Street Milwaukee for Economic Restructuring and Design Committee projects and activities can be best allocated and applied to local initiatives that stand to have the greatest impact in the district. Criteria for eligibility should be reviewed carefully and reporting requirements must be fulfilled diligently.

Additional funding, beyond the \$10,000 from private sources required as part of the agreement with Main Street Milwaukee, will undoubtedly be required for Silver City Main Street operations and in order to implement the full scope of the organization's annual work plan. Short- and long-term fund-raising strategies should be developed through a variety of means and from a variety of sources so as to build the capacity of the Silver City Main Street to implement projects during and even beyond the three-year program start-up period.

Community Outreach

While Silver City Main Street should assume a leadership role in efforts to organize and implement projects and activities aimed at enhancing the Silver City business district, including initiatives outlined in this strategic plan, its ultimate success will be highly dependent on its ability to involve and build partnerships among individuals and groups that have a stake in the Silver City business district.

Opportunities for Silver City to forge partnerships and to coordinate cooperative efforts are abundant. Already, partnerships and cooperative efforts involving the Milwaukee Police Department and neighborhood associations are being pursued. Silver City Main Street should continue to identify key individuals and stakeholder groups that share an interest in Silver City enhancement goals and strategies and possibilities for collaborative efforts that, in essence, will help to expand resources directed to tackling tough issues and capitalizing on rare or emerging opportunities.

Area business owners, property owners, residents and community officials participating in public input sessions conducted as part of the Vision Design process, particularly those that have not been active in LBWN or Silver City Main Street, generally agree that better lines of communication must be established. While this may very well be the case, there is also evidence of concerted efforts to designate the commercial district as "Silver City," to adopt a slogan, and to win designation as a Main Street Milwaukee business district. These efforts help to demonstrate the potential for the Main Street Program to serve as a unifying force, bringing stakeholders together and rallying them around common causes and goals to make decisions and enact initiatives that will enhance the Silver City Main Street District.

Serious problems and issues related to crime and illegitimate activities occurring in the Silver City business district provide an outstanding opportunity for Silver City Main Street to demonstrate its value and its ability to rally community partners around a common cause. Crime issues related to drugs, prostitution and gangs are not new to the district but have, by most accounts, existed for years or even decades. Past attempts to remedy problems associated with crime have yielded mixed results, perhaps best described as being only minimal or temporary in nature, and are the cause for frustration on the part of many stakeholders.

Silver City Main Street should create a Safety Task Force that involves the district's diverse mix of stakeholders in creative, community-based effort to address crime-related issues. Until the occurrence of crime reaches an "acceptable" level, issues of crime and safety in the district will most assuredly arise during committee meetings and could potentially distract or even divert committees from their core directives.

Crime and safety, and the different perceptions of its pervasiveness, can adversely affect the work of the Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring committees. Crime and safety can potentially throw a committee's agenda, members and projects off course. The creation of a Safety Task Force allows community members to *proactively* address issues of crime and safety with like-minded partners (i.e. Milwaukee Police Department, neighborhood block watch groups, Ambassadors Program, etc). Select members from Main Street's other committees might serve on the Task Force to enhance internal communications regarding task force efforts, with the Task Force providing a more formal report on findings and activities to Organization Committee as a regular agenda item on the Organization Committee's agenda.

The Safety Task Force could play a role in enhancing communications with and between various residential block watch groups in Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods. Some groups are reportedly more active than others, holding block parties that reach National Avenue. Given that it might be inefficient for Silver City Main Street to try to communicate with every single block watch group one by one, the Safety Task Force might develop a means of coordinating communications.

Other areas for concern that might be addressed through various community outreach activities of the Organization Committee and Safety Task Force include interracial relations and youth relations.

The extent to which racial tension exists and influences activities in the Silver City district is debatable. Some persons from various racial and ethnic groups participating in Vision Design activities and focus groups suggest that tension is rather pronounced, while other persons from the same groups indicated they feel little or no tension. Regardless of the level to which racial tension might exist, Silver City Main Street should remain mindful of the district's diverse composition and embrace its diversity as an asset. Efforts to develop the organization and its leadership to reflect the district's claim as "An Inter-National Experience" should be pursued, and decision-making processes that affect "the whole" must continue to be inclusive of "the whole." Efforts to enhance communications and networking opportunities, both formal and informal, should be pursued as a means of nurturing a greater sense of teamwork and camaraderie among the district's stakeholders.

The number of youth in neighborhoods surrounding the district is reportedly increasing. Yet there seems to be very little connection between Silver City and neighborhood schools. Youth participating in the Vision Design process indicated that the district offers little for them in terms of retail or activities, contributing to a sense of disconnect. In other cases, youth members cited safety-related issues or perceptions that prevent them from spending time in the district. Silver City Main Street should consider and pursue possibilities that might provide a means for engaging youth at an organizational level, as active participants in planning and decision-making processes that are devoted to enhancing the Silver City district today, and for generations to come.

Public Relations

Keeping projects that have been initiated as a result of the Vision Design process before the public eye will be key to building and maintaining momentum and to reversing negative perceptions revolving around the Silver City district. The Organization Committee should work consistently to publicize plans and progress being made through the implementation of projects originating from this process – and *always* celebrate successes achieved as a result. Public relations efforts might include:

- Regular "progress reports" delivered at neighborhood meetings.
- "Tip Sheets" or "Business Briefs," designed using a unifying banner or theme, hand-delivered to district businesses and posted on a Silver City Main Street Internet website.
- Periodic public meetings (i.e., monthly or quarterly) such as town meetings, stakeholder meetings and monthly business district merchant coffees to discuss projects, plans and results.
- An annual "Night at the Ballpark" networking event for district stakeholders.
- Regular (i.e., monthly or bi-monthly) updates on a local radio show or cable access television show, possibly produced in partnership with Main Street Milwaukee.

Volunteer Management

Main Street works through grass roots support and volunteer efforts. Silver City Main Street initiatives, including some projects and activities that might be identified and scheduled for implementation as a result of the Vision Design process, will require extraordinary volunteer resources. Whether the project is the introduction of a Silver City festival or event, an effort to network businesses, an initiative to create a public market, or an attempt to rehab a building, the Organization Committee should work with the relevant committee to find unique ways to acquire new volunteers – and even engage them in the process.

Silver City Main Street should develop a volunteer recruitment, training and recognition program designed to identify and match persons interested in Silver City redevelopment and revitalization efforts with an appropriate committee or project. A summary version of the annual Silver City Main Street Action Plan and National Main Street publications should be made available, or adapted, for use in Silver City Main Street volunteer recruitment and training efforts. A mentoring system might be used to match new volunteer recruits with “veteran” volunteers that will help new volunteers become acclimated to Main Street and assist them in completing their initial tasks.

Recognizing the contributions and efforts of volunteers will be an important part of volunteer retention and leadership development efforts. A simple “pat on the back” or hand-written thank you note can go great lengths in acknowledging the efforts of a volunteer. Other possibilities for recognition include the institution of a “Volunteer of the Month” award and an annual event where volunteers come together to celebrate their successes and honor the efforts of all team members.

Staffing

Silver City Main Street volunteers and staff will find themselves embarking on new territory, working together in new ways to address challenges and to capitalize on opportunities for the Silver City district. Silver City Main Street staff, in particular, will be involved at a high level and responsible for important tasks that will have a major impact on the organization’s success. The Main Street Manager, for example, will be extensively involved in efforts to organize a Safety Task Force or to assemble background information needed for business assistance programs selected for implementation.

The Silver City Main Street Organization Committee must work to allocate sufficient funds for staff and volunteer training that will help to nurture their leadership skills and enhance their abilities to work effectively, execute projects, and generate intended results. The workload of the Main Street Manager must continuously be monitored, and consideration should be given to the possible need for Main Street office support staff that could become apparent as the organization pursues new opportunities and projects.

Organization Strategies • Priority Action Steps

Action		Priority Level
1	Develop and adopt written policies and procedures, including those for finance, personnel and decision-making, that clarify the roles, responsibility, and authority of the Organization Committee within the greater LBWN organization	0
2	Work to develop funding sources, as may include a three-year pledge drive, corporate sponsorships and business and residential membership programs	0
3	Create a Safety Task force and pursue and establish strong partnerships with other area organizations and programs, such as area neighborhood block watch groups, the Milwaukee Police Department and Main Street Milwaukee (re: proposed Ambassadors Program) to address specific safety-related issues	0
4	Establish a formal public relations program to advertise positive achievements of the organization and its impact on the redevelopment of the district (i.e., newsletter and/or “Business Briefs,” Silver City Main Street website, periodic “town meetings,” etc.)	0
5	Develop a volunteer training, recruitment and recognition program – in partnership and consultation with the other committees – to ensure adequate staffing for projects and initiatives	0
6	Monitor, plan for, and provide funding for, additional Main Street support staff as organizational growth demands	1
7	Host an annual volunteer recognition event that recognizes the contributions of Silver City Main Street volunteers and proponents	1
8	Develop opportunities for youth to participate in Silver City Main Street planning efforts, activities and decision-making processes (i.e., youth board member(s), youth advisory board, etc.)	2
Priority Level Key		
0 = Immediate and/or Ongoing 1 = Within 1 Year 2 = Within 2 Years 3 = Within 3 Years		

Promotion

Silver City Main Street marketing and promotion activities should emphasize the district's distinguishing qualities, capitalize on key business clusters and activity generators, celebrate progress, and convey a strong sense of promise and optimism for the Silver City district's future.

During its early stages of development, Silver City Main Street marketing, promotion and image enhancement efforts should remain focused on efforts to overcome negative perceptions about the district and on the introduction of small-scale retail events and special events that reinforce positive messages and images for the district. For the long-term, a comprehensive marketing and promotion strategy that incorporates a series of special events, retail events and image enhancement efforts will be a vital component of the district's comprehensive redevelopment and revitalization initiative, supporting efforts to:

- Create a sense of the district as a safe, lively and vibrant mixed-use business district
- Support existing district businesses
- Overcome negative perceptions and misconceptions
- Enhance confidence among prospective investors and entrepreneurs

An effective promotion that builds upon positive changes occurring in the Silver City district and that highlights the district's distinguishing features will serve to send a strong, positive message about the district and its future. To that end, the execution of an effective marketing and promotion strategy will be central to improving the Silver City district's economic performance.

Promotion Strategies

The long-term redevelopment and prosperity of the Silver City district will be highly dependent on the quality of marketing and promotion activities – and the ability to appeal to targeted consumer segments. High quality marketing and promotional activities, orchestrated to capitalize upon the Silver City district's distinguishable assets and positive changes occurring in the business district, can effectively help to build a positive image and, in essence, effect positive changes in the market.

Consumer Markets

The identification of consumer markets for the Silver City business district enables Silver City Main Street and its Promotion Committee to think in strategic terms about the types of activities, events and messages that can effectively serve to generate traffic and enhance the image of Silver City. Short of conducting extensive research to profile various demographic groups and households that represent the greatest potential for the Silver City district to expand its market, it is reasonable to suggest that the Silver City market generally consists of three consumer groups:

1. Neighborhood Residents – Comprised of the population living in neighborhoods surrounding and in close proximity to the Silver City district. Neighborhood residents may be most likely to do business in the Silver City district because it is convenient and they are familiar with the range of goods and services available from district businesses.
2. Area Employees – Comprised of employees working at businesses within the district and at businesses and industries immediately surrounding the Silver City district. Masterson and P&H Mining, for example, are homes to hundreds of employees within walking distance of the Silver City business district. Employees represent a “captive” consumer market for district businesses.
3. Visitors – Comprised of consumers that travel to the Silver City business district from other areas of the Greater Milwaukee Metropolitan region and beyond.

The Neighborhood Residents and Area Employees consumer groups undoubtedly represent the Silver City business district's best markets today, particularly given current conditions and the nature of the existing business mix. As results are achieved through the implementation of redevelopment and revitalization strategies, the Silver City district's ability to capture a larger share of visitors will also be enhanced. For example, while the district, by most accounts to date, has largely been unable to capitalize upon Miller Park's location just to the west of the district, the successful implementation of efforts to enhance the district's appearance and fortify its business mix could undeniably enhance its ability to capture a larger visitors market in the future.

Special Events

Special events and festivals provide a means to build awareness among consumer groups, to boost the district's "entertainment factor," and to showcase positive changes occurring in the Silver City district. Silver City area residents may be familiar – or *think* they are familiar – with the existing business mix and the district's full inventory of features. However, as successes – both big and small – are realized through the implementation of Main Street projects and other community development initiatives, it will be important to communicate and "celebrate" those successes in ways that capture attention and enhance the image of the Silver City district.

The Silver City district has a growing cluster of specialty eating & drinking establishments that, collectively, help to maintain a sense of the district as a lively destination offering a variety of cuisines and dining experiences. A mix of specialty retail businesses catering to the ethnic tastes and needs of neighborhood residents provides for a multi-cultural – or Inter-National – experience. Events and festivals can help to maintain a certain level of activity in the district and to promote and celebrate the diverse experience contained within the boundaries of the district. Silver City Main Street should work to introduce special events and festivals that build on these assets and reinforce a positive message and image for the district.

Special events that enhance and maintain a strong sense of "local flavor" can deliver powerful messages that provide emotional links to the past and nurture new traditions – and customers. Public input received throughout the course of the Vision Design process points to special events and promotional activities that:

- Celebrate the Silver City district's small town heritage and distinct character
- Emphasize the district's industrious roots and hard-working people
- Connect, literally and/or figuratively, with the Menomonee River Valley
- Celebrate Silver City's "Inter-National" brand of ethnic and cultural diversity
- Include hands-on activities and entertainment for all ages

A proposed farmers market with an International flair, located at a highly visible location within the district, could potentially grow to become a pivotal event for the Silver City district based on its potential to capitalize on existing strengths, to reinforce an emerging identity, and to capture key neighborhood and employee consumer groups. Examples of other events and activities that could build on existing strengths to heighten the district's appeal and interest among key consumer groups include:

- Multi-cultural Arts Shows and Artisan Demonstrations
- International "Taste of Silver City" or "Silver Spoon" Festival
- International Christmas Celebration showcasing various Christmas holiday traditions
- All World Kids & Kritters (Pets) Parade

Special events and festivals offer opportunities to attract families and kids of all ages to the heart of the district. Silver City Main Street should work to involve area residents and youth from start to finish—planning the events, working for the day, contributing comments and suggestions on how to improve the event for next year, and just simply having fun. Engaging families and youth in Main Street events is one way to get them involved, and gives them a real reason to care about the district.

Retail Events and Activities

The production of Silver City Main Street retail events and activities will require astute planning, participation on the part of district retail establishments, and patience. Initially, the most effective retail-oriented promotional activities might be introduced as smaller, complementary components of special events and through ongoing retail-oriented marketing efforts and materials. Retail events should be designed to increase awareness as to the breadth and depth of retail products and services found within the Silver City business district. The introduction of Silver City Dollar Days planned for 2005 will be a good start – and test.

Cooperative advertising and marketing efforts promoting the district's retail and service sectors could offer a cost-effective approach to institutional advertising that conveys a quality image of the district and that heightens consumers' awareness of products and services available from Silver City district businesses.

The Silver City district logo should be employed as a common element in all Silver City Main Street-produced materials promoting the business district. With time and frequent and consistent use of the graphic, the district itself will become identifiable as a “brand” associated with a special place, special people, and special experiences.

The business community could also benefit from creative cooperative and cross-marketing techniques and partnerships that recognize the diversity of the district’s key consumer markets and that capitalize on both retail and non-retail traffic generators – a strategy that could be particularly effective in appealing to neighborhood residents and area employees. Cooperative advertising and cross-marketing examples include:

- Coupon or VIP card for a restaurant discount offered to employees of major employers in the Silver City district and surrounding area
- Coupon for discount at a Mexican Restaurant with \$20 or more purchase at an Asian food store
- Silver City Businesses Directory distributed to neighborhood residents and area employees

Image Enhancement

Image enhancement efforts are intended to create and reinforce a positive image of the Silver City district in the minds of residents, visitors and investors. Silver City image enhancement efforts face a stiff challenge – and are desperately needed – to overcome negative perceptions and attitudes that have gone unchecked for too many years. Silver City marketing materials, public relations campaigns, community goodwill activities staged in the district, maintenance programs, and special design features and décor should all be considered as possible components of a comprehensive image enhancement strategy for the Silver City district. Specific examples of image campaign components and applications include:

- New releases and features
- Public Service Announcements
- Institutional and cooperative advertising campaigns
- Production of a springtime clean-up & beautification event
- Publicity events and photo-opportunities (i.e., ribbon-cuttings, commemorative ceremonies, collection drives staged in the district, etc.)
- Local “National Night Out” events hosted in the Silver City district
- “Silver City Success Stories” features for media, newsletters, websites, etc.
- Signs and banners posted at the site of Main Street Area improvement projects
- Buttons and lapel pins for Silver City district business employees
- Special features, furnishings and décor incorporated in the National Avenue streetscape
- Gateway markers and directional signs

As may be evident from the list of examples appearing above, it will be important to coordinate image enhancement activities with other Main Street committees – especially the Design Committee and other community development partners – to ensure efficiency and consistency.

Promotion Strategies • Priority Action Steps

Action Description	Priority Level
1 Introduce new Silver City Main Street events (i.e., Silver City Dollar Days, Car Show, etc.) and work toward the development of an annual calendar of events	0
2 Work to develop print materials, as may include district directory, restaurant directory, etc., to promote the district to neighborhood residents, area employees and visitors	0
3 Work with district business to develop cross-marketing opportunities and campaigns (i.e., restaurant lunch coupons/specials for employees of area businesses and industries)	0
4 Work with Design Committee to develop projects – such as Spring and Fall Clean Up Days - designed to create a positive image for the Silver City District	1
5 Develop a Silver City Image Enhancement campaign that helps to distinguish the district as a quality place and that builds on the early success of Silver City Main Street and positive changes occurring in the district.	3

Priority Level Key:

0 = Immediate and/or Ongoing	1 = Within 1 Year	2 = Within 2 Years	3 = Within 3 Years
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Design

Business district revitalization and redevelopment is a long-term proposition. Proper management and maintenance of the Silver City district's physical environment and appearance will be critical to attracting investment and quality development, maintaining and extending the life of improvements made, and planning for future development.

Design Strategies

Historic Preservation and Aesthetics

Historic preservation is a key element of most, if not all, successful business district redevelopment and revitalization programs in the United States. Communities across the country have come to recognize that their historic resources are integral to maintaining a strong sense of place and a distinguishable identity in the market place. Preserving the Silver City district's historic resources, improving the district's aesthetics, and addressing building and other maintenance needs should be among the highest priorities pursued as part of Silver City Main Street initiatives.

National Avenue is dotted by buildings that have been, or are currently, the subjects of improvement projects. Fostering this momentum and guiding individual building improvements during Silver City Main Street's inaugural phase, in order to achieve the desired effect for the district as a whole, should be the pivotal effort of the Design Committee's action plan over the next few years.

One of the biggest challenges facing Silver City Main Street is how to deal with absentee property owners. Business owners in the district have become accustomed to building inspections and the performance of work necessary to comply with minimal maintenance standards. However, a number of vacant structures in obvious need of maintenance and repairs appear to escape the same scrutiny and conformance to required minimal maintenance ordinances. The Silver City Main Street Design Committee should work to identify problem properties in obvious need of maintenance and work cooperatively with City of Milwaukee building officials to force conformance with applicable ordinances and minimal maintenance requirements.

Even the very best of efforts to cure the entire inventory of problem properties are unlikely to achieve the widespread results sought by Main Street and the community. In some cases, property owners might insist that their tenants make necessary repairs to the buildings, creating an additional hardship for businesses that might already be struggling to survive. In other cases, property owners that do not share the community's vision for the Silver City district will simply refuse to comply or will make inappropriate repairs and alterations to their buildings as a way to "get by."

The Silver City Main Street Design Committee should become familiar with applicable city ordinances, design guidelines and incentive programs with an eye toward their application as tools to force compliance with minimal maintenance ordinance provisions, to guide quality building improvements, and to promote quality development in the Silver City district. The Design Committee, in cooperation with City of Milwaukee building officials, might also consider possibilities for developing district-specific design guidelines and development standards that promote improvements and developments that are consistent with the community's vision for Silver City.

The Design Committee should work closely with the Silver City Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee to promote a business- and investor-friendly regulatory environment in the district. A complete review of applicable land use plans, zoning ordinances, building codes and development policies should be performed to ensure compatibility with design and economic development goals. Information on technical assistance and financial incentives available for building improvements should be compiled in a single, user-friendly document or brochure.

Appearance and Maintenance

Residents and stakeholders participating in public meetings and focus groups place a high value on the district's visual appeal, with many expressing disappointment in the district's overall appearance. Unfortunately, current aesthetics do not reflect the level of quality desired by the community or the sense of pride that is evident in certain district properties and surrounding neighborhoods. Instances of poorly maintained and inappropriately altered buildings, deteriorating streets and sidewalks and worn streetscape furnishings, along with graffiti, weeds, and debris collecting in various areas of the district, were cited by Vision Design participants and were observed by the consulting team.

The Main Street Design Committee should conduct periodic “walk-throughs” to compile a list of items in need of maintenance and attention. Items in the public realm that are in need of repair or attention should be brought to the attention of appropriate City of Milwaukee officials and departments. Ideally, the Main Street Design Committee would work cooperatively with City officials to devise a plan that addresses all items listed. Items identified as requiring the attention of private property and business owners should be discussed in a friendly visit with the respective owners, where possible, or in a cordial letter from Silver City Main Street. If property and building owners fail to act, Silver City Main Street and its Design Committee should work cooperatively with appropriate City officials to remedy the situation.

The Main Street Design Committee should also consider organizing periodic volunteer clean-up events and beautification events that involve residents, business owners and property owners in efforts to improve and maintain the district’s public spaces. The events might include a post-clean-up party that helps to build a spirit of teamwork, camaraderie and ownership in Main Street beautification efforts.

Streetscape

The enhancement of the National Avenue streetscape was cited as a high priority by stakeholders that participated in the Vision Design process. The timing for consideration of streetscape improvements is ideal given that approximately \$700,000 in Transportation Enhancement Grant funds have been earmarked for improvements in the Silver City district.

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. Various streetscape design concepts that support the community’s vision for the Silver City business district are illustrated and described in pages 10 – 11 of this document.

The Main Street Design Committee should work closely with appropriate officials and agencies to provide input on designs and plans for streetscape improvements. Long term, consideration should be given to efforts that will help businesses prepare, survive and thrive during the streetscape construction period.

Pedestrian Access and Connections

The Silver City Main Street Design Committee should work continuously to maintain a safe and friendly pedestrian environment in the Silver City district. Safety and access are features of the Silver City pedestrian experience that will be increasingly important as Silver City Main Street works to enhance its identity as a vibrant neighborhood commercial district and as it works to promote new investment and business opportunities.

The significance of, and potential opportunities for, links and connections between the Silver City business district, surrounding neighborhoods, area employers and attractions, and the Menomonee River Valley are illustrated and described in pages 8 – 9 of this document. The Design Committee should actively work in cooperation with the City of Milwaukee and community development partners to promote projects and initiatives that will help to facilitate the seamless integration of the Silver City business district with surrounding neighborhoods, employment centers and attractions.

The Main Street Design Committee should remain apprised of Main Street Safety Task Force activities and initiatives, and at least one Design Committee members should serve as a member of the Task Force to maintain a direct line of communication. The Design Committee should also stand ready to propose or consult on various safety-related concerns that might be addressed, at least in part, through various design solutions.

Parking

The majority of parking for the district is located in marked spaces along National Avenue and side streets in the neighborhoods to the north and south. Most off-street parking in the district is privately owned and generally restricted for the use of employees and patrons of individual businesses. While few participating in the Vision Design process expressed concern regarding the supply of parking given current conditions, parking must continue to be managed to anticipate and accommodate the needs of business district patrons, residents and employees.

As redevelopment plans emerge, a parking study might be required in order to assess the impacts of new development and to better understand the parking needs and habits of district patrons, residents and employees. Such a study should explore options for improving parking policies, as might include the design of private and public lots, designation of spaces or lots for employee parking, shared parking opportunities, and various enforcement measures.

Design Strategies • Priority Action Steps

Action	Description	Priority Level
1	Conduct periodic “walk-throughs” to photograph and compile a list of items in need of maintenance and attention and work with appropriate owners and entities to address maintenance needs in the district	0
2	Work cooperatively with City of Milwaukee building officials to force conformance with applicable ordinances and minimal maintenance requirements where necessary	0
3	Organize periodic volunteer clean-up and beautification events that involve residents, business owners and property owners in efforts to improve and maintain the district’s public spaces	0
4	Work closely with appropriate officials and agencies to provide input on designs and plans for streetscape improvements	0
5	Develop district-specific design guidelines and development standards that promote improvements and developments that are consistent with the community’s vision for the Silver City district	0
6	Introduce historic preservation awareness and education efforts designed to draw attention to the district’s historic resources, to help promote appropriate changes to the district’s historic buildings, and to promote historic preservation-related financial incentives.	0
7	Assemble, package and promote available incentives and building improvement assistance programs	0
8	Work cooperatively with appropriate owners and entities to encourage design improvements that will enhance links between the district, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Menomonee River Valley	0
9	Monitor parking supply, demand and management issues and consider the possible need for a parking study and/or the need for additional parking as redevelopment occurs	0
10	Work with Economic Restructuring Committee and City to review city land use plans, zoning ordinances, building codes and development policies to ensure compatibility with business development goals and strategies and to promote a business- and investor-friendly regulatory environment	1
12	Undertake efforts to help businesses prepare, survive and thrive during the streetscape construction period	2

Priority Level Key:

0 = Immediate and/or Ongoing 1 = Within 1 Year 2 = Within 2 Years 3 = Within 3 Years

Economic Restructuring

Economic restructuring projects and activities are designed to strengthen the district's existing economic base and to find ways to expand it to meet new opportunities – and challenges from outlying development. Effective economic restructuring strategies build upon the business district's economic strengths and promote business and investment opportunities that are consistent with the vision for the business district.

Data Collection and Analysis

The initial phases of an Economic Restructuring Committee's development tend to be largely devoted to collecting, analyzing and summarizing information that provides a snapshot of the business district's economic conditions, performance and opportunities for purposes such as:

- Establishing benchmarks and tracking the district's economic performance and changes occurring in the market,
- Identifying needs of existing businesses
- Identifying potential business expansion and recruitment opportunities
- Packaging information and data in business and investor recruitment marketing materials

Examples of data and information that should be considered as part of the Economic Restructuring Committee's data collection and analysis activities include:

- Property and business inventories
- Trade area maps and descriptions
- Trade area consumer demographic and lifestyle profiles
- Consumer and business survey data and analysis
- Retail sales data and trends
- Investment data and trends

A market analysis completed for the district in 2001 provides a basis upon which to assess current needs for data and information. Given changes that have occurred in the business district and surrounding neighborhoods, the Economic Restructuring Committee should consider the means by which the market analysis might be updated with current data and information, or a new market analysis might be commissioned.

Business Retention and Expansion

Business retention and expansion efforts are among the most cost-effective economic development initiatives that can be undertaken as part of a Main Street Economic Restructuring strategy, and set the stage for successful business recruitment efforts. Programs designed to assist businesses with expansion, relocation and building improvements in the Silver City district could effectively stimulate increased levels of private investment and reinvestment from existing district business and building owners.

Business retention efforts should be focused on enhancing communication and cooperation among district businesses as a means of promoting the sense of the Silver City business district as a collective entity. Business-to-business networking, marketing and trade opportunities should be promoted. Other retention efforts should be directed toward familiarizing businesses with, and facilitating access to, technical assistance and resources available from Silver City Main Street, Main Street Milwaukee, and other local, regional and state agencies.

Business expansion efforts should seek to identify specific businesses that might be candidates for expansion and should target assistance and incentives at those business that have the greatest potential to expand and fill "gaps" in product and service lines offered by the existing mix of businesses. Business visitation programs are often a good first step in efforts to identify specific expansion prospects. A market analysis report completed for the area in 2001 could offer additional insight regarding expansion opportunities.

Examples of programs and incentives that might be developed or accessed to promote and facilitate business expansion opportunities, and that might be relevant to Silver City district business development efforts, include:

- Building improvement grants and/or low-interest loans
- Free or low cost building improvement design services
- Business management, marketing and merchandising consultations
- E-Commerce website assistance

Partnerships with local financial institutions should be pursued to explore possibilities for low interest loan pools and lines of credit programs. Main Street Milwaukee should be engaged in discussions and an exploration of project and program alternatives on a continual basis. Resources available through agencies and institutions such as the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Milwaukee area universities should be identified and promoted as part of an ongoing business assistance program.

Business Recruitment

Business recruitment is a highly competitive undertaking that can consume large amounts of time and financial resources – with little or no immediate results. The success of Silver City Main Street business and investor recruitment strategies will largely hinge on the ability to meet the following objectives:

- Demonstrate consumer demand. Maintain current market information and demographics data and present information in such a way as to make a compelling case for the viability of Silver City district business ventures. An update to the 2001 market analysis report should be considered as a means of presenting a current snapshot of the Silver City district's market and opportunities for new business ventures.
- Demonstrate the availability of appropriate sites. Maintain a current inventory of available sites and their characteristics. Provide information to investors and entrepreneurs in a professional, visually appealing and easy to understand format.
- Demonstrate current assets already in place. Make prospects aware of completed and imminent improvements, existing activity generators, neighboring complementary businesses and facilities, plans for new housing, and other features of the Silver City district that enhance the viability of new business ventures.
- Demonstrate an enthusiastic, progressive city government and financial community. Highlight investments and active roles played by the City of Milwaukee, Main Street Milwaukee, Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, and other organizations and financial institutions playing a role in Silver City district enhancement efforts.
- Demonstrate a cooperative regulatory environment. Clearly explain processes, regulations, restrictions and guidelines that are relevant to investing and doing business in the Silver City district. Work as a liaison to assist prospects and to simplify application, review and permitting processes.
- Demonstrate an active enhancement effort in place. Highlight accomplishments and capitalize upon progress being made as part of Silver City Main Street's revitalization program. Emphasize partnerships and cooperation between Silver City Main Street, Main Street Milwaukee, Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, and other community development partners.
- Demonstrate an effective promotional program in place. Highlight special events, festivals, and cooperative marketing efforts that attract people to, and focus positive attention on, the Silver City district. Provide examples of Silver City district marketing materials.
- Demonstrate readiness for redevelopment. Pursue appropriate pre-development research and action on sites and spaces targeted for redevelopment that might require special attention to address environmental issues, parking issues, access issues, and other issues and challenges that could affect the marketability and viability of prospective business and investment ventures.
- Promote available incentives and assistance. Provide information on programs available to Silver City district investors, developers and businesses, as might include design assistance, tax credits, low interest building improvement loans and grants, and low interest lines of credit or business start up loans that might be made available through Silver City Main Street, through a consortium of local financial institutions, or in partnership with agencies such as Main Street Milwaukee.

Marketing Silver City district business and investment opportunities to reach targeted prospects and investors can be a time-consuming and expensive task. Advertising in local and regional newspapers and trade journals can be costly and too often can go unnoticed. Beyond simple advertising, other business and investment marketing techniques include:

- Establishing communications with Milwaukee Metro area commercial real estate brokers and agents, keeping them advised of new business and investment opportunities.
- Posting a current listing of opportunities and businesses sought on the Silver City Main Street website.
- Issuing a Request for Proposals, where appropriate, to solicit proposals from qualified developers for potential redevelopment projects.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Vacant and underutilized buildings and properties dotting the Silver City business district offer potential redevelopment opportunities. The Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee should work continuously to identify redevelopment opportunities, develop concepts regarding the nature of, and possible uses for, potential redevelopment sites, and work cooperatively with owners of potential redevelopment sites to market opportunities and concepts, where appropriate.

The Public Market concept illustrated and described in page 12 of this document could offer an opportunity for Silver City Main Street, working with community development partners and agencies, to create a new activity generator and to set a high quality standard for development. The Economic Restructuring Committee should “float” the concept to the public and community development agency partners to gauge reaction. Depending upon the response, the Economic Restructuring Committee might conduct more extensive research to identify potential sites, explore the feasibility of the project, and to study similar projects and models.

New housing opportunities could also be the subject of potential redevelopment sites within and surrounding the Silver City district. The Economic Restructuring Committee should encourage new housing uses in the area, where appropriate.

Silver City area housing should be attractive for its unique design qualities as well as for its proximity to Silver City business district attractions. A range of housing choices could be developed, as could include condominiums and loft-style units in former industrial sites, apartments over street level office or retail spaces in new and existing buildings, and live/work housing. As proposals for housing are considered, the market potential should not be underestimated. Business districts and urban areas have long been locations for housing simply because the space was “cheap.” Today, these areas are attractive to a segment of the population that *chooses* to live in an urban setting. A more “upscale” notion of Silver City living might, therefore, be appropriate. Ultimately, a larger population of people living in the Silver City area will help to foster the revitalization of the business district.

Pro-active planning and advance consideration of management-related issues can help to pave the way for mixed-use and residential developments. City building officials should be involved early in the planning process to troubleshoot potential barriers to upper level redevelopment, and zoning ordinances should be reviewed and, if necessary, variances should be sought to accommodate desired residential and commercial uses. Parking provisions and management policies for residential tenants and business employees should also be reviewed and issues that might revolve around the need to accommodate long-term employee and resident parking should be resolved in advance.

Economic Restructuring • Priority Action Steps

Action	Description	Priority Level
1	Collect, update, analyze and summarize information that provides a snapshot of the business district's economic conditions, performance and opportunities, including trade area (neighborhood and workforce) demographic data and economic data	0
2	Develop programs to enhance communication and cooperation among district businesses such as business-to-business networking, marketing and trade opportunities as a beginning strategy to retain and expand existing businesses	0
3	Maintain strong partnerships and work cooperatively with LBWN and other economic development partners to identify opportunities for possible catalyst projects (i.e. Public Market) and act accordingly	0
4	Maintain a current list of properties available for sale or lease in the district and serve as a resource to refer prospective investors and entrepreneurs to owners and agents of available properties	0
5	Maintain a list and/or "fact sheets" listing and briefly describing all assistance, services and incentives available to existing and prospective Silver City District businesses, property owners and investors through Silver City Main Street, Main Street Milwaukee and other local, regional and state entities and serve as a resource to facilitate access to programs and services	0
6	Conduct a survey of district business and property owners and managers to identify specific issues and areas of need that might be addressed through ongoing business assistance programs and services (i.e. workshops & seminars, one-on-one business counseling, etc.)	1
7	Develop Silver City Main Street business and investor recruitment strategies, as may include review of and/or revision to existing land use and zoning, packaging of existing incentives, development of promotional materials, etc.	1
8	Identify potential commercial and residential redevelopment opportunities and sites that might be targeted for redevelopment	2
9	Develop concepts depicting the nature of, and possible uses for, potential redevelopment sites, and work cooperatively with owners of potential redevelopment sites to market opportunities and concepts	3

Priority Level Key:

0 = Immediate and/or Ongoing 1 = Within 1 Year 2 = Within 2 Years 3 = Within 3 Years

Draft Action Plan Outline and Potential Start-Up Projects

Organization Committee

Goal: (Draft)

To ensure the development of Silver City Main Street as a respected, well-informed, successful community organization and “central command” for the Silver City Main Street district, with effective leadership, successful fundraising programs, a growing volunteer base, and effective partnerships with local government and community groups.

Objectives & Potential Start-up Projects:

1. To establish and implement sound organizational management principles
 - Create a policies & procedures manual
 - Develop an annual budget for program administration, operations and projects
 - Develop and manage a fundraising program
2. To develop and maintain strong partnerships with Silver City stakeholder groups
 - Establish a Safety Task Force to address specific crime and safety-related issues
3. To attract, train, retain and recognize an effective volunteer force
 - Recruit and train volunteers for Silver City Main Street committees and projects
 - Develop a volunteer recognition program
 - Host an annual event to recognize volunteers and supporters
4. To effectively promote the Silver City Main Street Program and its efforts
 - Publish and distribute a periodic news bulletin (print and/or electronic)
 - Develop and maintain a Silver City Main Street website with fresh content and features

Promotion Committee

Goal: (Draft)

To promote Silver City’s historic business district through effective marketing and quality events.

Objectives & Potential Start-up Projects:

1. To develop and stage quality events in the Silver City Main Street District
 - Brainstorm and select new events (i.e., Silver City Dollar Days & Car Show)
 - Special events / festivals
 - Retail events
 - Image-building events & activities
 - Plan, promote and stage events
2. To develop an effective marketing strategy to promote the Silver City Main Street district
 - Initiate work to develop content for Silver City District marketing efforts (i.e., business directory, restaurant guide, cooperative advertising headers, website, etc.)

Design Committee

Goal: (Draft)

To enhance the physical appearance of the Silver City Main Street business district by encouraging and undertaking appropriate maintenance and redevelopment of public spaces, and by supporting quality, preservation-sensitive building design, improvement and construction projects.

Objectives & Potential Start-up Projects:

1. To promote quality building design, improvement and construction projects
 - Work with Main Street Milwaukee and other entities to promote design assistance available to district building owners
 - Work with the City to review minimal maintenance standards and work toward enforcement
2. To establish appropriate design guidelines for district buildings and spaces
 - Work with City toward the development of district-specific design guidelines / standards
3. To establish and maintain standards for the maintenance and re-design of public spaces
 - Conduct periodic “walk-throughs” to photograph and compile a list of items requiring maintenance and work with appropriate entities to address maintenance issues
 - Produce periodic volunteer clean-up & beautification events
 - Participate in streetscape enhancement planning and design phases and provide input, where appropriate

Economic Restructuring Committee

Goal: (Draft)

To provide assistance to existing business and property owners, and to attract new businesses and investors to the district by creating and offering appropriate incentives, marketing materials and business support services.

Objectives & Potential Start-up Projects:

1. To develop activities, materials and efforts to support existing businesses
 - Conduct businesses owner survey to determine needs for possible support programs & services
 - Initiate a Business Visitation and/or “Block Captains” program to enhance communications
2. To develop marketing strategies, materials and tools to attract new businesses and investors
 - Compile a list and/or fact sheets describing all available assistance and incentives
3. To collect, update and analyze data
 - Review the 2001 market analysis and consider needs to update data
 - Produce comprehensive District Inventory (i.e., business inventory, property inventory, etc.)
4. To identify and promote potential redevelopment and catalyst project opportunities
 - Develop a list of target properties/sites for potential redevelopment
 - Work with Design Committee to review applicable land use plans and zoning ordinances

Sample Action Plan Project Worksheet

Committee: Economic Restructuring				
Objective: To Develop & Package Incentives				
Project: "Package" & Distribute Existing Incentives				
Team Leader: Jenny Miller				
Team Members: Jenny Miller, Bill Jones, Roger Gibbons and Claire Smith				
Tasks Necessary to Complete Project:	Responsibility:	Start Date:	End Date:	Budget:
Investigate existing incentives	Bill Jones	09-01-05	09-30-05	\$10
Acquire list of property and business owners	Claire Smith	09-01-05	09-30-05	N/A
Write a "fact sheet" for each possible incentive and develop brochure/folder, etc. for their inclusion	Bill Jones, with team members	10-01-05	10-15-05	N/A
Produce "Package"	Jenny Miller	10-15-05	10-31-05	\$500
Distribute Incentives Package to all Business and Property Owners	Jenny Miller	11-01-05	11-07-05	N/A
Coordinate news release with Organization Committee	Claire Smith	11-01-05	11-07-05	N/A
Coordinate publicizing of success stories with Organization Committee	Claire Smith	11-01-05	Ongoing	N/A
Follow up with business/property owners	Bill Jones & Jenny Miller	12-01-05	Ongoing	N/A
Anticipated Results/Measure of Success: Create and distribute Incentives Package by 11-07-05; At least one use of advertised incentives by end of fiscal year				

Community Participation

An open invitation Town Meeting and Workshop was held on May 16, 2005 as a featured participation component of the Vision Design technical visit. More than 30 people – including business leaders, property owners and residents – participated in exercises that lend perspective on the community’s vision for the Silver City business district and that provide direction for strategies aimed at its enhancement. Following is a summary of responses submitted by groups completing the “Silver City Vision Quiz” questionnaire.

Silver City Vision Quiz – Summary Results

(√ = Indicates response submitted by multiple teams)

1. Positive things about the Silver City District today – things that you are most proud of:
 - Neighborhood diversity √
 - Resident pride of ownership
 - Community involvement
 - History
 - Location
 - Convenient location
 - Miller Park/Domes – Attractions
 - Quality and assortment of housing stock
 - Diversity of businesses and people
 - Hometown feeling
 - New improvements to the neighborhood

2. Negative things about the Silver City district today - things that you are least proud of:
 - Prostitution √√
 - Gangs √
 - Litter and graffiti √
 - Negative streetscape
 - Lack of security
 - Lack of inviting retail images
 - Absentee landlords
 - Unkempt
 - Crime
 - Traffic and parking issues
 - Safety issues
 - Lack of parking

3. What are the Silver City business district's best opportunities for the future?
 - Menomonee Valley (park and jobs) √√
 - Miller Park √
 - Diversity, and capitalizing on diversity
 - Young families moving in
 - Upscale dining
 - Brewers' success – increased dollars for businesses
 - Increase in home ownership
 - Increase in safety
 - Increase in property values
 - Funding for neighborhood
 - Improvement for quality of life
 - Employment opportunities

4. What are the greatest liabilities or threats facing the Silver City business district?
 - Perception from outside √
 - Drugs, prostitution and petty crime
 - Preponderance of business indifference
 - Absentee landlords
 - Lack of business plan/uncontrolled businesses
 - Apathy – no support
 - Parking
 - Lack of public space
 - Gang activity
 - Crime
 - Too much alcohol – bars

5. Things about the Silver City business district that should change immediately:
 - Continued and enhanced police presence √
 - Appearance (landscape, storefronts, litter) √
 - Streetscape
 - Encourage businesses and residents to clean-up local areas
 - Increased training for business owners
 - Neighborhood-friendly retail
 - Slum lords
 - Types of businesses
 - Perception
 - More residential volunteers

6. Distinguishing or defining features of the Silver City business district in 2015:
 - Pleasant looking streets and businesses
 - Attractive mix of businesses and residences
 - Comfortable late night venue
 - Outdoor dining
 - Well-kept, successful businesses
 - “Hot” area – can’t rent or buy without being on waiting list but retaining neighborhood “current” character
 - Mitchell Park/Domes
 - Diversity
 - Charm
 - Safe
 - Fun
 - Hometown feeling

7. Words that will describe the Silver City business district in 2015:
 - Safe ✓
 - Flourishing
 - Exciting
 - Desirable
 - Inviting
 - Real/Authentic
 - Vibrant
 - Diverse
 - Charm
 - Diversity
 - Successful
 - Interesting

8. In a sentence, what the Silver City business district will be “known for” in the year 2015:
 - Silver City – A full-service neighborhood.
 - Known for its dining opportunities and music under the viaduct.
 - Heart of Southside.
 - Known for the fun time, friendly people, and wonderful environment.

9. It's 2015. Everything has gone right – the development program has been hugely successful. You're in a hot air balloon, looking down at the Silver City district. What do you see?
- More people walking and biking – less cars
 - Abundance of retail experiences
 - Lushness and neatness of area
 - People
 - Street furniture
 - Clean sidewalks
 - Pedestrian traffic
 - Plaza – gathering spot
 - Pleasantville – well-kept homes
 - Boulevard of flowers
 - Trees & flowers
 - Great smell from restaurants
10. Things you want your children and grandchildren to remember most about the Silver City business district:
- A great place to live and work
 - That mom & dad and grandma & grandpa played a key role in the Silver City revitalization
 - A fun place to be – many good memories.
 - It was like the United Nations – people of all kinds got together and had a lot of fun.