



# **CITY of SOUTH MILWAUKEE**

**Comprehensive + Downtown Plan Update 2035**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Source: Flickr user Jamie Grunewald

# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

## A VISION FOR SOUTH MILWAUKEE:

“South Milwaukee’s proud heritage enriches its prosperous future as one of Wisconsin’s most attractive South Shore communities. An active citizenry and attentive government will enhance the thriving Downtown, enrich the quality school system, preserve and beautify public facilities and parks, and coordinate responsible redevelopment.”

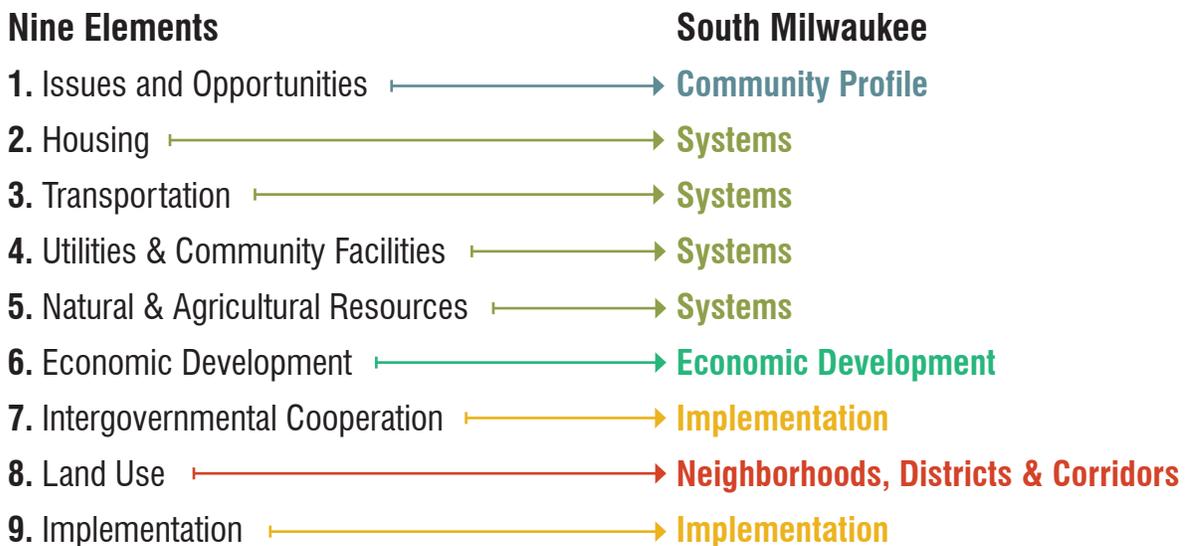
## ... AND A ROAD MAP TO GET THERE.

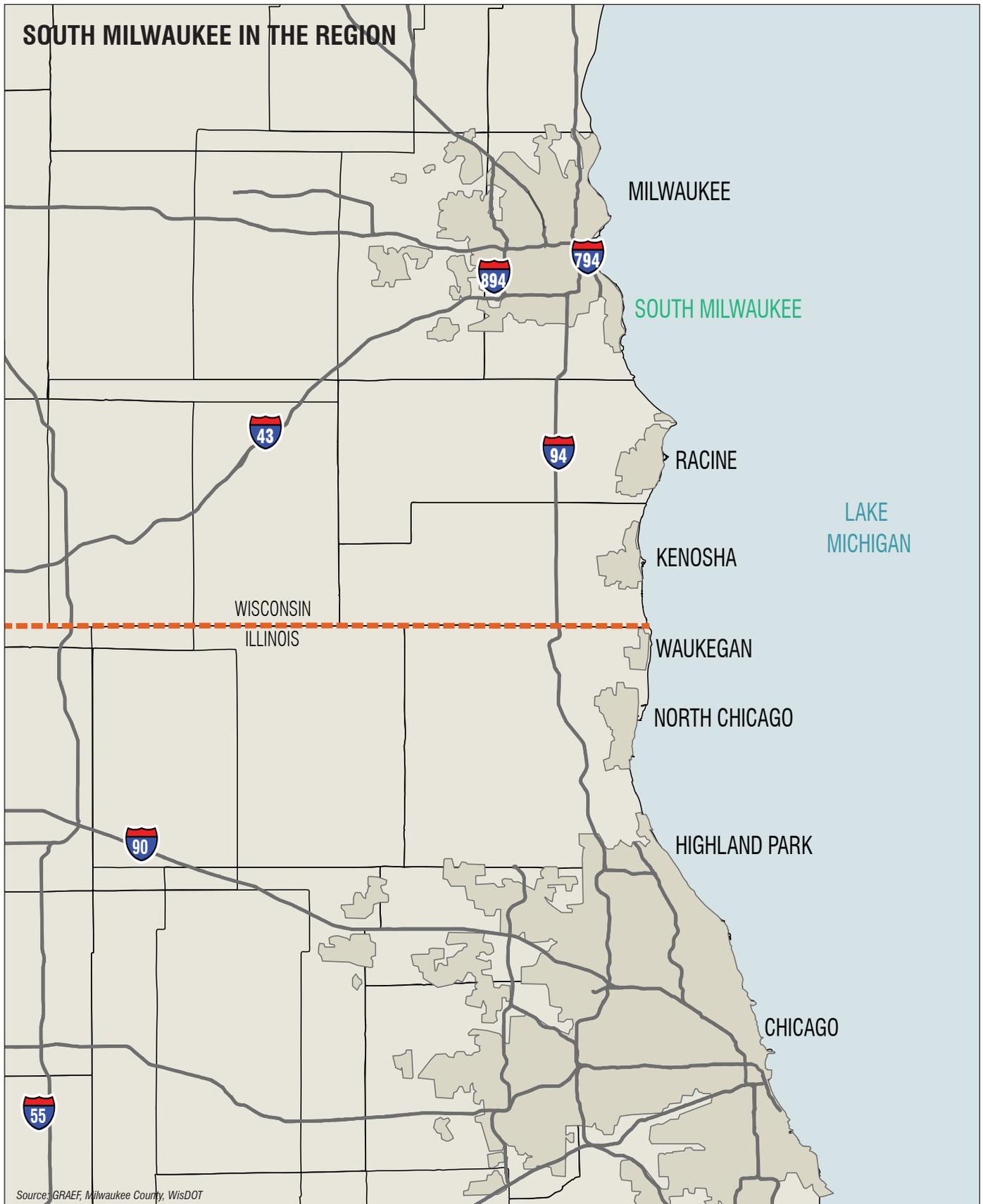
### User Manual for the Road map

**One.** Comprehensive plans, in Wisconsin, are emerging from a decade and a half of growing pains. The first comprehensive plans to be adopted under Wisconsin’s 1999 comprehensive planning legislation, or “Smart Growth” legislation, followed the “nine elements” almost by the book. Over time, comprehensive plans and their “2.0” ancestors are demonstrating more creativity, and are including localized strategies that make each plan document more relevant to readers.

The intent of this Plan – the South Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan Update and Central Business District Strategy – is to strive toward attaining creative next steps, localized strategies, data-driven conclusions where relevant for readers, and, well, a bit of fun. **This Plan should instill in readers a sense of promise about South Milwaukee because, simply, that’s precisely how everyone on the Acknowledgements page feels about South Milwaukee’s future.**

Those unfamiliar with the nine elements can first get a glimpse of those elements, and how South Milwaukee’s Comprehensive Plan Update has incorporated them into a different structure:





South Milwaukee's only other comprehensive plan – its first under the 1999 legislation – was adopted in June 2003. “City of South Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan 2020”, mostly organized in keeping with the legislation, is one of a few critical foundations for this Plan. Readers who have questions about how this Plan relates to the 2003 Plan can use the aforementioned chart to see which chapters cover similar ground as the 2003 Plan chapters.

**Two.** Readers: use this Plan as a resource to learn something new about South Milwaukee. Also: use this Plan as a first stop for ideas, strategies, and brainstorming about process. The creators of this Plan have attempted to display or diagram underutilized data in new ways, and to provide observations about the South Milwaukee community that will spark ideas and actions among others. Hardworking members of the City staff have grabbed every opportunity, amidst their limited time, to display their key observations about the community. Accordingly, they have poured their resources into the preparation of this Plan in the hopes that readers can take away something about South Milwaukee they wouldn't otherwise know.

**Three.** Those who created this Plan commissioned a special section: the “Downtown Strategy,” that Plan creators have relabeled the Downtown District. Including a deeper dive into the Downtown District makes for a large, but purposeful, Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors chapter. The future of South Milwaukee is nestled largely within the future of Milwaukee Avenue and its environs. As such, the City-commissioned Plan creators provide a statistical and observational perspective on worthwhile actions to be undertaken in the Downtown District.

## The Road map

After this chapter, readers should not feel obligated to read this Plan in the same order as its page numbers. The alternate route to read this Plan is as follows:

- » Start with Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors. Find your area of interest, and read the Land Use Table to learn about what you can do in that area.
- » Look for your same area of interest in the Economic Development & Capital Investment chapter to see if your chosen spot happens to be an “Opportunity Area.”
- » Visit the Implementation chapter and pick out the action(s) you want to tackle. Call the City and tell them what you plan to do. And don't forget to have fun.

## TOP 5 REASONS TO ENJOY (& KNOW) SOUTH MILWAUKEE:

1. **The Lakefront**
2. **Grant Park**
3. **Oak Creek Parkway**
4. **Downtown**
5. **South Milwaukee Neighborhoods**

# VISION

“Proud heritage enriching a prosperous future as one of Wisconsin’s most attractive South Shore communities.”

An active citizenry and attentive government will enhance the thriving Downtown, enrich the quality school system, preserve and beautify public facilities and parks, and coordinate responsible redevelopment.



Source: GRAEF

**South Milwaukee occupies a unique and highly valuable geographic position within the Milwaukee region.** This set of circumstances – proximity to Lake Michigan, accessibility via interstate / state highway / rail / trails, affordability, and abundance of open space – will make South Milwaukee a stronger “community of choice” along the south shore of Milwaukee County. The three conditions which establish the foundation for the future prominence and success of South Milwaukee are:

### **South Milwaukee’s Lakefront/Parkway Opportunity**

South Milwaukee’s position on Lake Michigan and the Oak Creek Parkway provides an amenity (cultural, physical, and economic) that is matched only by a few other coastline communities. Such value goes beyond the simple creation of a bike path or walking trail. That is, South Milwaukee is now poised to use this opportunity to be a premier lakefront community of choice. It can and should become the lakefront community of choice in the region. The key to successful lakefront and parkway utilization is the creation of prolonged environmental views versus short, less impactful views. Put another way, the issue is not whether a view is possible (there is always a way to catch a glimpse of the parkway), but whether the view is meaningful, celebrated, and integrated with a broad range of experiences.

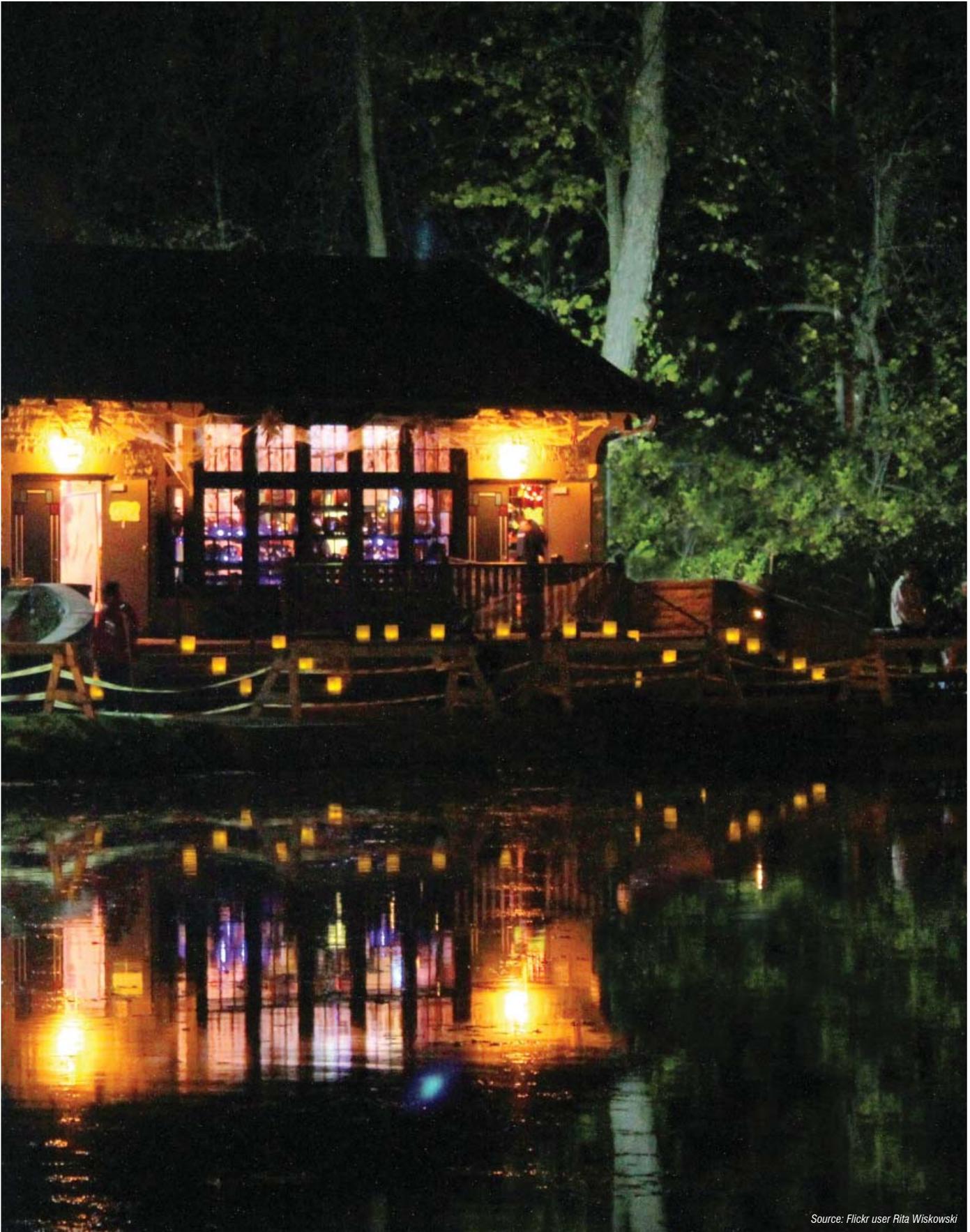
### **South Milwaukee’s Main Street Corridors**

South Milwaukee does not stand alone along the shoreline. It is actually a key link in a chain of redevelopment and revitalization that begins in downtown Milwaukee and extends along the old Kinnickinnic Avenue commercial corridor southwards to the County line. This business corridor will grow over the coming decades and, as it passes through South Milwaukee, can and should be linked to surrounding neighborhoods and districts. This linkage can and will primarily happen in South Milwaukee via 10th Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue.

### **South Milwaukee’s Live-Work Potential**

South Milwaukee’s industrial history is not a liability, but a major asset. Proximity to General Mitchell International Airport adds to this value. Increasingly, intermodal industry is ringing prominence. So too is the idea of “maker places” that view manufacturing and industry as an asset to neighborhoods – especially since such places can be designed in environmentally-friendly ways that are good neighborhood institutions.

These three (3) major opportunities can become the hallmark of South Milwaukee’s long term planning. Each new project could be judged as to how it fits into the opportunities noted above. Various parts of this comprehensive plan discuss how each of these overarching opportunities can inform the goals and recommendations of the ongoing planning effort laid out in this Plan.



Source: Flickr user Rita Wiskowski

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## A SNAPSHOT

The City of South Milwaukee has experienced a relatively stable population in recent decades. As a community with little land available for residential development - but a composition of strong neighborhoods, this population trend is to be expected. The City saw its greatest changes within the population itself, as demographics shifted between 2000 and 2013.

While the City lost a small number of households and residents, the average household size remained the same at 2.4. Fewer family households lived in South Milwaukee by 2013, but the average size of these households remained constant.

Generally, the City witnessed little change in the age distribution of residents. Like many other United States' communities, however, some changes in the Millennial and Baby Boomer generations appeared. The City had a slightly larger number of Millennials in 2013 than it did in 2000, and a significantly larger number of Baby Boomers with a 64.7 percent increase in their population.

The City continued to diversify with an increase in the African American, Asian, and Hispanic communities. Notably, the size of the Hispanic community increased by 97 percent with an increase of 829 residents.

By 2013, the City saw a 26.9 percent increase in the number of residents with an Associate's degree or higher. Residents with a high school diploma or less decreased by 8.7 percent. An increase in educational attainment led to a shift in employment and household earnings.



Manufacturing, educational services, and healthcare and social assistance are the dominant employers of South Milwaukee residents. With improvements in educational attainment, fewer residents are employed in low-skill jobs than they were in the previous decade.

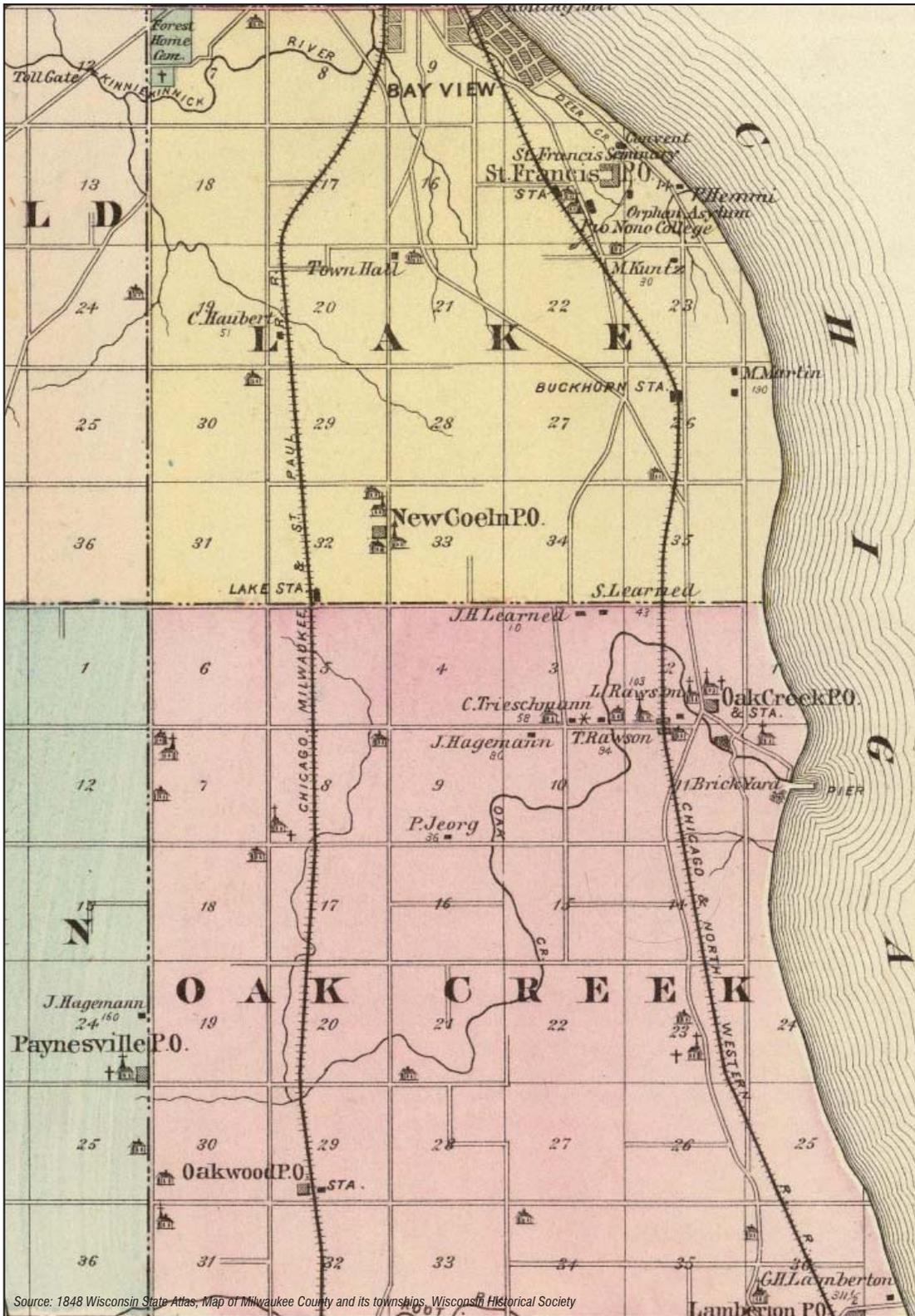
The median household income of residents increased by 19.7 percent from \$44,197 to \$52,900. Middle class, household incomes fell throughout the City as jobs shifted away from blue collar and low-skill work. The number of households earning more than \$75,000 per year nearly doubled.

## POPULATION TRENDS

Data sets from the 2000 Decennial Census and 2013 American Community Survey indicate that South Milwaukee's total population and number of households largely remained stable in the recent decade. The City began the decade with 8,694 households and 21,256 residents, and ended it with 8,571 households and 21,163 residents. The household and population loss is minor overall with a decrease of 123 households (1.4 percent) and 93 residents (0.4 percent). The average household size remained the same at 2.4. Of the total households, 5,620 were family households in 2000; after a 5.8 percent loss of 326 family households, 5,294 family households lived in the City in 2013. In addition, the average family size remained constant at approximately three residents per family. As South Milwaukee is a city with little available land for additional residential development and composed of a set of strong, existing neighborhoods, these population trends fit well within the City's profile. While the total population and number of households were largely unchanged, other positive changes occurred within the residents and their characteristics.



# PLANNING BACKGROUND & HISTORY



Oak Creek and Lake Townships. South Milwaukee originates from the Oak Creek township

Resting on the Lake Michigan shore, South Milwaukee has been a rich and vibrant community since its establishment as a city in 1897. With a history of small business ownership, manufacturing, quality schools, and thriving neighborhoods, the City is steeped in tradition that has carried forward into the present.

With dramatic economic and demographic shifts in recent decades, South Milwaukee now lies at the heart of a booming regional economic corridor along the Fresh Coast’s South Shore – that is the Great Lakes region. The city is included in a series of growing cities stretching from the Chicago to Milwaukee metropolitan regions. Located near key transportation hubs, the City is poised to take advantage of easy access to surrounding assets and communities by car, truck, freight rail, and aircraft.

Because of the City’s accomplishments and many amenities, it is now fully realizing and experiencing the benefits of its ideal location. With its affordable housing stock and respected school district, proximity to other metropolitan Milwaukee communities, the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and great natural amenities, the City is a magnet for families looking for their “community of choice.” Existing residents and Baby Boomers value the City because of its character, community identity, lively neighborhoods, and access to Grant Park and Oak Creek Parkway.

This comprehensive plan and the overall process provide an opportunity for the community to come together and craft a collective vision for the City’s future. As a holistic and extensive endeavor, it integrates citizens’ comments and feedback with relevant and existing public information and data. The document and the energy it inspires will provide a road map for continued growth and success for the City by appreciating the past, understanding the present, and preparing for the future.



Source: Images of America South Milwaukee

Bucyrus Machine Shop employees, c. 1900



Source: South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center

South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center



Source: Wisconsin Historical Society

The South Milwaukee Train Station



Source: JSOnline.com

South Milwaukee Rockets baseball team

# SOUTH MILWAUKEE HISTORY



## 1897 | City of South Milwaukee established

With over 1,500 residents, the Village of South Milwaukee received approval from then-Governor Edward Scofield to become a city.



## 1904-1907 | Bucryus shovels in Panama

To assist in the construction of the Panama Canal, about 77 Bucryus steam shovels were sent to the Isthmus of Panama.



## 1917 | Carnegie Library

The South Milwaukee Library Board originally approached the Carnegie Commission for funds to support a permanent building in 1915. The new building opened to the public in 1917.



## 1919 | Grant Park Golf Course

The golf course in Grant Park opened with playing on one hundred acres of land.



**1936 | WPA adds 7 bridges to Grant Park**

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) undertook significant renovations: enhancing the Lake Drive ravine and building the seven bridges that cross Eb's Creek.



**1938 | South Milwaukee Red Rockets**

Students at South Milwaukee High School decided to leave the Cardinals - the old mascot - in the wind to become the Red Rockets.



**1946 | South Milwaukee Association of Commerce**

Originally the South Milwaukee's Businessmen's Association - formed in 1934, the Association of Commerce was reorganized following World War II.



**1997 | South Milwaukee at 100**

A year's worth of festivities marked the Centennial Celebration of South Milwaukee's first 100 years as a city.



**2004 | South Milwaukee School District Renovations**

Following the approval of a \$42 million referendum in 2002, the South Milwaukee School District opened a new, state-of-the-art campus for grades six through twelve.



**2015 | South Milwaukee's Television Debut**

John McGivern, host of "Around the Corner" on Milwaukee Public Television, travelled to South Milwaukee and showcased the City.

# SOUTH MILWAUKEE BY THE NUMBERS

## AGE TRENDS

While the number of residents in each age band slightly fluctuated between 2000 and 2013, no major shifts occurred - with an exception in the Baby Boomer generation. With the minor decrease in the number of family households, the loss of residents between 0 and 19 years and 35 to 54 years was to be expected. While each of these age bands decreased by almost 10 percent, the loss of these residents compared to the total population was minor. A slight increase in the Millennial generation was noted with 280 additional residents (7.2 percent increase). When compared to the total population, this increase is slight; but, as other communities experience an increase in Millennials, it is important to note that South Milwaukee is experiencing this, as well. Of particular note, however, is the fairly large increase in the number of residents age 55 to 64 years. With a 64.7 percent increase of 1,077 residents in this age band, this is significant when compared to the total population. Similar to other communities (as noted with Millennials), the Baby Boomer generation is increasing in South Milwaukee. Looking ahead, it would be beneficial for the City to recognize the needs of these two generations and respond accordingly with the appropriate community amenities.

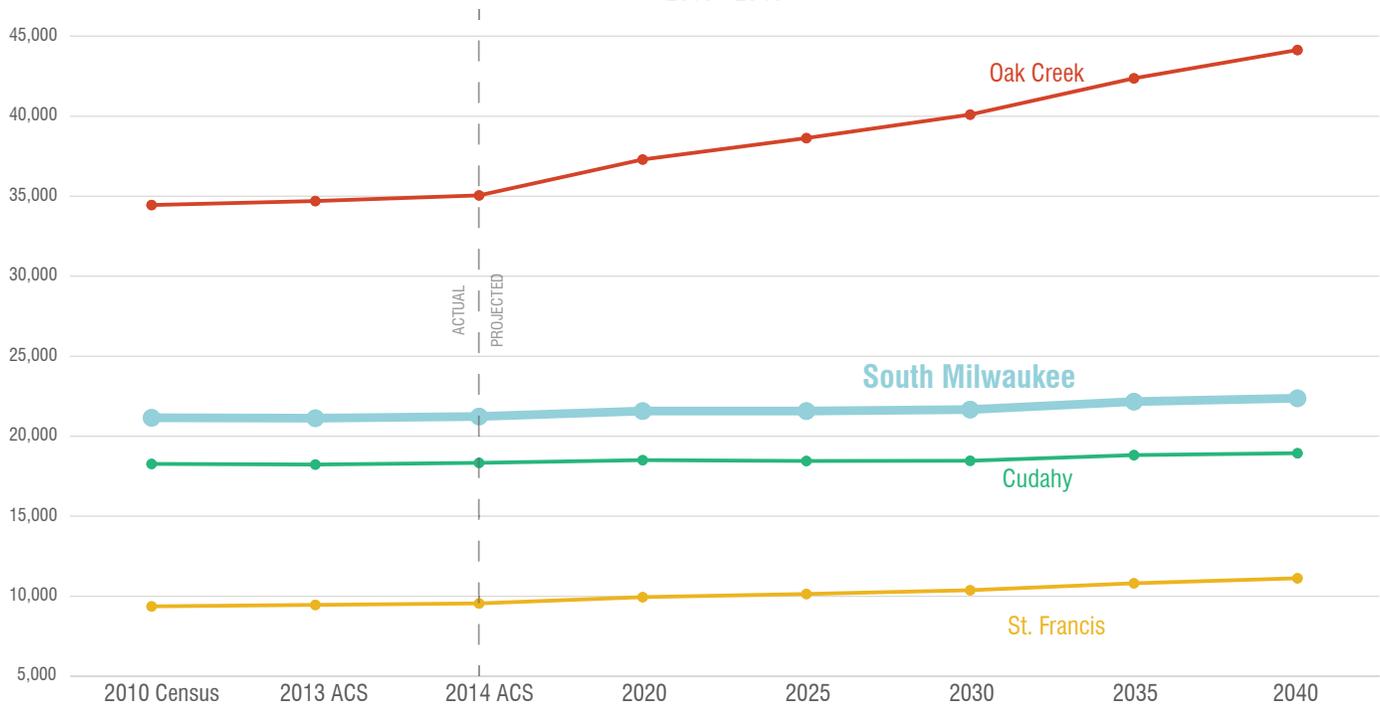
## ETHNIC COMPOSITION

South Milwaukee began to witness a diversification of residents between 2000 and 2013; in some instances, the populations of minority residents changed only slightly, whereas the Hispanic community experienced tremendous growth. The white, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities lost portions of their population. While the loss was not significant for the white community, as 93.7 percent of all South Milwaukeeans are white, the loss did hurt the smaller Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The African American and American Indian communities grew by 36 and 24 percent, respectively. The Hispanic community saw nearly 100 percent growth with the addition of 829 residents - from 852 in 2000 to 1,681 in 2013.

## EDUCATION

The City of South Milwaukee and the South Milwaukee School District share the same geographic extent. With six schools, the District provides children an opportunity to study from grades PK to 12. Schools include: Blakewood Elementary (PK-5), Lakeview Elementary (PK-5), Luther Elementary (PK-5), Rawson Elementary (PK-5), South

Population Trends in South Shore Communities  
2010 - 2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013 & 2014 ACS Five-Year Estimates, Wisconsin Department of Administration

## Age Distribution of Residents

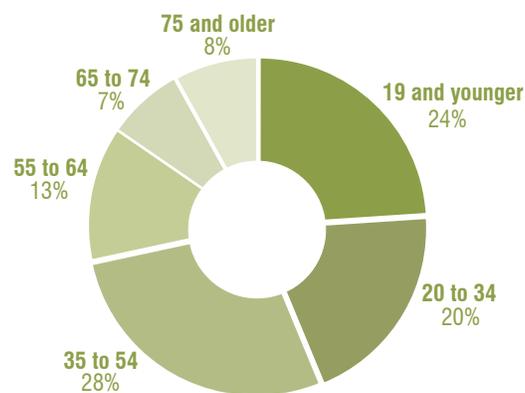
	2000		2013		Change: 2000 to 2013	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>0 to 19 years</b>	5,606	26.4%	5,072	23.97%	-534	-9.5%
<b>20 to 34 years</b>	3,910	18.4%	4,190	19.8%	280	7.2%
<b>35 to 54 years</b>	6,546	30.8%	5,897	27.9%	-649	-9.9%
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	1,665	7.8%	2,742	12.96%	1,077	64.7%
<b>65 to 74 years</b>	1,723	8.1%	1,556	7.35%	-167	-9.7%
<b>75 years and up</b>	1,806	8.5%	1,706	8.1%	-100	-5.5%
<b>Total</b>	21,256	X	21,163	X		

Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

Milwaukee Middle School (6-8), and South Milwaukee High School (9-12). In addition, South Milwaukee is home to parochial schools, including Divine Mercy Catholic School (K-8) and Zion Lutheran School (K-8); and, the Milwaukee Area Technical College's Oak Creek campus is located just to the west on College Avenue.

The City experienced notable and significant changes in the educational attainment of its residents between 2000 and 2013. The number of residents with only a high school diploma or less decreased by 8.7 percent. In stark contrast, by 2013, an additional 880 residents held an Associate's degree or higher, which accounts for a 26.9 percent increase since 2000. These educational shifts yielded additional benefits to City residents, as more Milwaukeeans began working in skilled-labor jobs and earning more money.

## Age Distribution (years)



Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

## Population by Race & Ethnicity

	South Milwaukee		Cudahy		Oak Creek		St. Francis		Milwaukee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>White</b>	19,840	93.7%	16,238	88.7%	31,165	90.1%	8,397	88.9%	593,691	62.5%
<b>Black or African American</b>	301	1.4%	466	2.5%	732	2.1%	303	3.2%	251,082	26.4%
<b>American Indian &amp; Alaska</b>	152	0.7%	200	1.1%	121	0.3%	165	1.7%	5,051	0.5%
<b>Asian</b>	129	0.6%	341	1.9%	1,481	4.3%	180	1.9%	33,244	3.5%
<b>Native Hawaiian &amp; Other Pacific</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	270	0.0%
<b>Latino</b>	1,681	7.9%	2,331	12.7%	2,928	8.5%	906	9.6%	128,643	13.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

## EMPLOYMENT

Increases in household incomes and greater educational attainment can be correlated to and drawn from shifting employment among South Milwaukee's residents. Between 2000 and 2013, the number of residents working low-skill jobs decreased, while the number of residents working high-skill jobs increased. Construction, manufacturing, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, utilities, arts, entertainment, and recreation, lost - in some instances - a significant number of residents employed in those industries. The number of residents working in wholesale trade, information, professional, scientific, management, administration, waste management services, educational services, healthcare and social assistance, and public administration increased. Two industries changed, however. The City saw an increase in the number of residents employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining, but lost a significant portion of residents employed in finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE). Employment in FIRE decreased following the 2008 Great Recession. Manufacturing in the region has declined overall and has been consolidated within the region. As a result, these employment shifts in South Milwaukee are not surprising.

## INCOME

As education has risen in South Milwaukee, so to has the household income of residents. Shifts across three, aggregated income brackets highlight changes in the community profile: households earning between 1) \$0 to \$24,999, 2) \$25,000 to \$74,999, and 3) \$75,000 to more than \$200,000 per year. The lower income brackets saw little change between 2000 and 2013 with the number of households remaining constant. The second income bracket, primarily representing middle class households, saw a 23.9 percent loss of 1,230 households. In contrast, the third income bracket, representing more affluent households, nearly doubled with a 98.7 percent increase of 1,155 households. Notably, the median household income in the City rose from \$44,197 to \$52,900, a 19.7 percent increase. These shifts in income and greater educational attainment among South Milwaukee's residents will be further reflected in the next section discussing employment by industry.

### Educational Attainment of Residents

	South Milwaukee		Cudahy		Oak Creek		St. Francis		Milwaukee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Population 25 years &amp; over</b>	14,796	100%	12,470	100%	23,775	100%	7,234	100%	610,181	100%
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	432	2.9%	416	3.3%	513	2.2%	254	3.50%	30,699	5.0%
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	1,163	7.9%	1,143	9.2%	1,092	4.6%	761	10.40%	55,601	9.1%
<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	5,463	36.9%	4,246	34.0%	7,293	30.7%	2,181	29.80%	177,948	29.2%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	3,593	24.3%	3,011	24.1%	5,358	22.5%	1,567	21.40%	130,234	21.3%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	1,471	9.9%	870	7.0%	2,423	10.2%	699	9.50%	44,066	7.2%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	1,934	13.1%	2,267	18.2%	4,923	20.7%	1,340	18.30%	111,141	18.2%
<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>	740	5.0%	517	4.1%	2,173	9.1%	522	7.10%	60,492	9.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

## OPPORTUNITIES

South Milwaukee’s growing diversity, vibrant neighborhoods, strong school district, and strengthening Downtown district all contribute to the City’s bright future. Leveraging these assets - in addition to Grant Park, proximity to Lake Michigan, and the Oak Creek Parkway, make the City an ideal community for current residents as well as an attractive home for potential families.

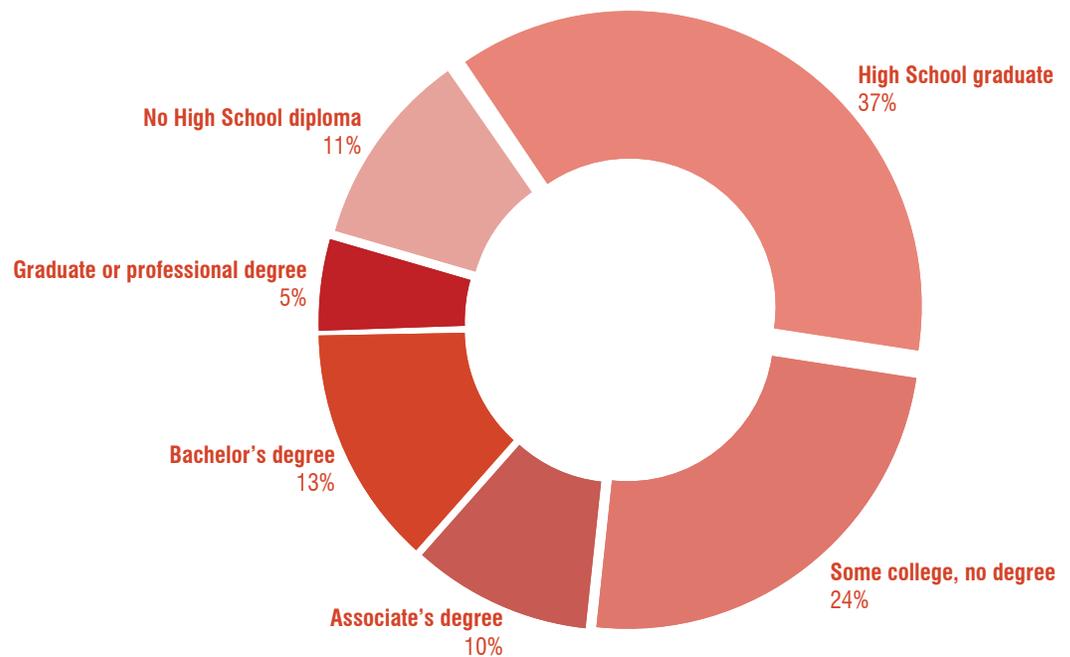
With an increasingly well-educated population, the City will likely continue to see household incomes grow and more residents shift towards high-skill jobs.

## Industry of Employment for Residents

	2013	
	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	67	0.7%
Construction	517	5.1%
Manufacturing	2178	21.4%
Wholesale trade	258	2.5%
Retail trade	913	9.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	797	7.8%
Information	242	2.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	618	6.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	792	7.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2164	21.3%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	852	8.4%
Other services, except public administration	413	4.1%
Public administration	372	3.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

## Educational Attainment



Source: American Community Survey 2013 Five-Year

# COMMUNITY INPUT

Community input is an integral component of the Comprehensive Update planning process to ensure that this plan is relevant and useful to all stakeholders working to improve conditions in South Milwaukee. This process has also been a strong opportunity to strengthen the level of commitment to the re/investment and pride in the city as a whole. The city has many highly engaged stakeholder groups that have provided insights for this Plan Update:

- » Plan Commission meetings
- » Downtown Advisory Committee meetings
- » Community Open Houses
- » Interviews
- » Staff workshops

The input from all stakeholders has been woven throughout this plan to incorporate and address all ideas and concerns in the community.

## PLAN COMMISSION & DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The City Plan Commission and the Downtown Advisory Committee have been highly involved in discussions centering on density, land use, zoning, transforming the downtown, and ways to support the leadership of these efforts to further the agenda and improve the decision-making processes and promote positive change in the city. During the Plan Update process, the Plan Commission and Downtown Advisory Committee focused the following meetings on

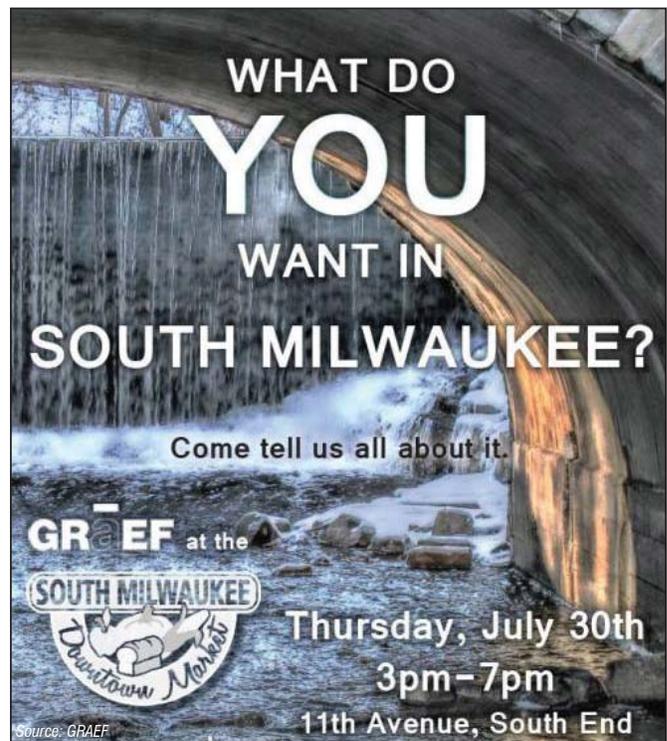
- » June 22
- » August 10
- » October 26
- » November 23

## INTERVIEWS

Interviews with City staff, key stakeholders, property owners and businesses have been conducted throughout the planning process for this Comprehensive Plan Update. The interviews with business owners are included in Chapter 3: Neighborhoods, Districts & Corridors.



Poster advertisement for “pop-up” downtown Open House



Flyer for South Milwaukee Downtown Market Open House



Poster advertisement for “pop-up” downtown Open House

## COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

Two Community Open Houses were hosted to gather input from South Milwaukee citizens. Given the civic participation in local events, open houses were conducted in tandem with the city’s highly successful Downtown Market and the Downtown Trick-or-Treat event. Feedback from the Open Houses is shared in each chapter and are woven into the Actions of this Plan.

### Downtown Market Open House

*July 30, 2015*

The ever-growing and highly popular Downtown Market takes place on Thursdays afternoons and evenings, spring to fall each year. Given its reputation in the community as a central community event, the first Open House was hosted on July 30th as a booth at the market to capture a wide variety of South Milwaukee’s citizens’ input. The Open House was publicly advertised to capture via the city’s social media accounts and connections. Input was gathered from approximately 55 residents and visitors.



Source: GRAEF

South Milwaukee’s Downtown Market Open House



Source: GRAEF

South Milwaukee’s Downtown Market Open House



Source: GRAEF

South Milwaukee’s downtown Halloween “pop-up” Open House



Source: GRAEF

Community discussion at South Milwaukee’s downtown Halloween “pop-up” Open House

### Downtown Trick-or-Treat Open House

*October 24, 2015*

As part of the City’s and the Downtown Advisory Committee’s push to transform the downtown, an opportunity to gather input on the city and its downtown in and environment celebrating the community’s unique assets was a priority. The Downtown’s Halloween celebration was identified as a strong opportunity to hear from families and youth to ensure that future actions build on family-friendly priorities for the community. A pop-up Open House was set up in a vacant storefront at 924 Milwaukee Avenue to contribute to the downtown transformation and present some new ideas about short- and long- term creative uses and interventions in the downtown. Input was gathered from approximately 60 residents and visitors.



# NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS

## A GUIDE TO “NDC”

The purpose of this Chapter is to guide land uses in the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors in South Milwaukee. The assessment provided in this Chapter is based on the neighborhood, district, and corridor framework devised by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU).

The CNU strives to encourage walkable, compact communities that are rich with amenities and celebrate the history of the built environment and the preservation of natural features. This includes introducing urbanism to the suburbs, both in building and rebuilding, while respecting the fabric of communities built before World War II.

As opposed to the single-use zoning of most contemporary city plans, the New Urbanism proposes a structure of three fundamental elements – neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. Viewing a community as the integration of mixed-use places rather than isolated land uses provides a planning structure that respects human scale and community while creating places for larger institutions and infrastructure.

The principles provided by CNU’s Charter guide public policy, development practice, urban planning, and design, and are used as the guiding principles for the areas identified in South Milwaukee.

1. The neighborhood, the district, and the corridor are the essential elements of development and redevelopment in the metropolis. They form identifiable areas that encourage citizens to take responsibility for their maintenance and evolution.
2. Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use. Districts generally emphasize a special single use, and should follow the principles of neighborhood design when possible. Corridors are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts; they range from boulevards and rail lines to rivers and parkways.
3. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.
4. Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.
5. Transit corridors, when properly planned and coordinated, can help organize metropolitan structure and revitalize urban centers. In contrast, highway corridors should not displace investment from existing centers.
6. Appropriate building densities and land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops, permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.
7. Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods and districts, not isolated in remote, single-use complexes. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
8. The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change.
9. A range of parks, from tot-lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within neighborhoods. Conservation areas and open lands should be used to define and connect different neighborhoods and districts.



- NEIGHBORHOODS
- DISTRICTS
- CORRIDORS

- SOUTH CHICAGO AVENUE OVERLAY
- GRANT PARK, OAK CREEK & LAKESHORE OVERLAY



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

South Milwaukee's neighborhoods, districts and corridors fit these principles, with many unique identities and regional metropolitan attractions.

Future land use for South Milwaukee is based on two elements in this chapter:

- » the Neighborhoods, Districts & Corridors map ("Future Land Use map"), and
- » the Future Land Use tables.

Determining the appropriate future land use for a parcel or a set of sites comes from these two items.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

South Milwaukee neighborhoods were identified during the comprehensive planning process based on their distinct identities, housing characteristics, and geographic features.

Neighborhoods in South Milwaukee:

- » Historic Grant Park
- » South Towne
- » Parkway Heights
- » M District
- » Drexel Highlands
- » Blakewood
- » Lakeview
- » Lakeshore
- » Historic Lakeview

## DISTRICTS

Districts were selected during the comprehensive planning process as areas where the City, property owners, and investors should concentrate business activity and expansion over the next twenty years.

Districts in South Milwaukee:

- » Downtown

## CORRIDORS

Corridors identify areas of connectivity between the neighborhoods and districts that can accommodate a variety of land uses, including natural, recreational and cultural uses.

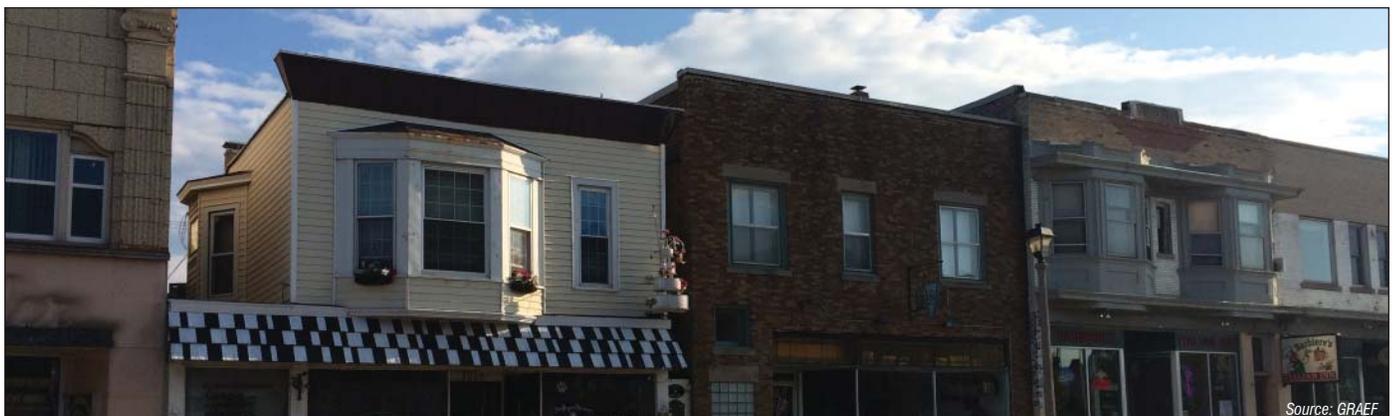
Corridors in South Milwaukee:

- » North Chicago Avenue
- » South Chicago Avenue
- » Grant Park Corridor
- » Oak Creek Parkway Corridor

## OVERLAYS

There are two overlay areas in South Milwaukee. These two overlays have been created to cater to the special circumstances of the city's development pattern and natural features. These two overlays include:

- » Grant Park, Oak Creek and Lakeshore Overlay
- » South Chicago Avenue South Overlay



# NEIGHBORHOODS

South Milwaukee's residential neighborhoods comprise one of its strongest assets. These neighborhoods function as social and economic subareas that establish a solid foundation for families and individuals. While the percentage of owner occupancy may not seem very high (compared to post World War Two commuter suburbs), there still remains a high degree of social cohesion within each neighborhood.

More importantly, during the public meetings, in which local neighbors were engaged in casual conversation, it became clear that the long-term continuity of family generations in South Milwaukee seemed exceptionally high. Many public participants reported that they grew up in South Milwaukee, moved back, and still had many family ties to parents, siblings, and friends and others living within the community. This type of social cohesion is not typical of many urban neighborhoods and inner ring metropolitan communities.

The strength of the neighborhoods was also identified by participants as attributable to the strong school system and the depth and breadth of environmental amenities provided through Grant Park, the Oak Creek Parkway, and the lakeshore. There is also a sense of separation of South Milwaukee from other neighborhoods and communities in the region. While some saw this as a form of "isolation," others viewed this separation as a unique advantage making the neighborhoods and community distinct.

While the neighborhoods offer a collective identity, there are some slight differences among the neighborhoods that are equally important and are noted in the comments below. The map accompanying this narrative shows neighborhoods and boundaries as perceived by the consultant team during this planning process. Such boundaries typically change over time. These neighborhood distinctions were based on perceivable housing characteristics, geographic barriers between areas, and comments from residents and other distinguishing features.

# HISTORIC GRANT PARK NEIGHBORHOOD



Source: Google Earth

Closest to Grant Park, the city was born in this neighborhood and contains higher value residential real estate due to this proximity and its historic character. Older homes populate the western part of the neighborhood on smaller lots with closer proximity to the commercial corridor. While the difference in assessed values is clear within different parts of this neighborhood, it still retains an overall, strong identity. The former industrial and commercial uses also provide opportunities for higher value reinvestments. The Ebbs Creek site is detailed for potential redevelopment in Chapter 5.”



Source: Zillow.com



Source: Zillow.com



Source: Zillow.com

# SOUTH TOWNE NEIGHBORHOOD



“The South Towne neighborhood is nestled between the Oak Creek Parkway, the railroad, and College Avenue, giving it a central location and close proximity to major community assets. The neighborhood features commercial and residential uses, including single-family homes, condominiums and apartment dwellings. It is home to South Towne Village Apartments, the city’s largest residential rental complex.”



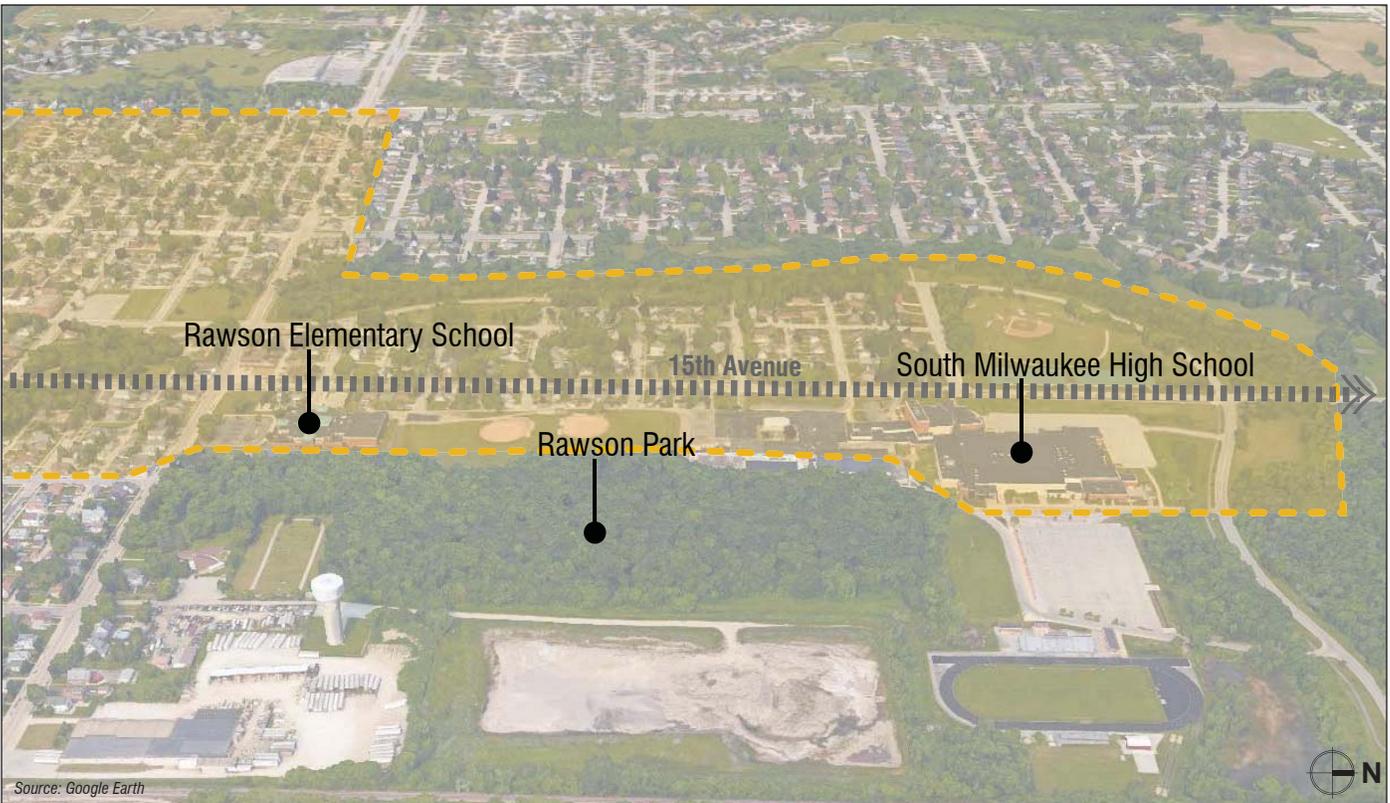
# PARKWAY HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

“Parkway Heights, in the northwest corner of the City, represents slightly newer block patterns in the form of curvilinear streets rather than the traditional grid system. Proximity to parks, the High School, and the Oak Creek Parkway help make this area a stable and pleasant residential area.”



# M DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD

“The “M District” neighborhood benefits from both the Oak Creek Parkway and being within walking distance to the downtown. The narrower lots add density and create a pleasant architectural character for this traditional neighborhood.”



# DREXEL HIGHLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD

“The Drexel Highlands are situated along the Oak Creek Parkway, within walking distance of the South Chicago Avenue Corridor and its commercial shopping district. The neighborhood features a variety of housing types and strong community connectivity.”



# BLAKEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

“Blakewood contains the largest collection of newer homes, closer in character to conventional suburbs. Yet the area still retains much of the compact feeling of an active, walkable urban neighborhood and retains a perception of higher value and desirability.”



# LAKEVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD

“This neighborhood is located next to the Lakeshore neighborhood, and is in close proximity to many public spaces and amenities, including the South Milwaukee Little League complex. This area features mid-century homes, a large number of multi-family rental units, and a tight-knit, walkable community fabric.”



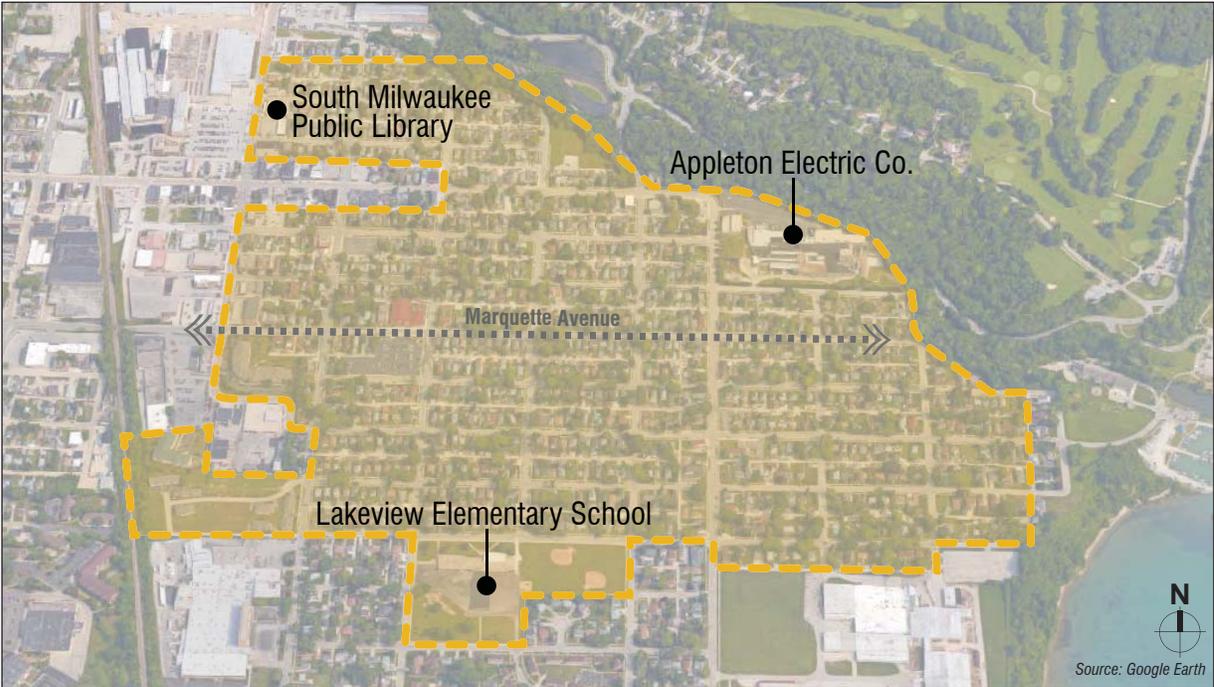
# LAKESHORE NEIGHBORHOOD

“The Lakeshore Neighborhood contains a mix of residential, industrial, and institutional uses with the city’s only lakefront housing. The sole neighborhood with direct adjacency and access to Lake Michigan, residents enjoy the benefits of a quality and diverse neighborhood, the proximity to natural beauty, and higher property values. The neighborhood is also home to the new Lakeshore Park.”



# HISTORIC LAKEVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD

“The Historic Lakeview Neighborhood has a pleasant, traditional visual character. The proximity of these homes to Grant Park, the Oak Creek Parkway, Mill Pond, and Downtown provide opportunities for a greater diversity of experiences within walking distance.”

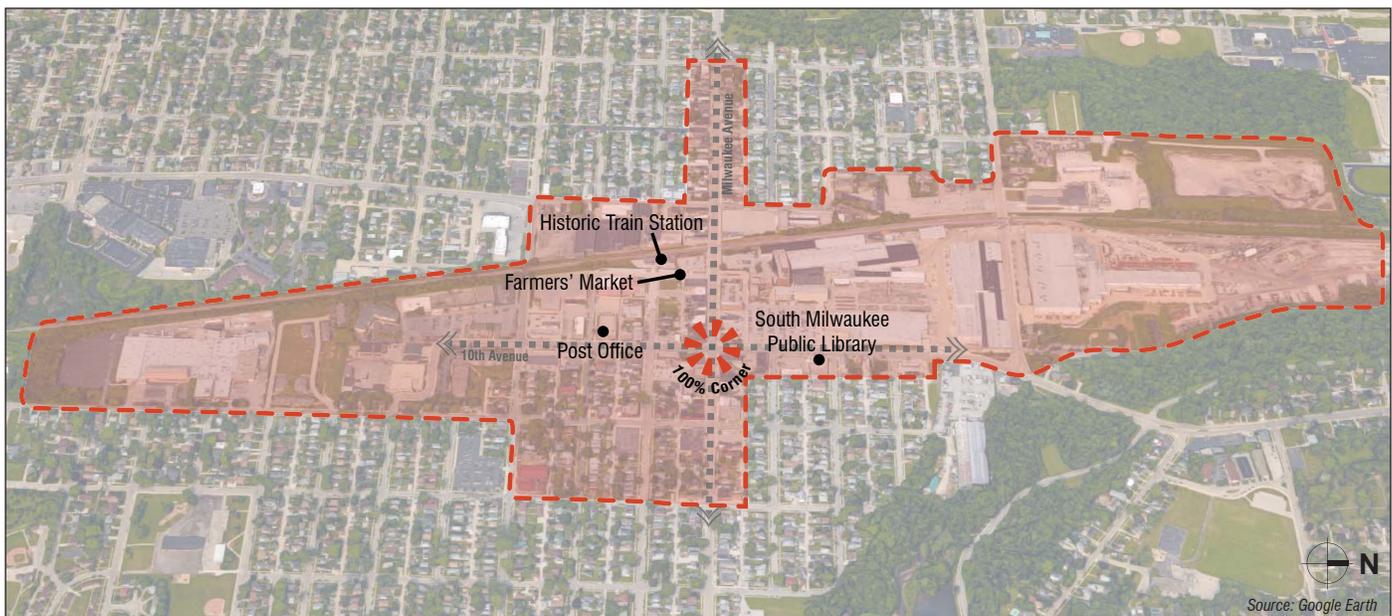


# DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

As part of this discussion, it became clear that the Downtown has always been the true center of the City. This area contains the historic train station and major local business community. It is still the recognized hub of the community – both socially and economically. Urban trends continue to place higher values on this type of walkable, compact urban experience. The intersection of 10th and Milwaukee is the “100%” corner. The streets, moving outward in all four directions, help insure greater adjacency and walkability from the Downtown to local housing. The presence of major industrial buildings represents a challenge as well as an enormous opportunity to improve the Downtown in the short term and long term.



Source: GRAEF



Source: Google Earth

# NORTH/SOUTH CHICAGO AVENUE CORRIDORS

## CORRIDORS

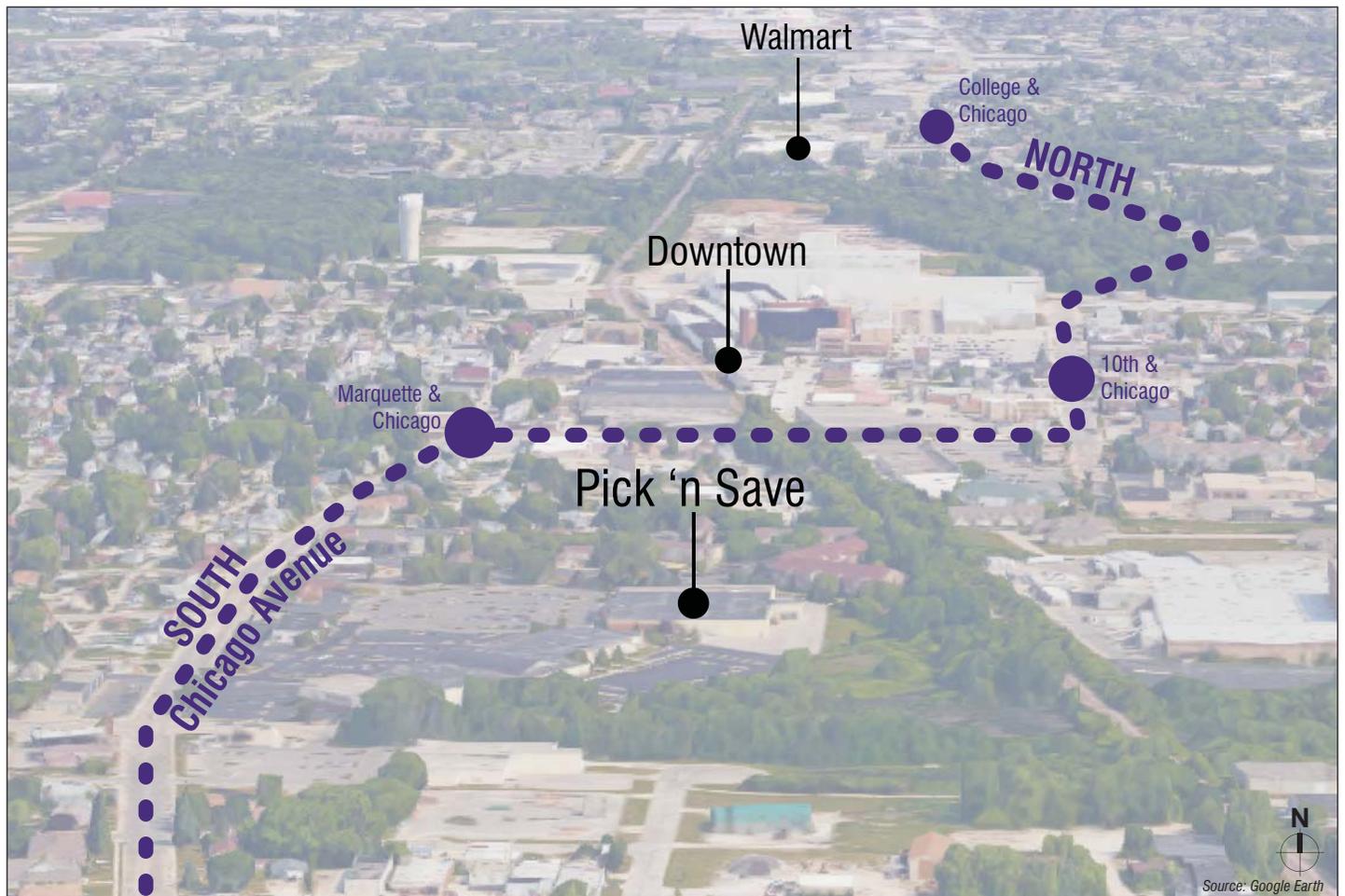
Corridors identify areas of connectivity between the neighborhoods and districts that can accommodate a variety of land uses, including natural, recreational and cultural uses.

## CHICAGO AVENUE

In many communities, industrial districts follow older rail lines. While rail-based industry has declined, the historical footprint of these uses remains and creates South Milwaukee's commercial corridors. These two corridors have both active and underutilized industrial uses. In many cases, these industrial sites border high traffic arterials which has made them attractive to conventional retail users, both outlots and large-scale retailers. This trend

will continue and creates many anomalies in deciding how future use should be addressed. On the one hand, new industrial uses, bringing jobs, are quite desirable. This is due, in part, to the nature of many newer industrial users that do not create the noxious pollutants typical of industrial areas in prior decades. Moreover, newer industries are often compatible with residential areas (often with fewer types of nuisances than high-activity retail stores).

Chicago Avenue North borders the high quality residential neighborhoods and a significant portion of the Oak Creek Parkway. Highway 32, as well as the Parkway, suggests that retail and residential uses could be developed. While Chicago Avenue South does not have the environmental advantage of the Oak Creek Parkway, it does have significant traffic counts and a walkable environment that would support retail.



# GRANT PARK & OAK CREEK CORRIDORS

## GRANT PARK & OAK CREEK PARKWAY CORRIDORS

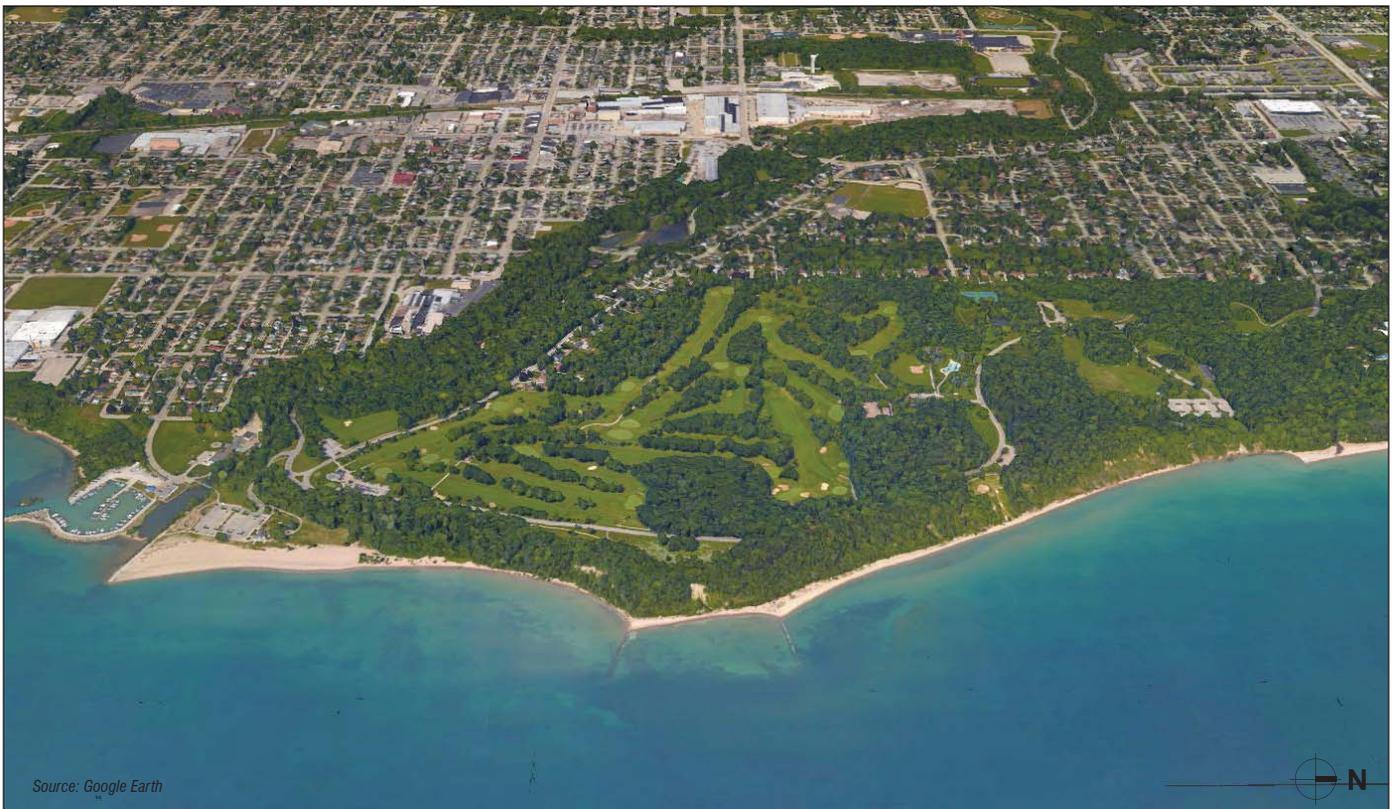
These environmental, social, and recreational amenities are two of the strongest features in the region. Connections to the lakefront, as well as the enormous perimeter bordering residential areas, make these corridors an exceptional resource.

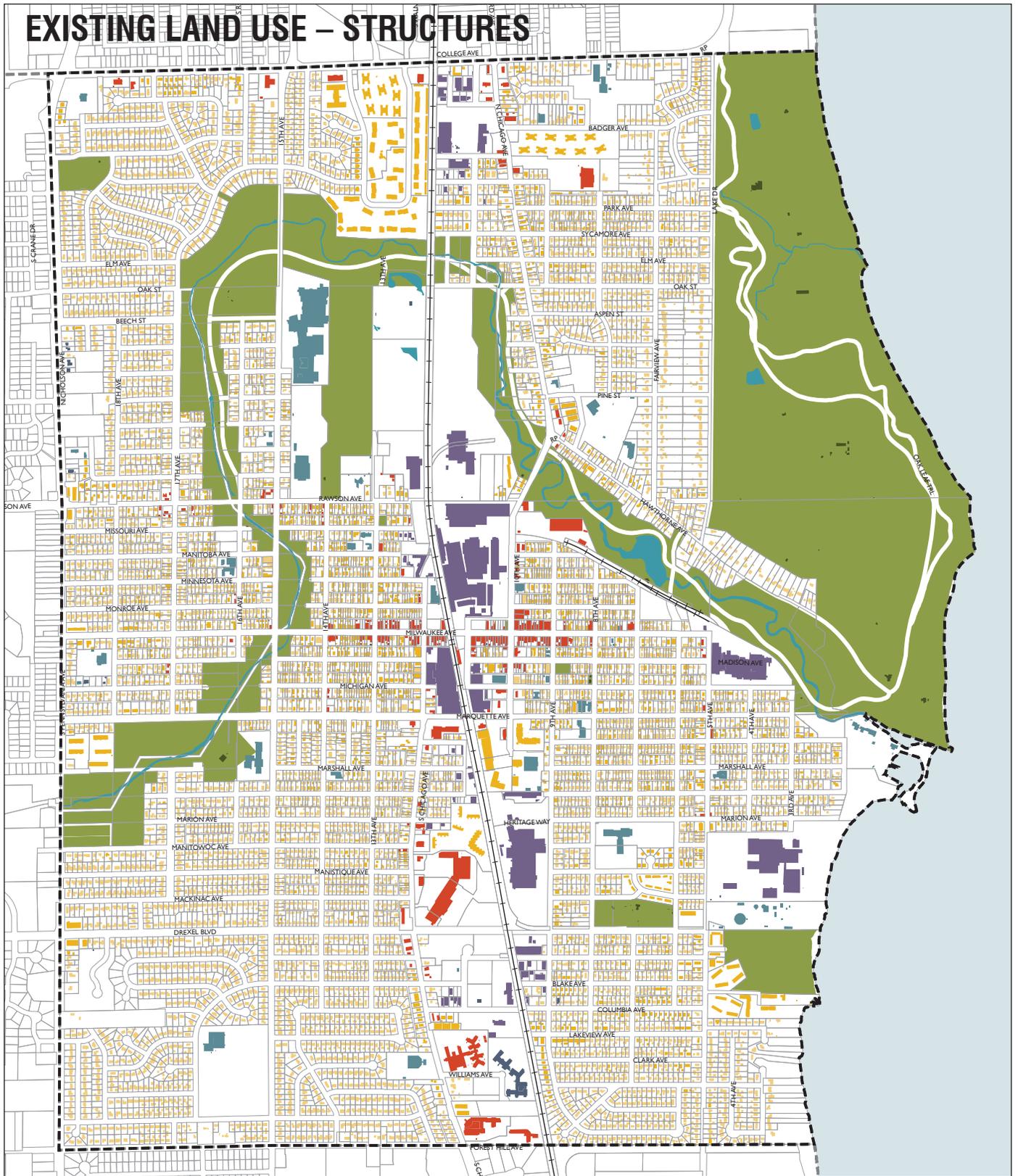
In the map, many of the boundaries of the corridors are shown as the streets surrounding the Parkway. In practice however, the homes and uses facing the corridor are clearly part of the social and economic character of these corridors.

More than 25% of South Milwaukee is parks and green space, and 100% of the residents of South Milwaukee are in easy walking distance of these amenities. More than a “tree city,” it is a “Parkway” city.



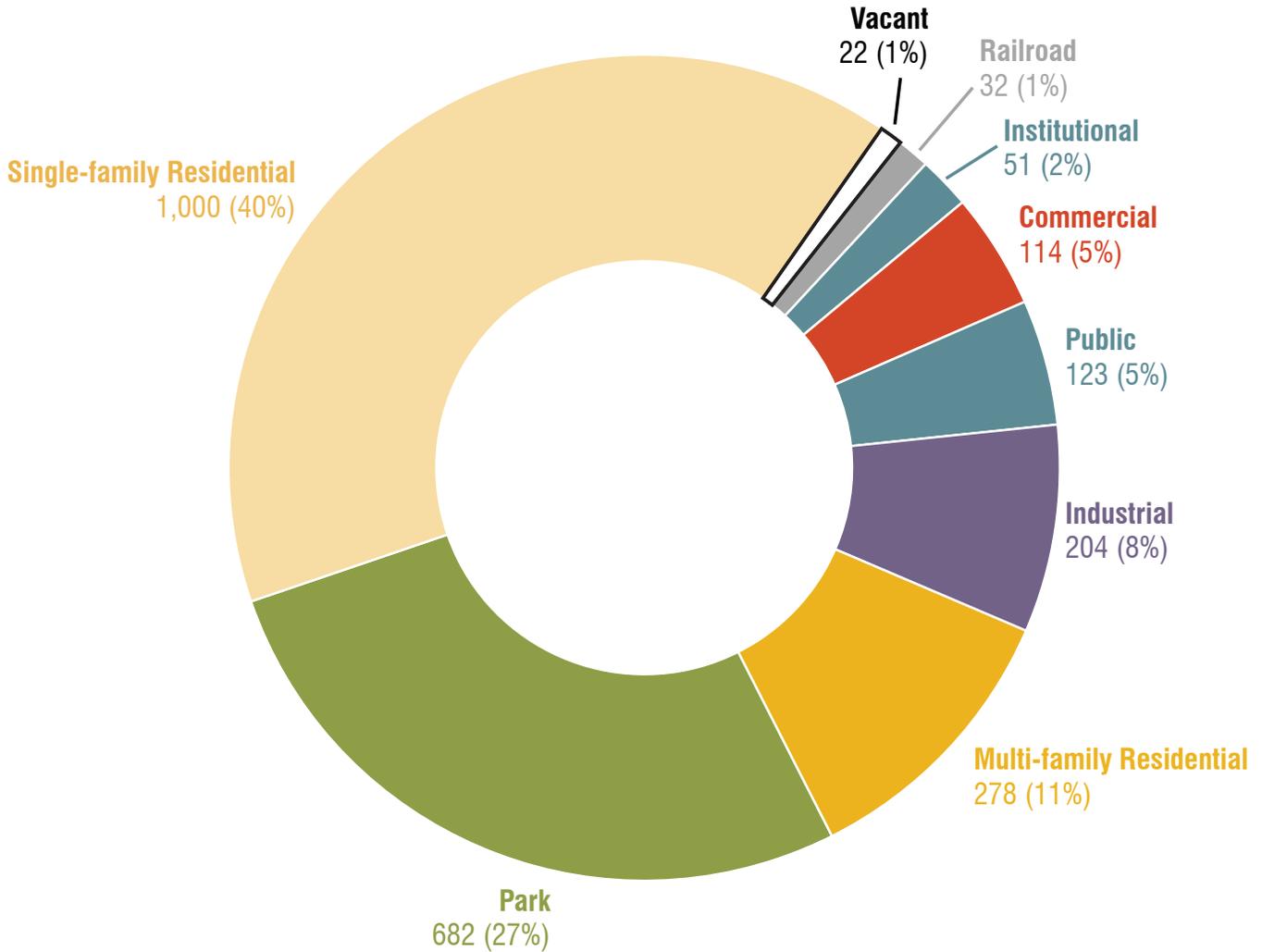
“South Milwaukee is a ‘Parkway’ city.”





Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

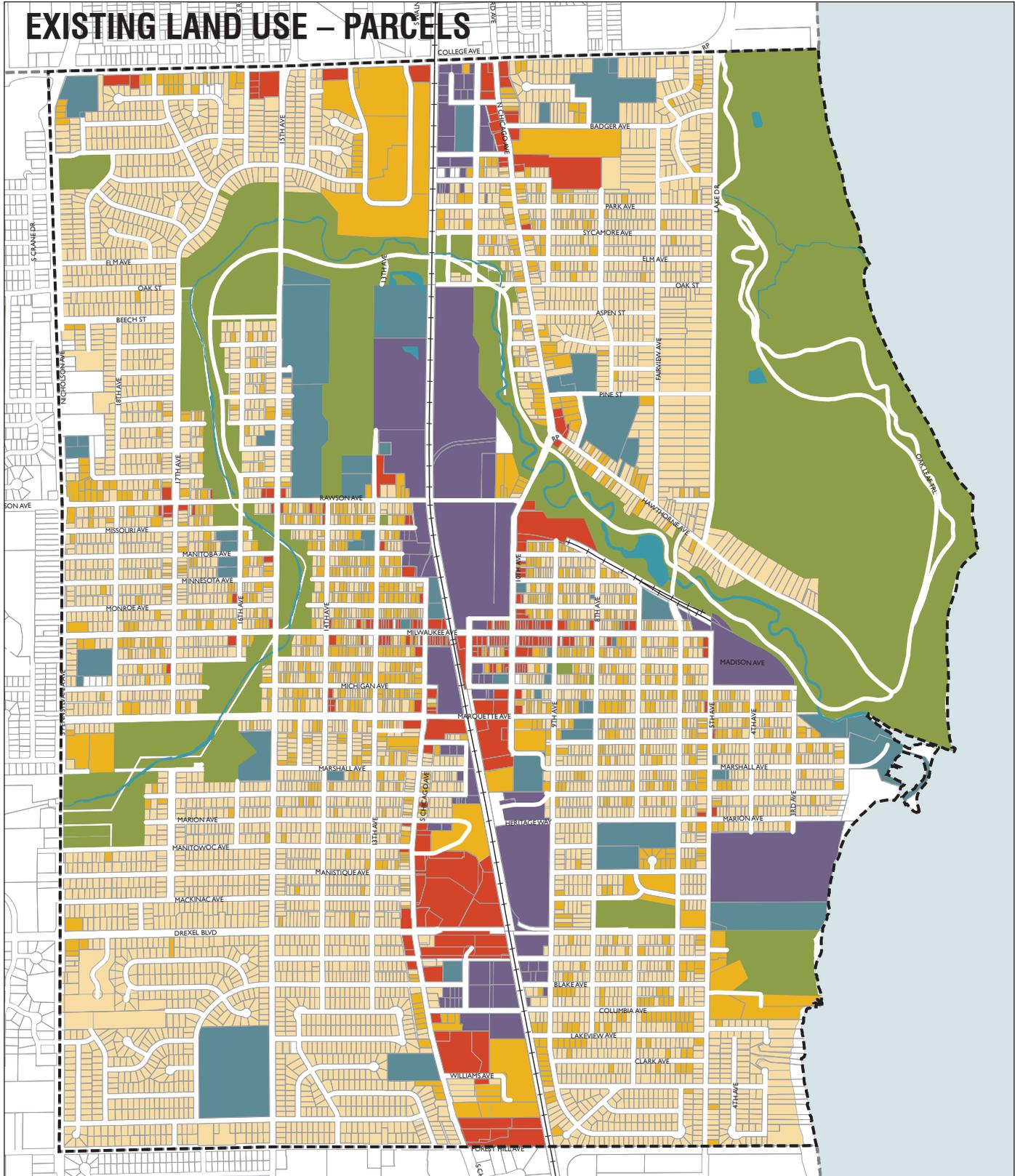
### Current Land Use Density (acres)



### Current Land Use Density

Land Use	Acreage
Vacant	22.48
Railroad	31.96
Institutional	51.17
Commercial	113.53
Public	123.08
Industrial	203.64
Multi-family Residential	277.64
Park	681.59
Single-family Residential	999.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,505.20</b>

Source: City of South Milwaukee, 2015



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

During the 2015-2016 planning process, the City and Plan Commission engaged in a process to update the Land Use Plan.

The updated Land Use Plan has been developed as a “place based” approach to land use planning. It represents a customized tool that helps describe the desired future character of the various “places” in and around the South Milwaukee. Unlike a typical land use planning approach, the updated plan does not assign a single acceptable future land use designation to a parcel. Rather it gives a range of possible uses and/or activities and design criteria that represent possible acceptable uses for a parcel.

This updated Land Use Plan gives the City staff, Plan Commission and City Council an adaptable and flexible framework to help discuss, evaluate and respond to development proposals in the city. The Land Use Plan on the following pages includes:

## THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

The Land Use Plan Map (page 45, also seen on page 26) illustrates the City as a series of places. Each place has a unique natural, cultural and economic character and special identity within South Milwaukee.

Each of the Neighborhoods, Districts, Corridors, and Overlay Areas is defined with solid “boundary” lines. These areas were formed after feedback from the community, Plan Commissioners, and City staff. These guideline “boundaries” may shift over time to accommodate an updated view of the Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors in the city.

Most importantly, the Neighborhoods, Districts and Corridors are not representative of a singular use, but illustrate an area with a mix of compatible existing and future uses. These are detailed in the Future Land Use Plan Tables on the following pages.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN TABLE

The Future Land Use Plan Table (pages 48-53) organize important land use considerations:

### Category, Place Type, & Names

These columns identify each Neighborhood, District, or Corridor, the type of place it is, and the name of the place. Each area of South Milwaukee is categorized.

### Preferred General Character Description

This column gives a description of the desired overall character of the place. It is intended to give a brief snapshot of the City’s intentions for the general mix and character of the future land uses in the area.



## Preferred Future Land Uses

These columns identify the range of desirable uses and activities for the various places within the Village planning area. While not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of all possible land uses, the listed uses and activities represent the vast majority of likely and desirable uses within South Milwaukee. Other possible uses not represented in a place or on the table will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may require a land use amendment to fully comply with this Land Use Plan.

The generalized types of uses and activities include:

- » **Existing Uses**
- » **Residential: Single Family**
- » **Residential: Two & Three Family**
- » **Mixed-Use: Commercial / Residential**
- » **Mixed-Use: Commercial / Industrial**
- » **Commercial**
- » **Institutional: Governmental**
- » **Institutional: Educational / Cultural**
- » **Open Space & Recreational**
- » **Industrial**

Each of these uses and activities is “rated” on its degree of desirability for each place within the Village planning area. Each general use is given a designation to reflect that rating. The designations are defined as follows:

- » **Desirable (D)** - These uses should be encouraged and support the desired character of the area.
- » **Allowable (A)** - These uses are appropriate for the area, but may require additional consideration to fit the vision.
- » **Undesirable (U)** - In general, these uses should not be encouraged, but may still be acceptable for the area under special circumstances.

A designation of **Desirable** or **Allowable** for the overall place does not imply that the use or activity will automatically be approved or judged suitable for every parcel within that place. Conversely, an **Undesirable** rating does not automatically exclude the use or activity from every parcel within that general place. Rather the designation of a use as **Desirable**, **Allowable**, or **Undesirable** within a particular place is intended as a guide to inform the discussion about the general suitability of a proposed use and its appropriateness in supporting the overall future vision for the area and its compatibility with existing and planned uses in and around the neighborhood or district.

Furthermore, the designation of **Desirable** or **Allowable** does not imply an entitlement to that future land use on any particular parcel of land within the city. The appropriateness of any specific future land use on any particular parcel will be determined on a case-by-case basis and is subject to further detailed review, evaluation and approval by the City of South Milwaukee as part of any and all applicable City of South Milwaukee ordinances and processes.

It is important to note that the Future Land Use Plan Table identifies possible future uses, but it does not propose the discontinuation of existing uses. There are a wide variety of existing uses throughout the city and these uses, as they currently exist, should not be discouraged. However, as uses become obsolete or change and future uses are proposed for the area, the Future Land Use Plan Table should be utilized to guide the discussions and make evaluations of the appropriateness of proposed uses. As the land planning process evolves, the possible future uses/activities and their ratings within a particular place may be amended, added, or removed.

## Density

This column provides recommended minimum densities within a particular place. The inclusion of a minimum density is intended to remind landowners, City officials and developers about the overall goal of maintaining the efficient use of land and resources. Planning for a slightly higher denser development pattern within the City makes use of the existing infrastructure that can accommodate further growth in South Milwaukee. The suggested range of densities is intended to reflect Reasonable variations from the stated densities may be considered at the time developments are proposed and should be evaluated relative to the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations of the approved Comprehensive & Downtown Plan Update.

## Preferred Community Design

This column gives guidance regarding the City's preferred pattern of residential or mixed-use development in a particular place within the Village planning area. The three general community design types include the following:

- » **Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND):** A compact mixed-use neighborhood where residential, commercial and civic buildings are generally within close proximity to each other. TNDs may occur in infill settings or on the edges of older well established areas, but often involve all-new construction on previously undeveloped land. This type of development involves traditional town planning principles. TND projects include a range of housing types, a network of well-connected streets (arterial, collector and local) and sidewalks, meaningful and useful public spaces, and where economically feasible have amenities such as stores, schools, and places of worship within walking distance of residences. TND projects generally have a variety of residential lot sizes ranging from smaller and narrower "village type" lots to larger and wider "estate type" lots. This type of development is similar in character to most of the neighborhoods and districts in South Milwaukee.
- » **Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD):** A residential housing development in a rural or semi-rural area that is characterized by compact lots, clustered home sites and shared common open space, and where the natural features of land are preserved, enhanced and made accessible to the greatest extent possible. In this type of development dwellings are located in a manner that reduces the area of land cleared, graded, and converted from agricultural, woodland, or wildlife habitat uses to building sites, driveways, and yard space. In such developments, lot sizes, dimensions, and setbacks may be reduced from those typically required for conventional suburban type developments. Often the total allowable number of dwellings is increased as a bonus for preserving or creating meaningful and significant open space or environmental features. The common open space often makes up over 30% of the total parcel area. Often the common open space is held in joint ownership by a homeowner's association or other conservation related organization and is maintained and preserved according to a professionally prepared open space management plan.
- » **Suburban Subdivision Design (SSD):** A residential housing development that subdivides an entire parcel of land into private lots and which does not contain significant common open space parcels or features. Generally these types of developments contain no more than 10% open space for such uses as stormwater control or possibly small park spaces. Other significant environmental features are often included within private development lots as amenities for the individual lot owners. Typical suburban subdivisions usually contain a network of streets that often have only "collector" level connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Designs often utilize landscaped cul-de-sacs to create a sense of privacy and value for individual lot owners. Landscaped streets, pathways sidewalks and parks are included in most well designed suburban subdivisions.

# FUTURE LAND USE: DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS

Places			Preferred General Character of Neighborhood, District or Corridor
Neighborhood / District / Corridor	Place Type	Place Name	Description
District	City Center	Downtown District	Maintain and encourage a mixture of uses and activities to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown. Uses should include higher-density, mixed-use commercial, residential, and institutional buildings. The district should include high quality pedestrian-oriented public space and amenities.
Corridor	Mixed-Use Corridor	North Chicago Avenue Corridor	Maintain and encourage mixed-use commercial and residential, as well as a potential increase in industrial. This high traffic corridor is attractive to retail uses, outlets, industrial, and large-scale retail. It also offers high quality residential neighborhoods and proximity to Oak Creek Parkway and Grant Park.
Corridor	Mixed-Use Corridor	South Chicago Avenue Corridor	This corridor has experienced steady growth and continues to support mixed-use commercial, residential, and industrial. It has some of the highest traffic counts in the city, which would strongly support retail.*
Corridor Overlay	Mixed-Use Corridor	South Chicago Avenue Overlay*	This overlay area allows for commercial uses within the residential fabric of this otherwise commercial district.
Corridor	Environmental Preserve & Recreation	Grant Park Corridor	The Grant Park Corridor features some of the most beautiful areas of the city, including Grant Park, the lakefront, pedestrian-friendly trails, and a golf course. Maintaining the park space is important to this area, as well as supporting existing residential. This corridor could also support educational/cultural institutions.**
Corridor Overlay	Environmental Preserve & Recreation	Oak Creek Parkway Corridor	This corridor extends throughout much of the city and consists primarily of park and open space. Maintaining the green space in this corridor is the top priority. It offers pedestrian-friendly parks and trails, as well as attractive water views.**
Overlay	Environmental Preserve & Recreation	Grant Park, Oak Creek & Lakeshore Overlay**	This overlay area includes all large parcels along the prominent natural features in South Milwaukee to ensure that future changes and proposed re/developments are sensitive to the immediate context of these renowned amenities. All proposed re/developments should maximize the social, economic and environmental value of these features.

Preferred Future Land Uses											Density	Preferred Community Design		
Existing Uses	Residential: Single Family	Residential: Two & Three Family	Residential: Multi-family / Senior	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Residential	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Industrial	Commercial	Institutional: Governmental	Institutional: Educational / Cultural	Open Space & Recreational	Industrial			Traditional Neighborhood	Conservation Subdivision
A	A	A	A	D	D	D	A	A	A	u	15 dwelling units (DU) / acre minimum	A	u	u
A	A	A	A	A	D	D	u	A	u	D	15 DU / acre minimum	A	u	u
A	A	A	A	A	D	D	u	A	u	D	15 DU / acre minimum	A	u	u
A	A	A	D	D	u	D	u	A	u	u	15 DU / acre minimum	A	u	u
A	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	A	D	u	Not applicable	u	u	u
A	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	D	u	Not applicable	u	u	u
A	A	A	A	A	u	u	u	A	A	u	15 DU / acre minimum	A	A	u

**D = Desirable** – These uses should be encouraged and support the desired character of the area.

**A = Allowable** – These uses are appropriate for the area, but may require additional consideration to fit the vision.

**u = Undesirable** – Generally, these uses should not be encouraged, but may still be acceptable under special circumstances.

# FUTURE LAND USE: NEIGHBORHOODS

Places			Preferred General Character of Neighborhood or District
Neighborhood / District / Corridor	Place Type	Place Name	Description
Neighborhood	Residential Community	Parkway Heights Neighborhood	Parkway Heights is primarily residential with some commercial on College Avenue. The proximity to the parks, high school, and Oak Creek Parkway make this a stable and quality residential area. Residential and educational uses are preferred for this neighborhood.
Neighborhood	Residential Community	South Towne Neighborhood	South Towne consists mainly of single- and multi-family residential uses. Some commercial exists on the north end of the neighborhood along College Avenue. Commercial and mixed uses are ideal along College with residential properties being located within the neighborhood's interior.
Neighborhood	Residential Community	"M" District Neighborhood	The "M" District contains primarily single-family residences that benefit from proximity to the Oak Creek Parkway and Downtown. This area is higher in density creating pleasant architectural character as a traditional neighborhood.
Neighborhood	Residential Community	Drexel Highlands Neighborhood	Drexel Highlands contains primarily single-family residences that offer access to the Oak Creek Parkway. It is a short walking distance from Downtown and the South Chicago Avenue Corridor. The quiet neighborhood is ideal for people looking for unique single-family homes.
Neighborhood	Residential Lake Community & Recreation	Blakewood Neighborhood	Blakewood contains the largest collection of newer homes, closer in character to conventional suburbs. Yet this area still retains the feeling of an active, walkable urban neighborhood. It is one of the few neighborhoods not directly adjacent to the Oak Creek Parkway; however, it still retains a perception of higher value and desirability.

Preferred Future Land Uses & Activities											Density	Preferred Community Design		
Existing Uses	Residential: Single Family	Residential: Two & Three Family	Residential: Multi-family / Senior	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Residential	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Industrial	Commercial	Institutional: Governmental	Institutional: Educational / Cultural	Open Space & Recreational	Industrial			Traditional Neighborhood	Conservation Subdivision
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	A	u	u	6-8 dwelling units (DU) / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	D	D	A	A	A	u	u	u	u	15 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	A	A	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	A	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u

**D = Desirable** – These uses should be encouraged and support the desired character of the area.

**A = Allowable** – These uses are appropriate for the area, but may require additional consideration to fit the vision.

**u = Undesirable** – Generally, these uses should not be encouraged, but may still be acceptable under special circumstances.

# FUTURE LAND USE: NEIGHBORHOODS

Places			Preferred General Character of Neighborhood or District
Neighborhood / District / Corridor	Place Type	Place Name	Description
Neighborhood	Residential Lake Community & Recreation	Historic Grant Park Neighborhood	This neighborhood is located closest to Grant Park and contains higher residential value due to its proximity to the Park and lake. It contains some of the city's oldest and most historic homes, which reinforce its strong identity.
Neighborhood	Residential Lake Community & Recreation	Historic Lakeview Neighborhood	The Historic Lakeview Neighborhood is mainly made up of pleasant and traditional single-family homes and duplexes. The neighborhood offers proximity to both Grant Park and the lakefront. It is also within walking distance of Downtown, which provides opportunities for a greater diversity of experiences.
Neighborhood	Residential Community	Lakeview Neighborhood	The Lakeview Neighborhood consists of single-family residences and rentals, including Parkcrest Housing. The proximity to the South Chicago Avenue Corridor provides numerous amenities to residents in the neighborhood.
Neighborhood	Residential Lake Community & Recreation	Lakeshore Neighborhood	The Lakeshore Neighborhood is known for its stunning lake views and diverse homes. Maintaining and increasing the single- and multi-family uses are important for the success of this corridor.**

Preferred Future Land Uses & Activities											Density	Preferred Community Design		
Existing Uses	Residential: Single Family	Residential: Two & Three Family	Residential: Multi-family / Senior	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Residential	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Industrial	Commercial	Institutional: Governmental	Institutional: Educational / Cultural	Open Space & Recreational	Industrial			Traditional Neighborhood	Conservation Subdivision
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	A	u	u	6-8 dwelling units (DU) / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	A	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	D	A	u	u	u	u	u	A	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum	D	A	u
A	A	A	A	u	u	A	u	u	u	u	6-8 DU / acre minimum on small lots, 15 DU / acre minimum on large parcels	D	A	u

**D = Desirable** – These uses should be encouraged and support the desired character of the area.

**A = Allowable** – These uses are appropriate for the area, but may require additional consideration to fit the vision.

**u = Undesirable** – Generally, these uses should not be encouraged, but may still be acceptable under special circumstances.

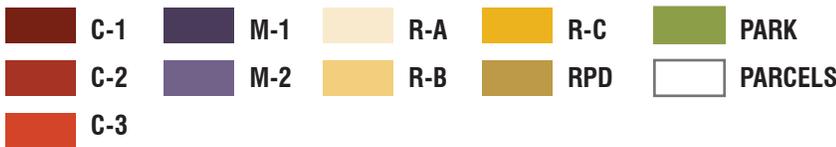
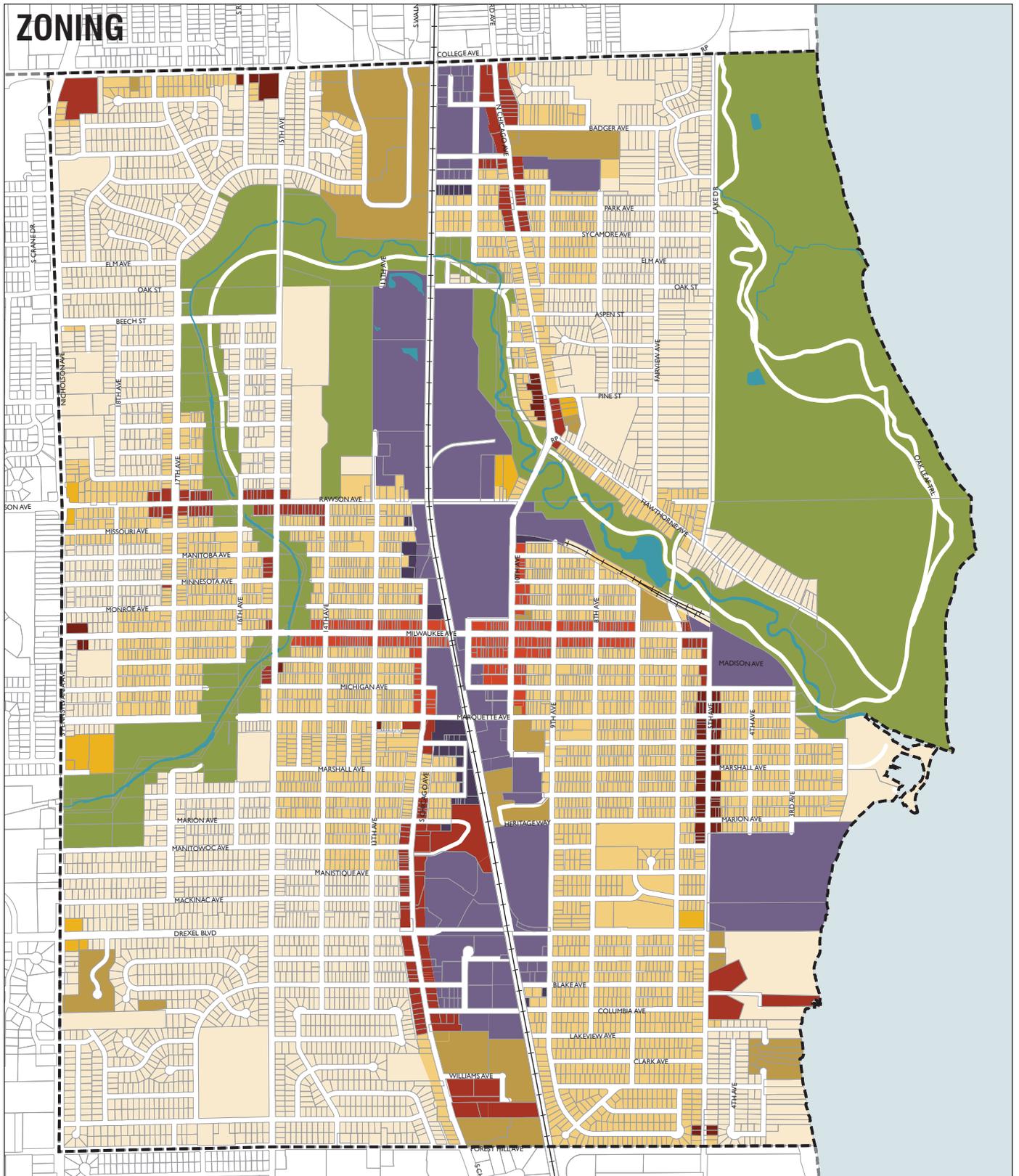
# ZONING GUIDE FOR FUTURE LAND USE

## HOW TO USE THIS MATRIX:

As the Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors chapter guides land use, it also appropriately locates development within South Milwaukee’s zoning code. As the zoning code is expected to be updated in the near future, this matrix can be read with “Future Land Use” being the primary guide for development with “Zoning” then providing additional guidance.

		ZONING									
		Residential Zone	Residential Zone	Residential Zone	Residential Planned Development	Neighborhood Shopping Zone	Commercial Zone	Central Business Zone	Manufacturing Zone	Industrial Zone	Park
		R-A	R-B	R-C	RPD	C-1	C-2	C-3	M-1	M-2	P
FUTURE LAND USE	Residential: Single Family	C	C	C	C	i	i	i	i	i	i
	Residential: Two & Three Family	C	C	C	C	C	i	i	i	i	i
	Residential: Multi-family / Senior	i	C	C	C	C	C	C	i	i	i
	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Residential	i	i	C	C	C	C	C	i	i	i
	Mixed-Use: Commercial / Industrial	i	i	i	i	C	C	C	C	C	i
	Commercial	i	i	i	C	C	C	C	i	i	i
	Institutional: Governmental	i	i	i	C	C	C	C	i	i	i
	Institutional: Educational / Cultural	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	i	i	i
	Open Space & Recreational	C	C	C	C	C	i	C	i	i	C
	Industrial	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	C	C	i

**C = Consistent**  
**I = Inconsistent**



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF



# DOWNTOWN DISTRICT



Source: Erik Brooks

“A vibrant, welcoming, and authentic city center recognized for its businesses, culture, and urban living opportunities.”

## OVERVIEW

The commercial character of South Milwaukee’s Downtown District, or “downtown,” truly reflects the city’s story – from its origins as a prospective college community, to the coming of the railroad and downtown’s industrial development by Bucyrus, to the current day. Today, the presence of Caterpillar’s Global Mining Division, multiple community institutions, popular local events, and downtown’s destination businesses are evident in South Milwaukee’s downtown. The Milwaukee Avenue core, its buildings, and its surrounding neighborhoods represent promise and potential for the entire city. All downtowns evolve over time. The resulting downtown conditions mirror changes in the local community and the impact of broader market trends. South Milwaukee’s downtown can become a place that responds to the local community and to changing markets. The downtown won’t be a themed, fake, or nostalgic place that no longer exists. It will be a place where residents and visitors want to spend time. **Further revitalizing South Milwaukee’s downtown will accomplish four (4) outcomes:**

- » Create a better and economically viable future for business and property owners;
- » Improve the numbers and operations of downtown businesses;
- » Enhance the character and appearance of the downtown;
- » Engage and excite the entire South Milwaukee community about their downtown as an important place, whether attending an event or through their experiences with unique downtown businesses.





Change in South Milwaukee’s downtown will remain the only constant. Implementing this Plan’s strategic recommendations will foster change, and this change will only occur over time. Capitalizing on the downtown’s existing strengths represents one component of initiating change: doing so demonstrates the strong local belief in downtown South Milwaukee’s future economic success. Another component of initiating change is commitment.

**The ongoing process to revitalize any downtown district is very hard work.** It requires a commitment by all local constituencies and an understanding that success will take time. The work must be comprehensive, considering the interrelated aspects of downtown’s issues, in diverse and new ways. There isn’t one answer or one project that will reverse years of frustration about, disinvestment in, or inattention to South Milwaukee’s downtown.

**For City officials and downtown investors, recognizing and applying market factors will help define the downtown’s opportunities.** Taking advantage of these fact-based opportunities will affect change. These opportunities are also inherent in these questions about the downtown’s future:

- » How can the downtown’s overall appearance and vintage buildings be improved? How can downtown property owners work together with the City to enable stronger tenanting on the ground level and upper stories?

- » What kind of focused leadership does South Milwaukee’s downtown need to begin revitalizing the downtown and to commit to the downtown’s long-term success? How can all downtown’s stakeholders, including nearby residents and major employers, facilitate positive change?
- » What kinds of businesses will succeed in the downtown? What kinds of businesses can work in combination to attract customers to the Downtown District?
- » How can downtown investors promote the downtown, and what can they promote, in addition to the annual special events calendar? How can these marketing steps establish the premise for a future downtown brand?
- » How can the City and its partners in downtown work to address misconceptions or mitigate any negative perceptions of the downtown?

The following section seeks to answer some of these questions through the lens of market conditions.

## Markets Surrounding Downtown South Milwaukee

Center Point: 1001 Milwaukee Avenue	South Milwaukee	Pedestrian 1 mile radius	Developer 3 mile radius	Drive Time 5 minutes	Milwaukee Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA)
Total Population	21,487	13,647	46,550	24,327	1,611,587
Total Households	9,229	5,863	19,753	10,692	651,597
Household Size	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.5
Population Density (per Sq. Mi.)	4,445.58	4,334.60	1,642.81	4,100.82	1,055.16
Population Median Age	40.7	39.3	40.9	41.6	37.1
Employees	5,568	2,957	13,220	5,243	769,857
% Owner Occupied Housing Units	59.2%	57.5%	62.7%	61.0%	60.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	19.4%	19.1%	20.8%	19.9%	32.3%
Average Household Income	\$61,962	\$57,718	\$63,863	\$61,860	\$74,117
Median Household Income	\$52,112	\$47,759	\$53,661	\$51,716	\$54,081
Per Capita Income	\$26,771	\$24,883	\$27,204	\$27,338	\$30,028
% Households w/ Incomes \$75,000+	29.6%	26.0%	31.6%	29.4%	34.9%
Retail Demand: Total	\$188,384,528	\$114,694,183	\$411,085,675	\$217,236,877	\$12,656,871,223
Retail Demand: Food and Drinking Places	\$24,204,883	\$14,792,772	\$52,496,273	\$27,775,883	\$864,039,964

Source: BDI



# VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » **Attract more businesses and include ALL businesses in downtown improvement**
- » **Give the Downtown a jump start!**
- » **Secure more Downtown businesses**
- » **Discourage vacant storefront spaces**
- » **Draw interest, because South Milwaukee's Downtown is separated from main transportation corridors**
- » **Change perception of the Downtown and attract more investment**
- » **Foster the potential in all of the downtown buildings**
- » **Make the 900 & 1000 blocks of Milwaukee Avenue the focal point of downtown**
- » **Create a downtown focal point, like a fountain and/or splash pad (like downtown Stevens Point)**
- » **Encourage creative downtown marketing, like a business guide sent through the mail, online, coupons and punch cards to incentivize customers**
- » **Encourage downtown businesses to include diverse dietary needs, including gluten- and dairy-free options**
- » **Incentivize more restaurants downtown**
- » **Secure a brew pub for downtown South Milwaukee**
- » **Keep the Downtown Farmers' Market downtown**
- » **Model the downtown on Cedarburg**
- » **Create a miniature downtown dining week**
- » **Every commercial building on Milwaukee Avenue should be filled! Use a tax incentive or whatever it will take to create demand for space**

## DOWNTOWN MARKET CONDITIONS

### Demographics

Demographics for five (5) market geographies and the Milwaukee Metro area are provided in this chapter. In addition to demographics for the city of South Milwaukee and the metro area, the downtown's pedestrian, convenience drive time, and developer markets are shown. A separate review of the downtown's custom market follows the analysis of these four (4) market geographies. The center point for the radii and drive time geographies is 1001 Milwaukee Avenue. These markets include:

» City of South Milwaukee, or Affiliated: Successful downtowns and commercial districts, regardless of size or business mix, define the character and image of their community. These commercial districts naturally attract local residents. The resulting relationship between local residents and district businesses makes residents an important customer base for those same businesses, regardless of business category restaurants. In turn, residents routinely patronize these local businesses, recognizing them as a part of their community.

- » Pedestrian, or 1-Mile Radius: Residents living within one-mile of any commercial district are more active users and can easily walk to the area. Their proximate location results in frequent trips, which in turn, adds vitality to the district. This market can be more important to the success of the commercial district than its spending power often suggests, based upon visit frequency and nearby residential densities. The downtown's .5-mile market is also shown for comparison purposes.
- » Traditional Developer, or 3-Mile Radius: The 3-mile market has been traditionally used by the retail development community as an important indicator of a suitable trade area for a successful location, particularly for regional or national chain retailers. As larger retailers increasingly use data analytics to more precisely target new and current customers, the demographic characteristics of any individual radius market are less important in site location. This 3-mile market does provide basic insights into how locations and communities may be perceived by regional site location specialists. Like South Milwaukee, many communities bordering lakes or natural areas include an area void. Regional site location specialists recognize these voids.



With available data that indicates a location's potential for success, these voids rarely represent an impediment in location decisions.

- » Convenience, or 5-Minute Drive, and Bicycle: When a consumer can drive to make a needed purchase within five minutes, that location becomes the routine choice to meet every day needs, assuming the appropriate quality and variety of goods. Convenience shoppers represent the core market for most commercial districts or retail clusters. This five-minute drive time market also represents a ten-minute bike ride to South Milwaukee's downtown.
- » Milwaukee Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA): This market represents Milwaukee's defined metropolitan statistical area. (The general term CBSA is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as including both metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.) This statistical area includes Milwaukee County, Waukesha County, Ozaukee County, and Washington County. The Milwaukee metro demographics are displayed to provide a regional context for South Milwaukee.

The downtown's strongest market characteristic is its nearby employee base at Caterpillar Global Mining, Johnson Health Tech, Metalcut Products, and Appleton (Emerson Industrial Automation). This number, nearly 3,000 within the 1-mile radius, is not only critical to the local economy, but it represents additional spending power accessible to the downtown's small businesses beyond that of local residents. **The presence of over 5,200 employees within 5 minutes of the downtown's center reinforces the potential for downtown businesses to capture additional employee spending power.** This same drive time market has an estimated retail demand, or spending power, exceeding \$217 million.

Each of the South Milwaukee markets has generally similar demographic characteristics. The median age across all South Milwaukee markets indicates a coterie of families in their highest spending years—the late 30s-early 40s. The two (2) pedestrian markets are younger with lower educational attainment levels. The .5-mile market is slightly more diverse, with the higher percentages of Native Americans and Hispanics, than the city of South Milwaukee. The owner occupied housing percentage is lowest in the .5-mile pedestrian market (45.3 percent), increasing in the other market geographies. South Milwaukee's percentage of owner-occupied housing (59.2 percent) is less than the Milwaukee region's (60.7 percent).

Other differences exist between the city and its markets when compared to the Milwaukee metropolitan area. The city, pedestrian, and drive time markets are significantly denser than the region. The 3-mile market includes less dense areas to the south and west of the city of South Milwaukee. The region's overall population is more racially and ethnically diverse than South Milwaukee's market populations. Incomes (median, average, per capita, and percentage of households with incomes exceeding \$75,000) in all of the South Milwaukee markets are less than those of the metro area. Related to incomes is a lower percentage of the population with college or advanced degrees within the South Milwaukee markets.

The table, “Demographics: South Milwaukee & Nearby Communities” (below) compares South Milwaukee’s key demographics with those of several neighboring communities cited throughout the public outreach process. The demographics for the Bay View neighborhood include those 2010 U.S. Census Tracts closest to that neighborhood’s accepted boundaries within the city of Milwaukee. Like South Milwaukee, multiple neighboring communities, including Oak Creek, St. Francis, and Cudahy, have started to address their downtown improvements. St. Francis and Cudahy have initiated efforts to revitalize their traditional downtown districts. Oak Creek is creating a new ‘downtown’ at the former Delphi site along Drexel and Howell Avenues known as Drexel Town Square. Kinnickinnic Avenue (KK) in Milwaukee’s Bay View neighborhood is considered a regional revitalization success story. Multiple South Milwaukee constituents indicated that South Milwaukee’s downtown currently resembles how KK appeared fifteen or more years ago.

Among these nearby communities, South Milwaukee generally holds a middle position when comparing these key demographics. KK has the greatest density, followed by South Milwaukee. Bay View/KK is also significantly younger

than the suburban communities, with a 35.1 median age, and has significantly greater ethnic and racial diversity. Franklin and Oak Creek have the highest incomes and highest percentage of residents with college and advanced degrees, followed by South Milwaukee and Greenfield.

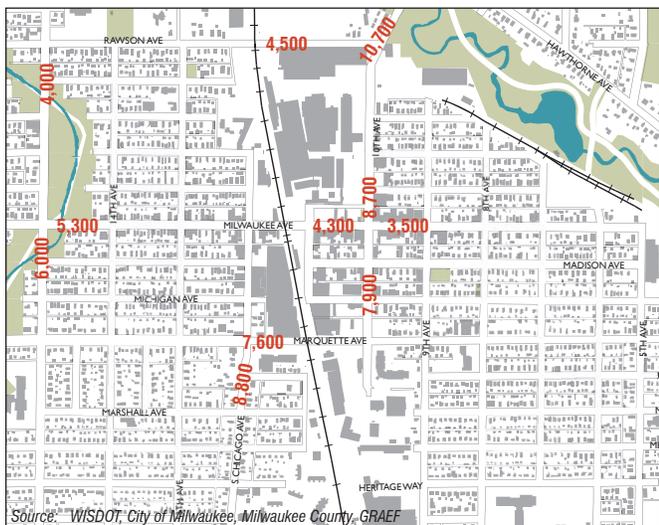
Several nearby communities, including South Milwaukee, have larger employment bases. An International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) office worker spending study, issued in late 2012, examined how much office workers spend near their work place, typically a downtown, or downtown. The mean expenditure by an office worker in a suburban downtown with limited purchasing options (defined as few shopping and dining options near their office) is \$104.53 weekly, with \$33.67 of that figure spent in restaurants and fast food eateries. These dollar figures exclude those workers who spent nothing.<sup>1</sup> **Using South Milwaukee’s employee numbers as an example and assuming about 40%, or 2,000, of local employees spend \$104.53 weekly for 50 weeks, this estimated employee spending would generate nearly \$10.5 million in revenues for the city’s businesses.** The Average Daily Traffic counts for the downtown are

<sup>1</sup> (Source: Office Worker Retail Spending in a Digital Age, ICSC Research Department, December 2012.)

## Demographics: South Milwaukee & Nearby Communities

	South Milwaukee	Cudahy	Franklin	Greenfield	Oak Creek	St. Francis	Bay View/ Kinnickinnic Avenue
<b>Total Population</b>	21,487	18,478	35,420	36,943	34,757	9,432	27,154
<b>Total Households</b>	9,229	8,196	13,675	16,993	14,225	4,532	12,251
<b>Household Size</b>	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.2
<b>Population Density (Pop/Sq Mi)</b>	4,445.58	3,877.65	1,021.64	3,212.02	1,220.36	3,690.51	5,416.45
<b>Median Age</b>	40.7	40.8	41.7	44.1	37.3	41.6	35.1
<b>Employees</b>	5,568	7,078	9,218	11,494	17,528	3,260	9,551
<b>Jobs Per Household</b>	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.7	0.8
<b>% Owner Occupied Housing Units</b>	59.2%	59.6%	76.8%	57.7%	60.8%	50.9%	53.0%
<b>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</b>	19.4%	19.5%	33.8%	25.2%	27.1%	24.5%	30.6%
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$61,962	\$56,204	\$95,063	\$64,982	\$75,829	\$56,783	\$55,244
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$52,112	\$47,370	\$75,041	\$50,962	\$64,596	\$44,232	\$45,464
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$26,771	\$24,976	\$37,406	\$30,164	\$31,080	\$27,683	\$24,951
<b>% Households w/ Incomes \$75,000+</b>	29.6%	24.5%	50.0%	29.9%	42.2%	25.1%	22.9%
<b>Retail Demand: Total</b>	\$188,384,528	\$157,987,675	\$332,766,372	\$345,725,885	\$322,815,139	\$85,700,132	\$233,093,097
<b>Retail Demand: Food and Drinking Places</b>	\$24,204,883	\$20,192,275	\$42,395,766	\$42,395,766	\$42,395,766	\$11,070,050	\$16,539,150

Source: BDI



Traffic counts, or Average Daily Traffic (ADT) downtown South Milwaukee, as of February 10, 2016

typically 6,000 to 12,000 vehicles per day. While these counts are strong for a traditional downtown district including a state highway, most major national or regional retailers prefer at least 20,000 ADTs as one suburban site location characteristic. The ability of any site or location to intercept vehicular and pedestrian traffic must be adequate to meet individual retailer requirements.

**South Milwaukee’s Downtown Custom Market**

In addition to examining demographics for market geographies and the surrounding communities, a custom, or destination, market geography was created for South Milwaukee’s downtown. This custom market is based upon trade area descriptions provided by several established downtown South Milwaukee businesses. These market boundaries, as described by these business owners, were uniformly similar. A map of this market is shown. The demographics for this same market are also included.

**Businesses generating substantial percentages of their revenues from the local or convenience markets and from a broader surrounding area are typically considered destination businesses.** For traditional commercial districts, these businesses are important to any downtown or central business district in three (3) primary ways:

- » **Enhances the downtown or district’s competitive position.** These businesses, both individually and in combination within the downtown mix, increase the downtown’s overall ability to attract greater numbers of residents and visitors.



- » **Differentiates the downtown or district.** These businesses often sell unique products or services, attracting consumers from a greater area. These unique businesses help create the district’s distinctive character that differentiates it from other shopping and dining areas.
- » **Increases overall business revenues.** Residents and visitors from this larger market also generate sales for businesses adjacent to downtown’s destination businesses. Increasing overall business revenues mean greater business growth and increased interest in investing in the downtown, or district.

## Downtown Custom Market

Downtown Custom Market	Custom Market	City of South Milwaukee	Pedestrian: 1 mile(s) radius	Developer: 3 mile(s) radius	Convenience Drive Time: 5 minute(s)
<b>Total Population</b>	109,749	21,487	13,647	46,550	24,327
<b>Total Households</b>	45,461	9,229	5,863	19,753	10,692
<b>Household Size</b>	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3
<b>Population Density (Pop/Sq Mi)</b>	1,602.67	4,445.58	4,334.60	1,642.81	4,100.82
<b>Median Age</b>	40.9	40.7	39.3	40.9	41.6
<b>Employees</b>	51,992	10,000	2,957	13,220	5,243
<b>Jobs Per Household</b>	1.1	1.1			
<b>% Owner Occupied Housing Units</b>	67.9%	59.2%	57.5%	62.7%	61.0%
<b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>	19.5%	19.4%	19.1%	20.8%	19.9%
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$69,484	\$61,962	\$57,718	\$63,863	\$61,860
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$56,554	\$52,112	\$47,759	\$53,661	\$51,716
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$28,876	\$26,771	\$24,883	\$27,204	\$27,338
<b>% Households w/ Incomes \$75,000+</b>	34.6%	29.6%	26.0%	31.6%	29.4%
<b>Retail Demand: Total</b>	\$953,980,128	\$188,384,528	\$114,694,183	\$411,085,675	\$217,236,877
<b>Retail Demand: Food and Drinking Places</b>	\$66,080,000	\$24,204,883	\$14,792,772	\$52,496,273	\$27,775,883

Source: BDI

Demographics for the custom market, the city, and the pedestrian, developer and drive time markets are compared in the "Downtown Custom Market" table, above. The custom market includes a population of nearly 110,000 and represents over \$950 million in retail demand. Income levels and the percentage of higher income households (34.6%) are also greater than the South Milwaukee market geographies assessed above. These custom market characteristics present an ongoing opportunity to incrementally capture additional sales as the downtown's business growth occurs for three (3) reasons:

1. The downtown's most notable businesses are already attracting patrons from this custom market;
2. These businesses will serve as the platform for future business growth, given their ability to successfully compete from their downtown locations;
3. Their identified larger trade area represents an opportunity for focusing marketing, special event and image positioning activities for the downtown. Ongoing focus will attract additional customers from this custom market to a growing downtown, again enhancing the downtown's vitality over time.

## Downtown Business Mix

Category	%
Entertainment	2.5%
Food and Beverage	11.6%
FIRE	8.3%
NFP/Institutional	3.3%
Industrial/Employment	4.1%
Personal Service	10.7%
Professional Practice	9.9%
Retail	11.6%
Service	9.9%
Vacancy	28.1%
Total	100.0%

Sources: City of South Milwaukee Downtown Inventory List 2015; BDI.

## DOWNTOWN USES

Ultimately, what succeeds in any downtown or traditional commercial corridor is a mix of uses, including ground floor uses, that reflects and responds to local markets. **Three (3) categories of uses exist currently within the downtown: ground floor, housing, and employment.** The current status of these uses is described in this section. An analysis of local, regional, and national trends affecting these downtown uses follows this examination of current conditions.

### Ground Floor Uses

Uses located on the ground level in any commercial district define perceptions about the district, its economic viability, and for better or worse, how outsiders perceive that community. These various uses include the mix of businesses located on the ground level.

South Milwaukee's downtown mix currently includes a diverse range of uses in business unit numbers and percentages. The largest percentage of the downtown's business mix is comprised of food and beverage establishments, of which three (3) represent full-service, sit-down restaurants. The broader service sector, including businesses providing personal services, business-to-business services, and financial services, and professional practices, represents 42.1% of the downtown's overall mix including vacant units. (This percentage of overall

## Housing Units: 1-Mile Radius of Downtown

Housing Units	# / %
Total Housing Units (#)	6,239
Occupied Housing Units	94.0%
Vacant Housing Units	6.0%
Housing Units by Occupancy	
Occupied Housing Units (#)	5,863
Owner Occupied (%)	57.5%
Renter Occupied Housing	42.5%

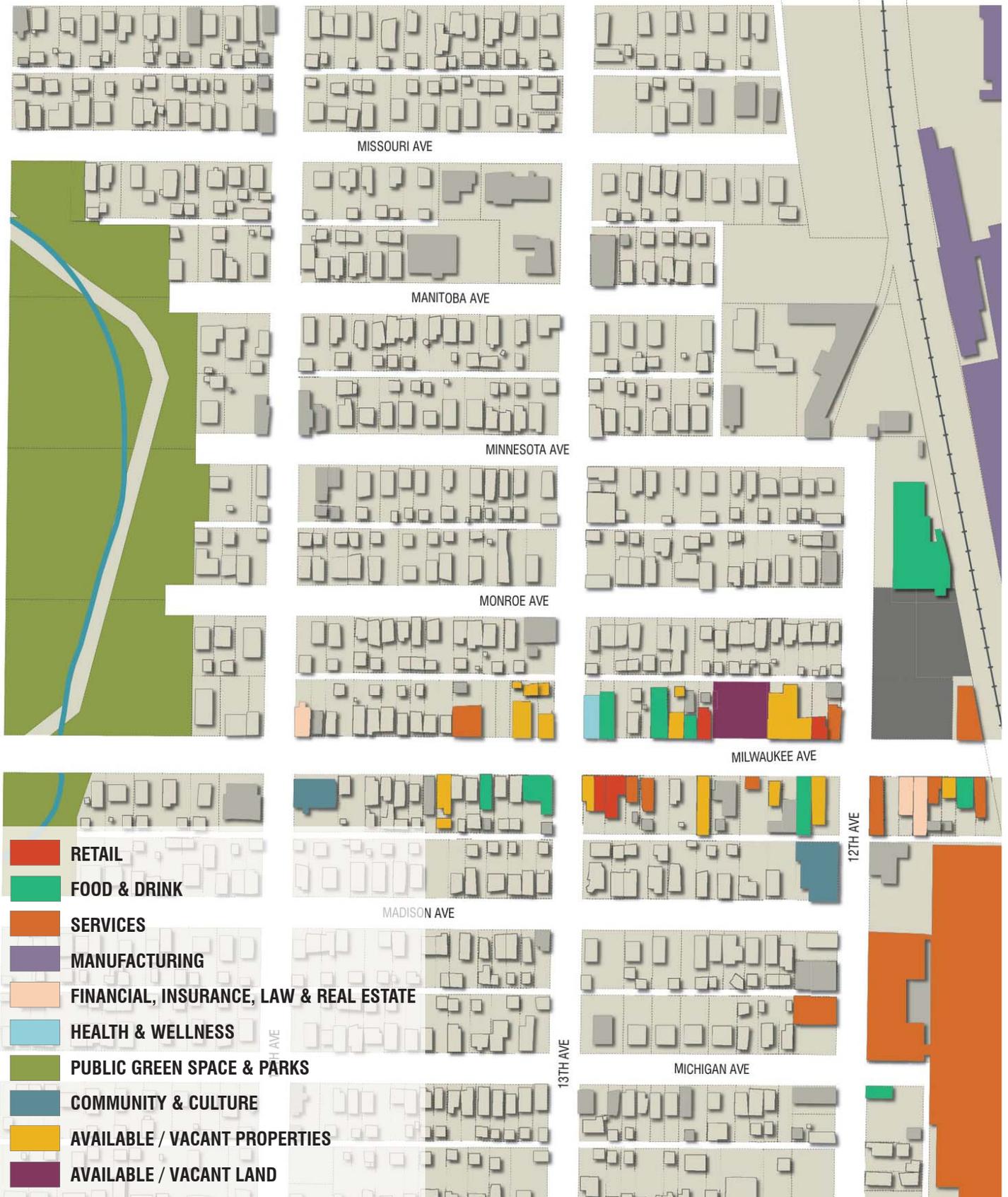
Sources: 2010 US Census, All Rights Reserved, Alteryx, Inc., 2014 Experian, Inc. All Rights Reserved, Alteryx, Inc., 2014 Easy Analytic Software, Inc. (EASI®) All Rights Reserved, Alteryx, Inc.

services is 59.3% of existing business units.) The retail component includes a variety of long-established South Milwaukee businesses and newly-opened businesses. Concentrations and clusters of complementary retailers within this mix component are nonexistent. The institutional and employment categories include major downtown employers, Caterpillar Global Mining and Johnson Health Tech.

### Residential

Surrounding residential neighborhoods and their connection with any traditional downtown often create joint perceptions about both areas. Within a 1-mile radius of 10th Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue, there are just over 6,200 housing units. An estimated 6% are vacant. Nearly 43% of these housing units are rental versus owner occupied. Rental units represent about 38% of the overall housing stock throughout South Milwaukee. Renter- and owner-occupied residential units and homes vary in condition within this 1-mile radius.

# DOWNTOWN DISTRICT BUSINESS MIX





## Employment

One of the strengths of South Milwaukee's downtown is its employment base. In the past, most of the employees at South Milwaukee's production facilities were also residents. Interviews with local stakeholders indicate that most employees come from throughout the Milwaukee Metro area. According to city-data.com, **1,430 workers live and work in South Milwaukee as of 2013, roughly 14.2% of the city's adult civilian population in the workforce.**

The major presence of Caterpillar's Global Mining facilities within the downtown remains the city's economic story. Indications are that Caterpillar intends to maintain its South Milwaukee operations. Caterpillar's corporate revenues have declined since 2012 due to the worldwide global mining slowdown; mining revenues have declined 55%. Corporate shareholders continue to criticize Caterpillar's management for the acquisition of Bucyrus and its timing. Caterpillar announced plans in May 2015 to reduce its manufacturing square footage in South Milwaukee by 260,000 square feet (SF) without staff reductions. In all of its operations, Caterpillar has committed to using analytics to solidify customer relationships through its 'domain knowledge' and to improve operating efficiencies, with some analysts estimating up to 40% improvement in certain product areas. Issues of efficiency, corporate governance and performance, global market conditions, and the potential impact of 'big data' in manufacturing will define how Caterpillar approaches its facilities requirements over the next decade.<sup>2</sup>

Johnson Health Tech (JHT), since acquiring South Milwaukee's Magnum Fitness in 2012, has increased its employee numbers by 50%, plans to continue hiring, and is expanding its facilities. This expansion includes additional square footage at the firm's 12th and Marquette location. JHT has been involved in 're-shoring,' or returning manufacturing jobs to the United States. Given that the South Milwaukee location is its sole U.S. production facility, JHT has the facilities and potential to expand its employment base.

In addition to these major employers, the downtown's service sector, currently about 60% of downtown's business mix (noted previously) provides employment and includes small office uses. Downtowns, like South Milwaukee's downtown, have unique types of lease space and represent an opportunity for new office tenants or emerging uses, such as maker or other shared work spaces.

<sup>2</sup> Three articles provided this data including: Rick Barrett. "Caterpillar Consolidating Space, But No Layoffs Result," *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel Online*, May 11, 2015. Joe Cahill. "Caterpillar Shareholders Speak, Directors Should Listen," *Crain's Chicago Business and ChicagoBusiness.com*, June 13, 2015. Micah Maidenberg. "Why Caterpillar is Letting Its Geek Flag Fly," *Crain's Chicago Business and ChicagoBusiness.com*, July 4, 2015.

## MARKET TRENDS: ALL USES

### Retail & Restaurant

The retail sector experienced seismic changes as a result of the recent Great Recession. Investment in new development within the broader retail sector will likely remain weak, according to Urban Land Institute's *Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2015*. **Slower retail growth is predicted over the next five years. Fewer national or regional retailers are expanding store numbers. Any new market entrants are typically constructing build-to-suit stores.** In addition, many of the major national or regional retailers now have a full complement of stores in the largest metro markets. These same national retailers also limit the number of locations in smaller metropolitan areas, such as Milwaukee. Other national retailers, such as Kmart, Sears, Office Depot, and Office Max, have closed stores, resulting in little change in vacancy rates in larger centers. **Despite the predicted slower store growth for major retailers, the opposite is true for many independent retailers.** The most successful of these independent retailers are focused on expansion, either physical or online, and on product and service differentiation.

Changing consumer behaviors are another aspect of the diminished expectations for the retail sector. The impact of the Millennial generation on all sectors – employment, housing, and retail – has been detailed during and post-Great Recession. This cohort represents 20.1% of the city's residents per this Plan's demographic data. Much has been published to date about their desire for retail and restaurant experiences and preference for urban living. As retail and restaurant consumers, the dominant behavioral question about the Millennial generation is whether they will resume the post-World War II pattern of moving to the suburbs, once their careers stabilize and they marry and/or have children.

Restaurant trends typically track retail trends, the most obvious being grocery sales. During the recent economic downturn, consumers chose less expensive 'fast casual' or limited service eateries versus full service or fine dining options. **As the economy improves, all of these major dining formats, with the exception of 'quick service' (fast food) continue to grow their market shares.** Wholesale and commodity price increases remain a broader industry concern. The National Restaurant Association (NRA) has projected a 3.8% increase in restaurant industry revenues for 2015. For most national or regional restaurants, moderate increases in location numbers are driving overall sales growth and sustaining per unit revenues. Despite the greater profile of national and regional chain restaurants, the NRA notes that about 70% of all restaurants are independently owned.

**These independently-owned restaurants have the capacity to quickly respond in a more targeted manner to their local markets, and industry-wide, this is viewed as an important competitive advantage.**

Five (5) current sector trends, applicable to restaurateurs and retailers, include:

1. **The 'Experience.'** Whether a shopping mall, commercial corridor, or traditional downtown, providing a unique consumer experience is key to sales performance and brand reinforcement for each commercial venue and its businesses. Successful areas strategically promote their distinctive character to their target consumers. For traditional commercial districts, this means a stronger emphasis on community gatherings, visual appeal, and the attraction power of the district's unique retailers, their resulting business clusters, and restaurateurs. These unique experiences also now include temporary retail and food events, such as South Milwaukee's food truck event. Temporary events can also be extended to include seasonal outdoor dining. Particularly, in the Midwest, this option represents an important source of 'bonus revenues' for downtown restaurants that increase their profitability. Ultimately, this wide range of temporary events serve four (4) purposes:
  - a. Fostering excitement about the area, simultaneously revising the district's image,
  - b. Cultivating potential business owners not yet ready for a physical location,
  - c. Activating district vacancies to showcase the area's real estate opportunities, and
  - d. Enabling businesses to 'morph' business concepts. For example, an established restaurateur wants to test a new concept via a food truck. MKE City Sippers' daytime coffee shop and evening wine bar is South Milwaukee's best example.
2. **Smaller stores, long-term vacancies, and excess retail space.** The U.S.'s position as 'over-stored' when compared with other western nations has been well documented. Many commercial areas, particularly downtowns, suffer from long-term disinvestment with visible ground floor vacancies. Other reasons for increased vacancies in many communities include retail over-building in auto-oriented corridors, poor or obsolete design footprints, or regulations requiring ground floor retail uses in newer developments at inferior retail locations. The rise of e-commerce has also contributed to smaller store footprints. In many commercial locales, service or office uses represent the best options for tenancing long-standing vacancies or excess space. In traditional commercial districts, service uses, particularly personal services, comprise the emerging clusters absorbing excess retail lease space, particularly at peripheral locations.
3. **E-commerce.** The growth of e-commerce continues to be exponential. E-commerce sales for 2014 exceeded \$262 Billion and are projected to exceed \$400 Billion by 2018. For current and future success, retailers of all sizes and formats must sell through multiple channels and continue to refine those channels for sustained sales success. Those channels vary by business type or size, but an electronic (including mobile enabled) and social media presence is now essential to revenue growth and better operating margins. While much of the focus is the retail sector, successful restaurateurs are using technology to improve operating efficiencies. Examples include using reservations and ticketing systems, tablets for orders and menus, social media to communicate with target customers as described in bullet 4 below, and mobile technology to facilitate payment and payment processing.

4. **'Local.'** The 'local' movement has multiple facets—supporting small business owners, local foods and food systems, and shopper initiatives, as examples. South Milwaukee's successful farmers' market is one example of a local activity. This broader movement now encompasses shared community 'experience' and recognizes tangible investment by business owners in their local community. 'Community retail' is one emerging aspect of this local trend. For independent retailers and restaurateurs, this means moving beyond selling product to developing relationships and communicating directly with their community of customers. This 'community' concept also continues to expand for food and beverage businesses. Micro-restaurants in shared spaces allow new and experienced restaurateurs to test new operating concepts, developing market support for these concepts. Temporary restaurants in equipped restaurant space again serve as a different kind of proving ground for an overall concept and potential business expansion. 'Shop Local' has become 'Shop Small,' as communities have learned that most businesses need both residents and visitors from other communities to shop in their stores to ensure profitability.
5. **Preference for 'known' markets.** Real estate professionals affiliated with major retailers or restaurateurs seeking locations in any metropolitan area, including the Milwaukee area, prefer 'known' locations. This has been particularly true in the post-Great Recession economy. The consumer markets in these 'known' locations are established and understood by commercial real estate professionals, and the existing businesses in those locations are performing well financially. This preference even extends to small business owners with the financial capacity to select the best locations to achieve their sales growth and expansion plans.

## Employment

**As noted, South Milwaukee's economic story, like that of the Midwest, has been the growth of manufacturing. Industrial production remains critical to the Midwest economy.** After decades in decline, manufacturing job growth in the Midwest began to improve in 2010. The manufacturing sector continues to change and adapt to new market realities and technological advances. Two trends are considered crucial to Midwest and Wisconsin industry—innovation in manufacturing processes, specifically supplier firms providing individual parts or kits of including specified parts, and use of technology, such as 3D printing and data analytics.

With the exception of energy-related and agricultural production, demand for production in other manufacturing sectors is projected to increase for 2015. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) 2014 data for Wisconsin reflects this sector's importance to the state's economy—manufacturing employment was 464,000 with overall sector output representing 18.9% of the gross state product. Machinery and food-related manufacturing are Wisconsin's two largest manufacturing sectors. Southeastern Wisconsin's production facilities, including South Milwaukee's, reflect these same industry sector concentrations. Given the importance of manufacturing to the city, collaborating with these major employers to understand their future plans will remain important to long-term downtown business growth.

The office sector remains subject to two (2) related national trends—reductions in the amount of office space required per employee, and the project based economy, with knowledge workers' ability to work in open environments and anywhere including the local coffee shop. In downtowns and traditional commercial districts, services and small offices locating in ground floor lease space is also the result of the retail trends noted above. 'Brick and mortar' lease space, formerly occupied as larger retail footprints, is now being occupied by services, particularly personal services, and by small business offices.

Entrepreneurship represents the one important growth trend in office uses. 'Growing your own' employment base is one aspect of this entrepreneurial trend. The Milwaukee area's small office user market has been described as both strong and competitive in research by the region's major commercial real estate firms. Small user leasing is the major factor in the Milwaukee South sub-market, including the city of South Milwaukee, for office. The data are shown in the following table.

This submarket is not only Milwaukee's smallest, but it also has the region's highest vacancy rates. The dominance of lower cost Class B office space (70.8% according to CBRE) makes the market more attractive to smaller users. Lease rates vary significantly, given these concentrations. Incrementally increasing the numbers of small users considering local lease space and aiding their expansion will require local commitment over the long-term.

Shared workspaces of all types are an emerging driver of this entrepreneurship trend. Co-working and maker spaces represent new work cultures based in technology and innovation. The Milwaukee region has an active maker movement, with spaces dedicated to arts and artisans and to engineering and new technologies. How the occupants of the existing maker spaces choose to grow their work or commercialize their innovations dictate their future lease space needs. For those businesses with growth plans, employment growth is often not their objective, given available sub-contractors. Entrepreneurs with industry expertise typically start these businesses; with much of the workforce comprised of Millennials. Ten (10) employees is typically the maximum workforce for these businesses. In seeking business locations, these kinds of businesses prefer places that are accessible to urban conveniences, have available vintage or Class B or C space, and readily adaptable lease space to configure as needed.

## Residential

In mature suburbs, like South Milwaukee, identifying options for sustaining local housing stock have become strategic to overall community development efforts. These efforts in neighborhoods around traditional downtowns are focused on providing attractive, pedestrian-oriented areas that reinforce the downtown's opportunities for success and that attract new residents seeking to live in a more compact locale accessible to the neighboring large city amenities. There are indications that younger generations

are seeking these types of neighborhoods, as they enter their household formation years. Affordability, or lack of affordable housing for Millennials and other new buyers, is an issue in many suburban housing markets. For South Milwaukee and the Milwaukee region, housing affordability represents both a metro area competitive advantage and an opportunity to attract new potential homeowners.

Home prices in the Milwaukee region increased 5.2% from first quarter 2014 through the same period in 2015 to a median home price of \$166,900. (Source: Marcus & Millichap Apartment Research Market Report, Milwaukee Metro Area, Third Quarter 2015.) Average sales prices for the city of South Milwaukee also reflect the Milwaukee region's housing affordability based upon regional incomes. South Milwaukee's 2015 average home sales price is \$128,000, about 6% less than the same period in 2014. Average sales price PSF for South Milwaukee homes has actually increased from \$91 PSF to \$99 PSF, again in the same time period. (Sources: Trulia and Zillow Research Reports about South Milwaukee.) Both sources indicate a high level of foreclosures, pre-foreclosures, and bank-owned properties in the city. This includes 33 single-family homes in foreclosure, including 9 for sale, 24 foreclosed homes not yet listed for sale, and 49 residences in pre-foreclosure status. Those neighborhoods south and east of the downtown have the highest concentrations of foreclosures within the city of South Milwaukee.

Multi-family residential development remains strong both nationally and in the Milwaukee area, given favorable investor returns and increasing job growth. Apartment vacancy rates for the Milwaukee region remain stable, given new developments in the city of Milwaukee and its north and west suburbs. Senior housing also remains a stable investment for the region. Assuming favorable economics and absorption rates for senior and market rate multi-family, development proposals for both types of projects will continue.

## Milwaukee Metro Office Market

Market	Market Rentable Area	Vacancy Rate	Q2 2015 Absorption	YTD Net Absorption (SF)	Gross Average Asking Lease Rate (\$/SF/Year)
Milwaukee Southeast	821,082	16.8%	-8,849	-7,454	N/A
Suburban Subtotal	27,453,336	16.4%	-335,854	-311,410	\$21.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,180,417</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>-247,180</b>	<b>-161,405</b>	<b>\$22.24</b>

Source: CBRE Milwaukee Office Market View Q2, 2015; BDI.

## DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE

Current asking rents for available commercial lease space for South Milwaukee’s downtown are shown in the “Downtown Asking Rents” table. This table also includes asking rents for residential properties in the downtown or nearby. These rents are compared with the average asking rents in the Milwaukee metro area. All commercial rents shown are on a triple net, or NNN, basis.

Retail, or ground floor, asking rents within the downtown are well below average for the metro market. According to interviews with local commercial realtors, prospective business tenants seeking downtown lease space are marginal businesses lacking operating experience and solely focused on cheap rents. These same interviewees also indicated that actual rents are less than shown in the “Downtown Asking Rents” table. Current downtown leases are generally structured on a modified gross rent basis versus at triple net rates. Actual downtown ground floor lease rates are typically at a modified gross of \$8.00-\$12.00 PSF. Commercial asking rents to the south of the downtown along 10th Avenue, or Route 32, are higher. Negotiated, or actual, lease rates in this area are generally estimated at about the average metro rent. **About 43.5% of downtown buildings are owner occupied.**

The industrial asking rents shown in the “Downtown Asking Rents” table are also representative of rents in South Milwaukee and throughout the region. As noted in the Employment Trends section, the metro office market including the city of South Milwaukee and its downtown is dominated by smaller office uses and by lower cost Class B office space. Again, the asking rents shown are lower, given the available space within the sub-market including the city.

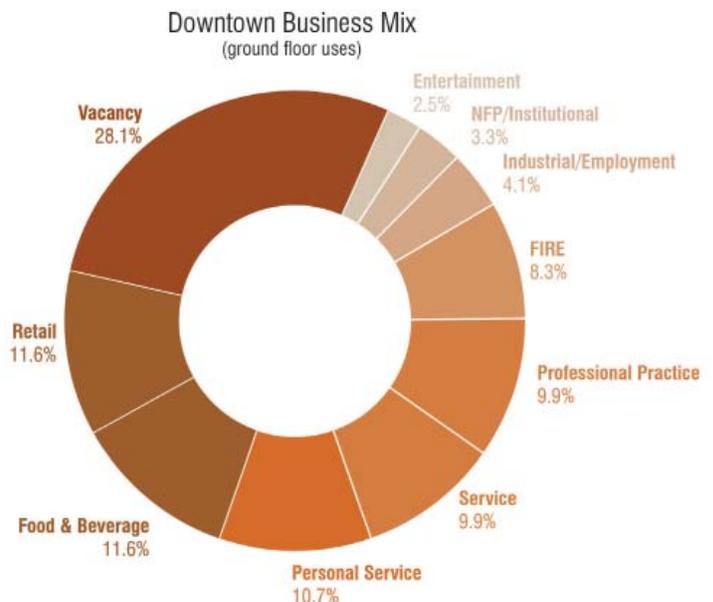
Residential asking monthly rents within the downtown area are generally less than \$1.00 PSF, less than the Milwaukee area average. Residential properties for rent near the downtown include both single-family residences and apartments. Published monthly rents for available one-bedroom apartments currently range from \$525-\$800, with single-family homes renting from \$1,000-\$1,400.

The below market rents in South Milwaukee’s downtown and in the surrounding neighborhood reflect general perceptions about the downtown from the regional real estate community. Most commercial real estate professionals described the downtown as a ‘diamond in the rough.’ Any future interest by national or regional chains in the area near downtown would likely occur along Route 32. Commercial realtors described traffic counts (ADTs), shown above, as ‘OK.’ Most professionals noted that downtown is too distant from major highways and those commercial enterprises interested in a South Milwaukee location will be independently owned and either destination or location-neutral businesses, regardless of use.

### Downtown Asking Rents

Asking Rents (Annual Triple Net Rents Per Square Foot)	South Milwaukee	Metro Average
Retail/GF: Downtown Address	\$4.00 - \$10.00	\$13.83
Retail/GF: Near Downtown	\$14.00 - \$16.00	\$13.83
Office	\$10.00 - \$14.50	\$14.49
Industrial	\$3.25 - \$5.00	\$4.61
Residential: Near Downtown (Monthly Rents Per Square Foot)	\$.82 - \$1.00	\$1.04

Sources: LoopNet; Commercialsearch.com; Apartments.com; Troveit.com; BDI.



## DOWNTOWN BUSINESS MIX

The “Downtown Business Mix by Unit & Square Footage Occupied” table, below displays the current downtown business mix by number of businesses (as previously shown). Data regarding the percentage breakdown of the downtown business mix by unit and by square footage is also provided. The square footage analysis excludes Caterpillar Global Mining and JHT, given that their occupancies (over 1.23 million SF) would greatly skew the percentage calculations. Both firms are included in the unit calculations.

### Whether calculated on a unit or square footage basis, the downtown’s vacancy rates are high, exceeding 20%.

This level of vacancy serves as a deterrent to investment, whether by a prospective business owner or property owner, and creates the perception that the downtown lacks importance to the community. Within the individual uses, retail businesses represent 11.6% of the business units. There are no existing retail clusters, though owners collaborate on downtown activities. The downtown’s established destination businesses comprise the core of downtown retailing. These businesses include Parkway Florist, Donn Powers Jeweler, and Green Flag Racing. Their core customer markets are the

basis for the downtown custom market described earlier. The food and beverage mix component is comprised primarily of bars; three (3) sit down restaurants are also included in this category. Azteca, Barbieri’s, and MKE City Sippers are the most notable and frequently patronized by the downtown employees, based upon project interviews. Bars and taverns are part of the South Milwaukee and metro area story. Most of South Milwaukee’s bar owners have invested in interior improvements to enhance the overall customer experience. Exterior improvements have lagged, disconnecting what customers see before and after entering.

In addition to the downtown’s major employers, multiple traffic generators exist among the downtown’s commercial entities. The area’s personal service businesses and professional practices bring their customers to the area on a routine basis. Sorce’s Martial Arts attracts adults and children from throughout the metro area to classes and events. The Bucyrus Museum, located within Caterpillar Global Mining, represents a minor traffic generator, averaging between 3,000 and nearly 6,000 visitors annually. Though open to the public, most Museum patrons are Caterpillar vendors, customers, or employees visiting the South Milwaukee facility from throughout the world.

## Downtown Business Mix by Unit & Square Footage Occupied

Downtown Business Mix Category	By Square Footage		By Unit Numbers	
	SF	%	#	%
Entertainment	15,314	3.9%	3	2.5%
Food and Beverage	39,971	10.3%	14	11.6%
FIRE*	21,464	5.5%	10	8.3%
NFP/Institutional	30,074	7.7%	4	3.3%
Industrial/Employment***	9,051	2.3%	5	4.1%
Personal Service	18,354	4.7%	13	10.7%
Professional Practice	32,154	8.3%	12	9.9%
Retail**	29,876	7.7%	14	11.6%
Service	97,792	25.1%	12	9.9%
Vacancy	95,114	24.4%	34	28.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>389,164</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Sources: City of South Milwaukee Downtown Inventory List 2015; BDI.

## DOWNTOWN BUSINESS MODEL

Using the ground floor lease rates for South Milwaukee and for the Milwaukee metro region, two (2) hypothetical downtown business models are shown in the “Comparison Business Operating Estimate” table, below. These ‘back of the envelope’ calculations assume occupancy of a 1,500 SF ground level lease space at the downtown’s estimated rent PSF (\$8.50) and the Milwaukee area average (\$14.49 with \$14.50 used in the example).

Rent-related expenses typically represent no more than 10% of revenues for most ground level downtown businesses. The estimates shown above indicate those businesses capable of paying the Milwaukee market’s average rent are likely generating profits to the business owner, making it a sustainable operation. For additional comparison purposes, the National Retail Federation and International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) indicate that the average sales per square foot (PSF) nationally for all retail stores is about \$300 PSF. Smaller independent retailers occupying 1,500 SF stores are typically profitable with sales of at least \$200 PSF. This equates to at least \$300,000 in annual revenues for these smaller stores meeting national operating norms.

The differences between the two (2) estimates illustrates why marginal or inexperienced tenants frequently go out of business in South Milwaukee’s downtown. These owners lack the skills and capital to sell enough goods to keep their businesses open. Their inexperience means leases with shorter terms at lease rates that inhibit reinvestment in downtown buildings and in the commercial space; both factors contribute to high vacancy rates. Even the most experienced downtown property owners have difficulties leasing to ground level tenants with any potential for success.

## Comparison Business Operating Estimates

<b>Business Operating Estimates: 1,500 SF Store</b>	<b>Current Downtown Rents</b>	<b>Average Metro Rents</b>
<b>Rent per Square Foot</b>	\$8.50	\$14.50
<b>Gross Sales</b>	\$127,500	\$217,500
<b>Cost of Sales (50%)</b>	\$63,750	\$108,750
<b>Net Sales</b>	\$63,750	\$108,750
<b>Rent (10% of Gross Sales)</b>	\$12,750	\$21,750
<b>Marketing</b>	\$7,500	\$10,000
<b>Other Expenses</b>	\$40,000	\$40,000
<b>Income to Owner</b>	\$3,500	\$37,000

Source: BDI

The downtown’s current successful businesses are established, with extensive customer knowledge, market understanding, and proven ability to adapt their operating models to emerging trends. These businesses serve as the core for future downtown business growth. The diversity among downtown’s most successful business types indicates two (2) competitive considerations: (1) well run and interesting food and beverage businesses can be supported by available sales within the downtown’s custom market; (2) how an individual downtown business operates may be more important than what product or service is sold. Downtown economies foster nimble and unique retailers, personal service businesses, and food and beverage businesses. The goal is interesting businesses that stay open and attract customers routinely to multiple businesses.

Overall, a business’ ability and capacity to increase sales at a certain location have a much greater impact on either store or restaurant profitability than do occupancy costs. All tenants believe their rent is too high. But the optimal location will yield greater sales and profits for store or restaurant owners, mitigating the impact of higher rents. For South Milwaukee’s downtown, identifying skilled business owners and entrepreneurs that understand how to formulate a plan and to grow a successful business in a commercial environment, like the downtown, represents one component of implementation. The City and the DAC will need to work pro-actively with regional business growth resources to identify potential new downtown tenants prepared to open a downtown business and to refer any struggling downtown businesses for assistance.

## DOWNTOWN MARKET CONDITIONS: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

To prepare for strategy implementation, four (4) preparatory task sets were created for the August 10, 2015 Downtown Advisory Committee meeting. These task sets will help City officials and the DAC to begin strategy implementation. This work includes:

1. Determining a downtown management structure, or 'Champion,' to administer downtown programs and serve a non-partisan advocate for downtown's interests.
2. Identifying and developing relationships with local, regional, and statewide business and entrepreneurial services as a platform for future revitalization work to grow downtown's economy.
3. Preparing a 'How to Open A Downtown Business' Guide.
4. Considering additional incentive options, as part of City staff's update of current incentive programs. Several options for evaluation were provided. Integrating these incentive options with Tasks 2 and 3, as appropriate, was part of this Task work.

These preparatory tasks combined with current conditions in South Milwaukee's downtown will serve as the basis for the district's future growth.

- » **Strong and diverse downtown businesses.** The downtown has a group of strong and diverse businesses that are currently succeeding in the district. These businesses were identified in the Business Mix section. They include retailers, restaurants, personal services, and the downtown's martial arts academy. Helping these businesses with any of their growth plans within the downtown will be an initial priority. Working with these same businesses to identify new businesses that can share customers and attract new customers to these established businesses will be an important first step to overall downtown sales growth.

- » **Collaboration.** The downtown's business owners' work together on events intended to drive sales and to enhance their collective image. In implementing the final downtown strategies, this ability to work together, whether through the DAC or another implementation structure, makes these businesses an important partner for the City and other downtown stakeholders.
- » **Adequate Markets.** South Milwaukee's markets share similar demographic characteristics with the Milwaukee metro area. The downtown employment base provides an important daytime population for nearby businesses. The core custom market, currently served by many of the downtown's signature businesses, is large enough with sufficient spending power to capture more sales as the downtown's underlying economics improve.
- » **Quality Special Events Calendar.** The City supports an excellent annual calendar of high quality events in the downtown. These events are well attended, and organizers continue to work to improve each event. New and unique events, such as the food truck event, will increase in importance as strategy implementation begins.
- » **Commitment.** The City, the DAC, and the downtown's many stakeholders want the downtown to improve and succeed. Downtowns communicate to outsiders how any community perceives itself. All stakeholders agree that South Milwaukee, as a community, has many advantages—great schools, a regional performing arts center, affordable and diverse housing, the lakefront and parks, fiscally responsible government, and a solid employment base. Having a downtown that also reflects South Milwaukee's many strengths is important for the future and for attracting new residents and businesses to the community.

### **Downtown revitalization is hard work, and it never ends.**

The issues faced by any downtown, or central business district, change over time. Even the most successful districts must proactively respond to change or lose their competitive position. Disinvestment in South Milwaukee's downtown has occurred over decades, and making the downtown vital again will take time, patience, and determination. The final downtown strategies will provide the framework for this work. Most important, the work must get done.

“WHILE SOUTH MILWAUKEE RESIDENTS PATRONIZE DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES, DOWNTOWN’S BUSINESSES MUST GENERATE SALES FROM A BROADER REGION.”

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The following common themes were identified from twenty-two (22) interviews with South Milwaukee’s downtown stakeholders and regional commercial real estate professionals. These interviews were conducted between late June, mid-September, and late December 2015, in addition to January 2016.

### South Milwaukee’s Downtown: General Perceptions

- » South Milwaukee’s downtown, is perceived as a ‘diamond in the rough,’ with the potential to become a unique and interesting place for the community and the Milwaukee region.
- » The City needs to be realistic about the downtown and what it can be. The downtown will remain modest, but it can have some successful businesses and serve as a wonderful amenity for the community.
- » Doing nothing about the downtown is not an option. It will only continue to decline.
- » Key competitive advantages for the city and the downtown are the many local amenities: Grant Park, Performing Arts Center, good schools, diverse housing stock, and well produced community events.
- » The City of South Milwaukee, including the downtown’s stakeholders, needs to improve its self-image and stop the self-deprecating attitude. The City and the community need to overcome this ‘old way’ of thinking about the downtown. They need to think about the future, moving beyond just talking about the downtown and actually taking positive actions.
- » Stronger relationships with major downtown employers are needed, particularly as the current workforce includes more professional and technical staff than manufacturing staff.

### Businesses & Uses

- » As a retail and small office location, the downtown is challenging. There are few amenities. The downtown lacks access to the Milwaukee area’s higher traffic arterials and interstates. Other Milwaukee traditional commercial districts, such as Bay View and Third Ward, have better highway access and are readily accessible to downtown Milwaukee.
- » Marginal new businesses often seek out downtown locations. These businesses and their owners are generally under-capitalized. They are attracted by cheap rents, not by any opportunity to locate their business in a thriving area. From the leasing side, property owners hesitate to use typical commercial multi-year leases. Many leases to these marginal businesses are month-to-month or one year to mitigate risk to the property owners.
- » The downtown appears empty and tired. The only businesses in the downtown are bars. Dining options are limited. Any new stores just go in and out of business quickly.
- » Independently owned, niche businesses, both service and retail, are the only ground floor businesses that can succeed here. Most likely candidates to consider a South Milwaukee location operate existing successful locations in districts to the north and west.
- » Related to the above, these same independently owned businesses must be able to attract customers from a much larger area. While South Milwaukee residents patronize downtown businesses, downtown’s businesses must generate sales from a broader region.
- » Dining and entertainment of all types and formats were suggested. Multicultural dining and casual sit-down dining were suggested most frequently as preferred formats.

### Redevelopment & Development

- » Downtown properties have very low sales prices, given downtown rents and some building condition issues.
- » Since the city is fully built-out and somewhat hidden, developer interest in any potential new development projects in South Milwaukee will be based on the quality of the infill site.

## Appearance & Physical Improvements

- » The downtown needs to be cleaned up, and the appearance of downtown buildings needs to be greatly improved. The buildings look poorly maintained and uninviting. This is what visitors to South Milwaukee and to the downtown really see.
- » The City can insist on quality building rehabilitations and improvements, regardless of use. Cheap isn't always the best approach.
- » Several downtown stakeholders expressed concerns about personal safety and the implications for the district. Encounters with new residents in downtown or nearby apartments and bus transit riders were noted. Some of the area's rental units may be functioning as rooming houses or single room occupancy (SRO) rentals.
- » Additional plantings and other physical improvements are needed to make the downtown look nicer. It doesn't have to be expensive, but unifying elements, like nice benches, common planters, and removing dead trees, would help make the downtown look more inviting.
- » The downtown's bar owners need to be responsible for the actions of their customers. The cigarette butts on the sidewalk in front of every downtown bar really make Milwaukee Avenue look bad.

## Process and Regulation

- » The downtown's vintage properties can be improved to downtown's advantage. Downtown property owners need guidance on how to treat these buildings, and the City needs to apply appropriate regulations to ensure these buildings are fixed and maintained.
- » In addition to the downtown, the residential neighborhoods proximate to the downtown need both a review of current codes and regulations and consistent enforcement. Both should work together to improve the quality of the housing options near downtown and throughout the city.
- » Parking on Milwaukee Avenue no longer requires active regulation during the day. Parking is plentiful, and the current signage and regulations should be modified. Police officers conducting parking work could better be used elsewhere.
- » Inconsistency in code enforcement, combined with lack of understanding about vintage or historic buildings, was cited as problematic for the downtown. This has created apathy among property owners and has facilitated disinvestment.

## Programming

- » The City does a great job in organizing a quality annual event calendar. The weekend events and Farmers Market are considered excellent events.
- » Merchants work together through their downtown group to focus on more retail-oriented program and support City event efforts.
- » The area and its businesses need to be better and more consistently promoted and marketed.
- » The City needs to broaden its direct outreach efforts to downtown business owners. Most owners cannot leave their stores.

## Broader Market Factors

- » South Milwaukee considered 'hidden' by the development community, partially because there are no currently available development opportunities and partially because the downtown is neither visible nor easily accessed.
- » Housing in South Milwaukee is beginning to turnover, with sales to new families.
- » Mobility remains a factor for business growth in the Milwaukee area's emerging commercial districts, or areas. For shopping, dining, and entertainment, residents in region can and easily will drive to other commercial areas. Most are a 30 minute drive or less.

“THROUGH DOWNTOWN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, THE ENTIRE SOUTH MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET A DOWNTOWN THAT WORKS, ENHANCES THE CITY'S IDENTITY AND COMPETITIVE POSITION, AND REFLECTS THE BEST ABOUT THE COMMUNITY.”

## Strategic Implications

The following strategies are suggested by interviews with downtown stakeholders.

- » Maintain focus on the downtown's future. By methodically implementing the final downtown strategies, South Milwaukee's downtown can become another important amenity and gathering place for the entire city, like the schools and Grant Park. The actual work is and will remain difficult. Only the community and its constituencies can fix the downtown over the long-term.
- » Continue to strengthen the relationships with Caterpillar and Johnson Health Tech. While the City has contacts with both firms, they are important beyond their employment base. These companies want to be good citizens. Most important, they can provide additional expertise to assist with downtown revitalization efforts and represent potential funding sources for the city's downtown organization structure and its programming.
- » Address recent concerns regarding personal safety. Additional police monitoring, combined with a joint effort by police, other relevant City staff, property owners, and any social service providers, can identify problem locations and any trends. Rental property owners should also be informed of any specific problems with tenants. Inspections may be needed to identify any non-conforming or inappropriate residential uses. Addressing these concerns comprehensively and factually is very important in districts, like the downtown, that are just starting the revitalization process.
- » Examine current codes, code enforcement, and regulatory processes specific to the downtown and the surrounding neighborhood. This examination can help City officials begin to identify how better enforcement and more efficient processes can work for the downtown's future. Initial steps should include reviewing code requirements for the International Historic Building Codes adopted by the City and their application to downtown buildings, considering what improvements in regulations or codes could ensure that ground level lease space can support modern tenancies, reviewing recent occupancy permits for upper level housing units, and considering if similar code modifications could improve the residential units in the downtown's surrounding neighborhood.
- » Expand current outreach to business and property owners. City officials conduct some current outreach efforts with downtown business and property owners. Expanding these efforts to include one-to-one dialogue and visits will increase goodwill as the revitalization process begins.

“The need to improve the condition and appearance of downtown buildings was noted by every interviewee.”

## Implementation Priorities

- » A defined group, or entity, must be focused on implementation and have clear roles and responsibilities. This group would be accountable for taking action on plan recommendations and leading the revitalization efforts.
- » Basic appearance improvements are critical and represent an important beginning, according to interviewees. Property and business owners must be part of this work, assisting with tasks such as sidewalk snow removal and sweeping outside their stores. The City needs to address trees, ways to soften the appearance, and certain regulations, such as signage. The DAC's littering proposal was cited as one other example of an initial action.
- » Streetscape improvements were a priority noted by most interviewees. The general assumption is that these improvements to sidewalks, lighting, and banners will be uniform and will be phased, based upon available capital funding.
- » The need to improve the condition and appearance of downtown buildings was noted by every interviewee. Whether described as ongoing deterioration, a need for façade improvements, or inappropriate ground floor uses (storage was often cited), addressing disinvestment is a priority for the DAC and for City officials. Related to this issue, City officials emphasized filling vacancies as one aspect of this priority.
- » Benchmarks are needed to understand how progress can be measured and how to adjust revitalization priorities over time.

## Implementation Concerns

- » South Milwaukee needs an understanding of ‘how to’ implement versus a recitation of tasks of ‘what to’ implement. The ‘why to’ implement will also be important to the long-term process.
- » With the understanding described in the above point, the focus must be on the future and just getting the work done. The City needs to invest and be vested in the downtown’s future. Interviewees also understand that the City lacks the staff capacity and resources to revitalize the downtown on its own. There must be a partnership with the private sector, and the private sector needs to assume a much larger leadership role.
- » In revitalizing the downtown, South Milwaukee cannot ‘do things as they have always been done.’
- » The role of the Downtown Advisory Committee needs clarification for the short-term, given it lacks official status, delegated powers, and any budget.
- » South Milwaukee has had a conflicted history in understanding and improving the downtown, and this history concerns certain stakeholders. Past officials have wanted to demolish the downtown or certain buildings without viable alternatives. Some officials have been scared by downtown property owner complaints about regulatory or code enforcement matters or fines. These inconsistent attitudes and counter productive decisions frustrate the downtown’s strong businesses and vested property owners. The City needs to be ‘business friendly’ in a way that supports new and existing business and property owner investment in the downtown and that grows the downtown’s tax base.
- » The City needs to address the social and housing issues fostering negative perceptions about the downtown. There is no apparent sense of urgency to focus on these issues for the good of the downtown and of the surrounding neighborhood.
- » According to most interviewees, South Milwaukee, as a community, lacks strong civic organizations with the capacity to address challenging issues. What organizational capacity that does exist is perceived as ineffective and lacking in vision. Certain interviewees also noted that some local organizations focus on protecting their territory versus working with other entities to improve the community.

## Implementation Opportunities

- » With successful actions, South Milwaukee can be positioned as a truly unique place, assuming anticipated investment occurs in the downtown and throughout the community.
- » Partnerships with Milwaukee area and regional organizations can bring important resources to the community. Funding, resources, and how to pursue them will be key to this process.
- » Through downtown growth and development, the entire South Milwaukee community has the opportunity to get a downtown that works, enhances the City’s identity and competitive position, and reflects the best about the community.
- » City officials and DAC members believe that they can affect downtown change incrementally and comprehensively with a solid local infrastructure in place to address the downtown’s challenges.

“Through downtown growth and development, the entire South Milwaukee community has the opportunity to get a downtown that works, enhances the City’s identity and competitive position, and reflects the best about the community.”

## BEST PRACTICES IN SIMILAR DOWNTOWNS & CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Strategy development also considers what efforts have and are working in similar downtowns, or traditional commercial areas, to South Milwaukee's Milwaukee Avenue. In examining what works elsewhere, the emphasis is on proven strategies that can be readily implemented or adapted to the downtown's needs by the City of South Milwaukee, the Downtown Advisory Committee, the South Milwaukee Community and Business Association (, and other downtown constituencies. Commercial districts throughout the U.S. have addressed countless challenges, and their experiences provide relevant examples – processes, creative ideas, and solutions – for communities like South Milwaukee.

In considering best practices applied in other communities, two (2) points should be noted:

1. Focusing on whether any comparable community is exactly like South Milwaukee ignores the opportunity to apply and adapt proven practices and successful strategies to South Milwaukee's downtown.
2. Embracing the need for downtown, change was the starting point for each of these communities. All of these communities recognized the need to make a commitment to changing how their district was perceived and functioned. These communities recognized that change in their districts would be incremental – requiring time and attention and using effective management.

To inform South Milwaukee's downtown strategies, revitalization efforts in six (6) districts in Wisconsin and elsewhere were reviewed. Four (4) of the communities were suburbs located in Iowa, Ohio, Minnesota, and Massachusetts. **These communities have experienced success in addressing similar local challenges to those of South Milwaukee.** Most communities and their downtowns have industrial uses in or near their traditional commercial district. Most are first-ring suburbs of cities with a similar population as that of the City of Milwaukee. The fifth commercial district considered was Milwaukee's Kinnickinnic Avenue, or "KK." Many of South Milwaukee's downtown stakeholders noted that the KK corridor faced similar issues to those of South Milwaukee's Milwaukee Avenue about 10-15 years ago. The final district considered, again based upon South Milwaukee stakeholder suggestions, was Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

All of these communities have defined organizational structures for their downtowns and have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally for successful programs and

events, improved appearance, and business growth. Plans, tactics, and programs specific to each community were researched, and representatives from all of these communities were interviewed. The best work conducted by each community is organized into the following six (6) categories. Local examples of the programs or tactics used by these communities are described below within those categories.

### Organization

Each of the comparison communities has an organization identified as a downtown, or central business district (CBD), champion. The structure within these six (6) communities varied. They included independent non-profit Main Street organizations, Business Improvement District (BID) management organizations, a downtown revitalization program within a Citywide housing organization, and dedicated City staff. There is no wrong structure. Each organizational structure is based upon what works for that community and how the organization can be sustainably funded.

- » **Maintain strong relationships with major employers or industries in and near the CBD, or downtown.** These entities represent important resources and relationships for CBD revitalization according to all groups interviewed. These resources typically include funding, expertise, and volunteers. In four (4) of the communities interviewed, these key stakeholders have increased their local commitment by funding local programs as good corporate citizens. In one instance, a major employer engaged in downtown revitalization has added employees to their downtown operations. They have also either led or participated in business retention and recruitment efforts for the downtown and other locations in the local community. These downtown organizations also look for unique ways to enhance the downtown and these relationships. For example, working cooperatively with Caterpillar, Johnson Health Tech, and the manufacturing/tech groups within the Milwaukee area's maker movement may present the opportunity to provide maker space for entrepreneurs needing industrial space.
- » **Work directly and collaboratively with City officials and departments.** In any strategy to improve a CBD, or downtown, the relationship between downtown management and City staff is critical to ensuring revitalization success over time. Organizational structures vary among the communities researched. But all of these organizations have very strong partnerships with municipal government.

## Physical Appearance/Design

The downtowns, or CBDs, in all of these similar communities began their improvement work after many years or decades of disinvestment in the area. This is most visible in the condition of the district's buildings, how businesses appear, the cleanliness of the sidewalks and streets, and whether the area looks inviting.

- » **Address infrastructure improvements within the early years.** All of the communities improved their district's infrastructure and streetscape on a phased basis to match available funding. Typically, these projects were completed during the first seven (7) years of their revitalization effort. During these major projects, downtown managers worked with downtown property owners to improve vacant spaces and with downtown businesses on construction mitigation. As a result of these major projects, marginal businesses often go out of business, presenting re-tenanting opportunities. Working throughout the project to either strengthen these businesses or anticipate potential vacancies is an accepted management role.
- » **Integrate other appearance improvements with infrastructure and streetscape plans.** The similar communities considered multiple opportunities as part of these major improvements. Like South Milwaukee, most were linear districts. Connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods, within the district or corridor, and with parking and transit were an initial part of this work. Efforts to overcome negative perceptions, including anti-crime task forces, increased liquor license enforcement, or regulations addressing sidewalk cleanliness, were among the first programs implemented. Identifying funding sources for wayfinding and signage was another effort. For later implementation, public art programs, either temporary or permanent, were initiated to showcase district change.
- » **Develop district design guidelines.** All of the comparison districts are comprised of vintage or historic buildings. Several districts are listed in the National Register of Historic Places; many include locally designated landmarks. Key to successful building rehabilitations is the attitude that the community can 'do better.' The design guidelines describe the types of improvements suitable to local building stock. In those communities with architectural review or historic preservation review (or both), collaboration among downtown management, the board or commission, and property owners is important to ensure that standards in the guidelines are met and that local processes are consistent. Often, these same processes are used to approve local incentives.

- » **Identify ways to address long-standing vacancies.** In addition to conducting outreach to commercial property owners and brokers, several communities have adopted vacant property ordinances to address long vacant properties. These ordinances increase the responsibility of property owners to maintain their buildings and any adjoining land and to deter vandalism, potential safety hazards, or deterioration that could affect nearby properties. These ordinances typically require registration of the vacant building with the municipality and some level of continuing fees while the property remains vacant.

## Business Growth

In all of the downtowns, or CBDs, studied, developing a strong and interesting business mix is key to district success. As this occurs over time, weaker businesses are replaced by stronger businesses. The increasing strength of the overall business mix, particularly the ground level tenants, enhances customer and business attraction.

- » **Emphasize business basics in business retention and recruitment.** In the communities reviewed, this meant one goal—having serious independent business owners interested in operating profitable businesses in ground level space. By pursuing this goal, the variety of businesses strengthens the overall mix and fosters an environment where these same well-run businesses can expand within the district.
  - » **Applying multiple approaches to identifying and supporting district business owners.** Related to the singular goal noted above, each community applied one or more of the following approaches to identifying, supporting, and recruiting new businesses:
  - » **Requiring a business plan and committed financing, as needed, for new business owners as a condition of leasing ground floor space.** In addition to this requirement as a standard, several communities (and some Milwaukee neighborhoods) have used business plan competitions to identify potential new businesses for prepared tenant spaces. These competitions have also included the support services noted in the next point.
  - » **Developing a system of local and regional small business and entrepreneurship resources to strengthen current ground floor businesses, if needed, and to assist potential business owners in developing a business plan.** A list of these

resources was provided to South Milwaukee's DAC to initiate a working relationship with each of them in preparation for downtown strategy implementation. Promoting and encouraging access to these resources should be consistently communicated to prospective and existing downtown businesses.

- » **Working with the City, South Milwaukee's CDA and other economic development partners to establish a uniform process for prospective new businesses seeking downtown and City locations.** Based upon the business type, one contact would be assigned to the prospective owner. For example, if a small business is seeking a downtown location, the downtown manager would serve as a point of contact, provide information about incentives, relevant permitting and regulatory processes, timeframes, and fees, and work with that small business throughout the process to successful opening.
- » **Identifying locations for shared occupancies in tandem with downtown property owners.** In addition to identifying locations, partnerships with regional small business resources in the second bullet point above must be in place. These kinds of spaces include incubators (service, arts, and shared kitchens as an example), maker spaces and arts studios for industrial or larger commercial spaces, and co-working spaces in CBD upper stories and flexible lease space. In supporting the growth of these shared concepts, the CBD gains more diverse uses and an incrementally increases the employment base.
- » **Collaborating with downtown property owners to conduct tours of empty properties, or ground floor vacancies.** Multiple communities have organized these tours to attract interested small businesses and artisans to their downtown vacancies. For South Milwaukee, storefront tours represent partnership opportunities with building owners, the South Milwaukee area's commercial brokers, and the region's potential entrepreneurs accessing the small business resources, such as WWBIC, noted above.

## Marketing & Promotion

South Milwaukee's downtown has an advantage over the comparison communities as it begins to consider how to promote the downtown – a complete and well-regarded special events calendar. The communities researched each have developed strong community events and festivals. In addition to these events, these districts have incrementally crafted a new image, or market position, for the district as it improves. Events designed to drive customers to downtown businesses is part of this more strategic and comprehensive approach.

- » **Begin to establish a new downtown market position.** Linked to the recommended physical design elements, this initial image will begin to convey the message that South Milwaukee's downtown is changing. This emerging image can be incorporated into existing City and merchant sponsored events and media (traditional and new) and begin to differentiate South Milwaukee's downtown from nearby corridors and downtowns. As the downtown strengthens, this more fully developed image can serve as the basis for the downtown's brand.
- » **Maintain and refine the current downtown event calendar.** The special events held in South Milwaukee's downtown constitute a complete special events calendar. The City and future downtown management should continue to maintain the quality of these events and to evaluate the schedule annually for potential changes or improvements. Working in tandem with downtown businesses and the CBA, merchant events, intended to directly result in sales, should complement the current schedule. Events sponsored by other South Milwaukee organizations can be added to the calendar, assuming that these events are well organized and with minimal cost.
- » **Monitor the competitive environment.** The downtown and nearby districts will continue to change. New development will occur, and businesses go in and out of business. Considering the impact of these competitive factors on the downtown and its businesses are an important ongoing component of market positioning.

## Incentives

Among the communities researched, incentive programs differed. Their local incentives were developed to fund specific local, or downtown, needs. Some were small dollar incentives; some substantial depending upon available funding sources. All of these communities or organizations established standards of quality for each type of incentive supported. Also, all of these communities promoted these incentives as increasing investment in the downtown or community.

- » **Tie incentives to specific physical appearance issues.** Examples of local incentives included:
  - » Technical assistance grants are available from two (2) communities. Each provides \$500 or \$1,000 in direct grants paying for design services to ensure that downtown, or traditional CBD, projects are sympathetic to historic or vintage buildings.
  - » A shared sprinkler project among nine (9) buildings with a shared control room. This allowed the City to dig once for installation and to meet all local and state life safety codes.
  - » Reimbursement for grease trap installation or other City required expenses for such items as special utility hook-ups to assist restaurateurs in opening new locations.
  - » Façade improvement programs for exteriors. These programs were funded in multiple ways, usually with an applicant match, and funded projects were expected to conform to downtown design, historic preservation, or architectural review guidelines.
  - » Interior space, including upper story, improvements to ensure move-in quality space. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were used by one (1) community to fund this incentive. One community's program offers from a \$50,000-\$250,000 match per project for upper story housing improvements. Funding is derived from a federal funding source. Most used Tax Increment Financing (TIF), if available, as a funding source to enable ongoing improvements.
  - » Window, signage, and awning replacement were among the smaller incentives offered as grants.
- » **Streamline local processes.** These actions ranged from one municipal point of contact for project applications, to local guides to open a business, to joint efforts

by downtown, City, County and state or regional organizations to use the same process, a designated point of contact, and access to all of these resources to ensure efficient local processing and a positive business owner experience.

- » **Apply local regulations to incent investment and mitigate any negative perceptions.** The development and use of downtown design guidelines is one method of ensuring quality and conformance to local building regulations. One (1) community had several problem bars within their downtown district. **Using local liquor license regulations to reinforce responsible ownership and to limit the number of bar liquor licenses** convinced current and prospective owners holding licenses that the City and downtown management were serious about addressing one of most negative perceptions about their district. **Another community has a vacant property ordinance for vacant industrial and commercial properties.** Vacancies must be registered with the City, typically with public safety personnel. An annual fee for vacancies is charged at the time of registration. The base fee is \$400 annually. This annual fee is then doubled each year the property remains vacant. Required maintenance standards, regular inspections, and understanding each owner's defined plans for the property are typically other aspects of successful vacant property ordinances.

## Nearby Neighborhoods

The appearance of the surrounding residential neighborhood can reinforce either positive or negative perceptions about any downtown or CBD. **The communities interviewed and researched recognize the interdependency between their CBD and surrounding neighborhoods and how the image of the CBD reflects on the nearby neighborhood, and vice versa.** Most communities are also just starting to address this issue.

- » **Enhance the housing stock near the downtown.** Housing improvements in neighborhoods proximate to suburban downtowns and traditional urban corridors have become an increasingly important issue in addressing certain negative perceptions about these commercial areas. In most communities, neighborhood housing is addressed as part of a Citywide housing program in most of the comparison communities. Examining regulations that deter the appearance and modernization of housing stock near these districts represent one way to strengthen their pedestrian market and neighborhood connectivity.

» **Develop programs specific to rental properties and to homeowners.** In two (2) of the communities examined for best practices, 80% of the community's housing stock is over 80 years old. In both communities, high percentages (over 40%) of rental properties exist near their downtowns. Their work with rental properties started with meetings with problem landlords. Ensuring that existing regulations are enforced and requiring periodic inspections of rental units represented two (2) strategies. The objective of all of these efforts is to improve neighborhood appearance and appeal for prospective residents. Licensing or registration of residential rental units has also been an effective tool used by municipal government to ensure and maintain property standards. New purchasers represent an emerging opportunity in these same neighborhoods. Whether Millennials seeking a first home in an urban-like setting or buyers committed to the 'small house' ethic, neighborhoods near traditional commercial districts are an attractive option. For new homeowners in these neighborhoods, inspections are required at sale, and both communities offer education programs on topics, such as weatherization and preservation. Regulating housing permits, resident parking, additions and major improvements, lot coverage, and maintenance ensures that these residences remain attractive to current and prospective residents and sustains housing values, the local property tax base, and the varied housing types within the community.

### Strategic Implications from Best Practices

Each of these communities began their downtown work facing one or more significant local challenges. Examples include the loss of a major downtown employer, crumbling streetscape and infrastructure, bad reputation from a concentration of rowdy bars or other seedy activities, and high vacancy rates due to marginal or hobby businesses. In several communities, it was a combination of these challenges – all of which result in ongoing and cumulative disinvestment in their downtown or district. The local solutions developed by these similar districts and downtowns provide valuable examples of responsive programming to commercial district issues. These examples represent opportunities to duplicate or adapt certain programs and ideas to the needs of South Milwaukee's downtown.

Often, communities beginning to address downtown revitalization assume that marketing is their best answer to downtown 'problems.' Marketing, or promotion, is an easier answer, and generally more fun. Marketing and events, among other programs, are certainly an important part of any comprehensive approach to improving a downtown district. But better marketing is rarely the best or only answer. The central issues facing South Milwaukee's downtown and similar districts are the result of declining economics over time. Addressing the downtown's economic fundamentals is challenging work that must be started strategically. The communities described above recognize the importance of focusing on economic challenges in their programming. This analysis suggests four (4) initial strategies to revitalize South Milwaukee's downtown economy.

1. Ensure the resources identified in the preparatory steps provided to the City and DAC are in place.
2. Develop the organizational framework to begin change in the downtown. This framework should identify responsibilities for initial work.
3. Focus on the basics first, meaning what outsiders notice. Three (3) downtown facts inform this 'basics first' emphasis. These facts are: (1) when visitors come to South Milwaukee's downtown, they see vacancies; (2) 10th Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue functions as the downtown's 100% corner; (3) most of the downtown's strongest businesses are proximate to this intersection. Matching the resources identified in the preparatory work with willing property owners in the blocks adjacent to this intersection will foster building improvements, better occupancies, downtown sales, area appearance, and foster development of a unique cluster that can be readily marketed to the Milwaukee region. Appropriate incentives and City processes are another aspect of 'basics first.'
4. **Maintain the downtown events calendar and add activities incrementally.** Take every opportunity to publicize all downtown successes, including new business openings and business anniversaries.

## DOWNTOWN DEFINITION & BOUNDARIES

The accepted boundaries of any traditional downtown district, like South Milwaukee's, have historical and commercial origins. The primary goal of the original South Milwaukee Company in the 1890s was "...[to] create and develop a substantial new industrial suburb." Throughout the City's story, industry and the downtown's traditional blocks have co-existed, and both remain important to the City's future.

The view shown in the illustration below shows the focus of the most business activity along Milwaukee Avenue between 8th and 12th Avenues and encompassing the blocks to the north and south of Milwaukee Avenue. In considering what South Milwaukee's downtown boundaries are, two (2) questions require consideration:

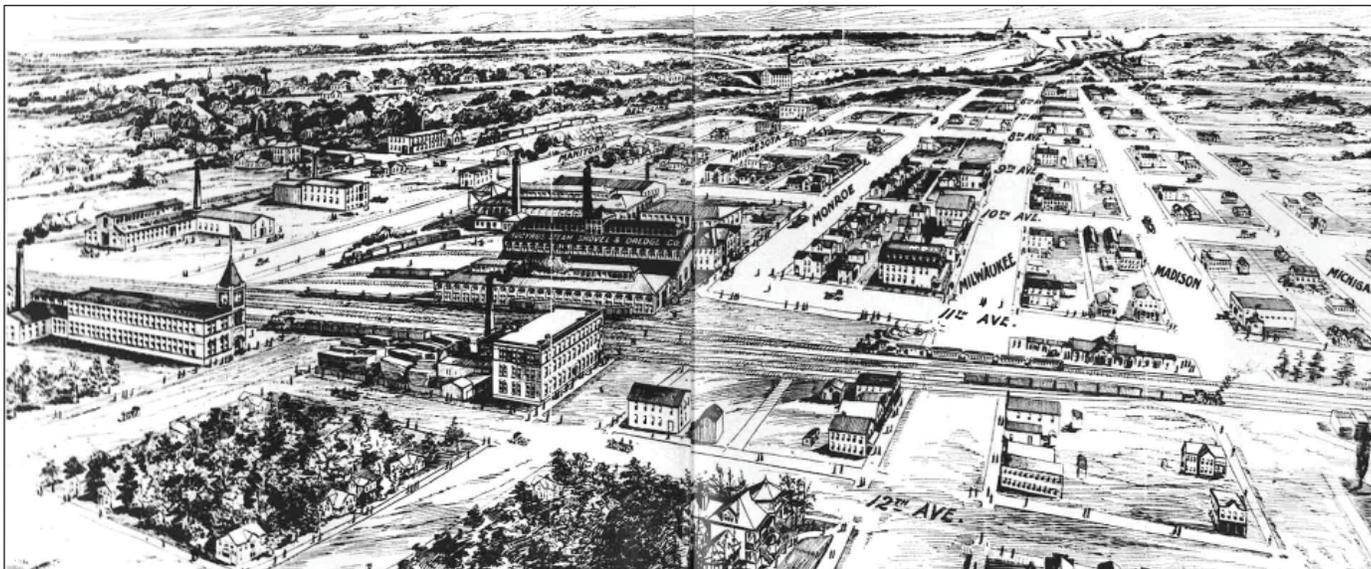
1. What does the community understand to be the downtown?
2. What areas of the downtown represent the foundation for expanding economic growth and reinvestment?

Both of these questions can provide focus for the downtown's future in unique ways. South Milwaukee hosts multiple events and festivals along Milwaukee Avenue. City residents and visitors from nearby attend these special events each year. Most of these downtown visitors likely assume that South Milwaukee's downtown is generally similar to those shown in this Illustration, perhaps including an additional block to the west. The vintage buildings along Milwaukee Avenue from 8th through 13th Avenues outline the downtown's core footprint. Downtown stakeholders have generally agreed that the boundaries

of downtown on Milwaukee Avenue are focused from 7th to 14th Avenues, and are reflected as such in this Plan. How the downtown actually functions also frames these perceptions. Currently, the downtown serves as a series of destinations within a vintage business district with most commercial activity near 10th and Milwaukee Avenues. The downtown functions similarly for event participants and attendees, as a place for a short visit to a specific location for food, entertainment, or both.

Transforming the downtown from a series of destinations and short visits to an economically viable commercial district where residents and visitors circulate and spend time may be the most important strategic objective for future implementation. The downtown's strongest blocks are near the 10th Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue intersection, based upon traffic, existing destination businesses, and institutions, such as South Milwaukee's Public Library. The intersection of 10th and Milwaukee Avenues consequently functions as the downtown's core. The surrounding blocks can serve as a catalyst area to begin the City and downtown's revitalization work along Milwaukee Avenue.

For South Milwaukee, the downtown boundaries should remain unchanged. Though the initial economic focus of the downtown strategies will be the catalyst blocks noted above, this does not mean that the remainder of the downtown will be ignored. Opportunities for improvement on other downtown blocks and access to business resources should be encouraged and facilitated by the City and downtown. Applying a catalyst approach strengthens the most visible downtown blocks with the most businesses and stimulates growth and interest in the downtown.



A 1893 bird's eye view of downtown South Milwaukee, designed as an advertisement to attract new businesses to the area

## OPTIONS FOR DOWNTOWN IF MAJOR MANUFACTURING CEASES

As noted in the Market Conditions sections of this report, manufacturing remains important to Wisconsin's economy. The manufacturing sector in Wisconsin has outperformed the national rate of job growth. Though growth has returned, the state's manufacturing jobs have declined from 600,000 in 2000 to 430,000 in 2010, increasing to 475,000 by 2015. Manufacturing in Wisconsin and elsewhere remain subject to the long-term impact of global market cycles, such as the recent decline in global mining markets on Caterpillar, and manufacturers of all sizes continue to assess their facilities requirements.

Caterpillar and its predecessor, Bucyrus, have occupied their Milwaukee Avenue site for over a century. This site, encompassing 28.2 acres with nearly 982,00 SF of buildings, is the downtown's predominant feature. Caterpillar employees patronize downtown restaurants, and many still live in South Milwaukee. While there are no indications that Caterpillar plans to leave South Milwaukee and their downtown facilities, the formulation of any downtown strategy must consider this possibility.

A closer and ongoing relationship between the City of South Milwaukee and Caterpillar has been recommended throughout this downtown Strategy process. It is important for both partners to routinely communicate and to collaborate—the City to understand more about its major downtown and corporate citizen, and the company to understand the City's plans for the downtown and the community. Understanding where the interests of both entities intersect is crucial for the downtown's future. As these sustained conversations expand, the City can better understand the site's real estate ownership structure(s), any potential environmental challenges, and Caterpillar's emerging plans for its Global Mining division and applying technology to benefit its customers.

For Caterpillar, increased engagement with the local community will enhance its regional image and support downtown improvements that represent amenities for its many employees and visitors. As the City develops partnerships with regional economic development groups, the City could also introduce new resources, or partners, to Caterpillar management. An established relationship will be crucial if Caterpillar should choose to leave South Milwaukee. Any transition will require working together, and it will be a more effective process for the City, its residents, and downtown stakeholders.

For South Milwaukee, examples of the re-use of industrial facilities, including Milwaukee's Pabst Brewhouse, have occurred throughout the U. S. Michigan has experienced innovative and unusual redevelopment of industrial sites and facilities in large and small communities, resulting from contraction in the auto industry. The more challenging aspect to redevelopment is that these projects take time, sometimes decades, to develop and succeed. These projects require creativity in identifying how to phase development to best align with market demand and the best potential uses, or mix of uses. Any environmental issues specific to a vacated site can extend the redevelopment timeline, affecting costs and uses, and has significant implications for the municipality in lost revenues, staff time, and transition planning.

Local communities faced by major plant closures have applied five (5) common steps. All of these steps recognize the economic and emotional toll to both employees and local communities. The steps include:

- » Transition planning. With any announcement, City and corporate leaders bring together local or regional workforce and career development experts, area colleges and universities, and social support services and their networks to coordinate long-term services for employees losing their jobs. This planning should be comprehensive, involving as many local institutions that can contribute. Understanding the overall impact on job opportunities and local income loss are other aspects of transition. Planning should also include initial projections of City revenues to serve as the basis for revenue stabilization, as described below.
- » The status of the site, land and buildings. This is why understanding how ownership is structured, what if any environment challenges exist, and how and at what cost remediation can occur. Whether the corporation carries the relevant insurance coverage to pay for any potential environmental cleanup is part of this process. The ratios of buildings to land can be a factor in certain redevelopment scenarios.
- » Revenue stabilization. The revenue implications for City operations and local taxpayers are often overwhelming. For local government, identifying new and growing local revenue sources to mitigate potential revenue losses and severe expense reductions will be important to the City and any downtown management organization. Identifying potential and long-term public-private partnerships is also part of this work.
- » Site work and preparatory funding. The step really assesses development readiness for the industrial site. Depending upon the timing of any environment work at the site, funding sources for site preparation, site visioning, and site master planning should be identified. Examining varied re-uses and the market support of those uses will also require analysis and study. Site characteristics that affect marketability and re-use are: ownership (as noted above), rail access, highway access, traffic and truck circulation to and around the site, building condition(s) and size(s) at the site, potential for conflicts with nearby neighborhoods, condition of infrastructure, and land and redevelopment costs, based upon proposed uses. Strategically, pursuing regional, state, and federal funding sources will be necessary to prepare for the start of redevelopment.
- » Future project planning and development. Adapting industrial properties for re-use requires that experienced developers be targeted for industrial redevelopment. These projects are considered riskier by the broader real estate market and require sophisticated analysis by lenders. Project financing is layered, and project returns need to justify the time commitment to negotiate these complicated debt and equity structures through project completion. The complexity associated with the redevelopment of large parcels may require phased development over time. Financing often includes City, regional or state incentives, tax increment financing (TID), applicable federal tax credits, private investors, and loan guarantees. Inherent in financing is an agreed upon land value prior to any developer solicitation.

Any potential plant closure or departure of a major employer will affect the local community in ways that cannot be quantified. Some communities, as part of site visioning, have altered how they view the site, considering it as built space with land versus as vacant land with former factory spaces. The process may also require a radical repurposing of the industrial site. Successful re-uses have included housing, medical facilities, commercial mixed use, urban agriculture, and in one Detroit example, National Public Radio as a primary tenant. Directly addressing each challenge as part of a sustained process is the fundamental approach used by most communities achieving effective re-use for vacated industrial sites. This desire to translate a major economic setback into a positive future is ultimately what differentiates communities with successful redevelopments at former industrial sites.

## EVENT “TIERS” FOR PUBLIC PLACES

The ideal public event place – the top of the list – is one that generates a high level of human activity for a diverse population and requires minimal levels of pre-planning, management, or maintenance.

The least ideal form of a public event place is one that offers little activity, focuses on a single population group, and requires high levels of planning, management and maintenance.

**The purpose of this discussion in the Comprehensive Plan Update and Central Business District Strategy is to help South Milwaukeeans create (and feasibly maintain) a variety of the first 4 public places, suitable to their location and context in the community.**

There are many different combinations of these variables. Some familiar types of public places (ranked from “most public” to “least public”) are:

### 1. “Un-programmed, every-day” public places

This is usually a small, intimate setting (something like a small café area with outdoor seating) combined with some area that has some benches, trees, or other ornamental features. Some of these places are quite successful without any landscape, but some require small clusters of trees to create a sense of enclosure. Many streets should be considered public event places as well, especially if they have many entrances to stores and other activities.

The key to these places is that they offer high levels of “every-day” activity for individuals and small groups but do not require any event planning. The individuals who use them do so as their own personal choice. The reason for the importance of these types of public places is that they tend to have the highest volume of users. Unfortunately, regional trends currently do not include counting how many people walk up and down a local street or sit at the café – but, day after day, those people represent a substantial quantity of users. In the future, the City of South Milwaukee could assess the relative success of these places by measuring the number of users per square foot per day or, more importantly, unplanned social interactions per square foot per day. That is, it is possible to quantify the success of these places through uncharted assessments.

Local examples: Azteca’s outdoor dining, Heritage Park (northwest corner of Milwaukee and 10th Avenues), Milwaukee Avenue itself

### 2. Un-programmed event destination places

These are event places that are sought out by individuals for a specific purpose – they might be called “individual destination” places. There are no tickets or special times for attendance. Typical examples are places where individuals wish to walk in a park (or take their dog for a walk), or places where people can engage in unorganized sports events (e.g. frisbee, tag, playing catch, sledding on a hill, playing in a splash pad, using the children’s playground, flying a kite, having a picnic, swimming at the beach).

Local examples: Grant Park, Oak Creek Parkway, Rawson Park

### 3. Programmed every-day event places

This type of place, like the every-day event place described above, is open to all but requires significant special programming to attract visitor traffic.

Local examples: South Milwaukee Farmers Market, local block parties, the Food Truck festival.

### 4. Programmed special event places (open or closed)

Programmed special events are often used to create high activity levels when (a) no every-day uses have emerged or (b) when there is a strong unmet need for the type of event. In some cases, these event spaces are relatively “open” and do not require any special payment or entrance process – not unlike some beach volleyball courts or a festival in a local park. In other cases, special events are “closed” or private and require admission fees – like major sporting or entertainment venues, theme parks, zoos and aquariums. These latter types of places are not usually defined by most people as “public places,” but they do carry the responsibility of creating a strong sense of community.

One of the undesirable features of this type of special event place, especially when outdoors, is that when the event does not occur, the place is typically empty and offers little sense of public value. In fact, these special event places often create a negative emotional response when people view the space empty. The key to preventing this negative emotional response is to ensure these special event places can host secondary and tertiary uses during the times when they are not use for primary special events.

### 5. Unoccupied places

Without doubt, the least desirable form of public event place is that which is unoccupied. Unfortunately, this category includes some places intended for high occupancy that result, in fact, in empty lawns and vacant views. These places can be as small as a landscape along a sidewalk or a large open garden in front of a major office building. The lack of occupancy is due not to a security fence, but to the simple unappealing nature of the place. Unoccupied places have a specifically pernicious attribute – they are often less expensive to manage and maintain and, at the same time, can document a “good intention” by the owner (whether it is a public agency or a private business). Put another way, unoccupied places can appear “politically correct” by dedicating open space, but instead act as social detriments. The creation of great public places in along the lakefront and social/economic nodes.



Source: GRAEF



Source: Google

Existing conditions of the south east corner of Milwaukee and 10th Avenues



Source: GRAEF

A photomontage of future opportunities for the south side of the 1100 block of Milwaukee Avenue, at the intersection with 10th Avenue, including improvements to the current Tri-City public space and restoration of existing buildings.



Source: Google Earth

Existing conditions of the north side of the 1000 block of Milwaukee Avenue, at the intersection with 10th Avenue

### “Spontaneous” Public Place Activity for Small Groups & Individuals

The ideal public place would achieve several key objectives, each of which would increase the prominence of South Milwaukee (and thereby increase the value of the whole community as a desirable residential location).

This is usually a small, intimate setting (something like a small café area with outdoor seating) combined with some area that has some benches, trees, or other ornamental features. Some of these places are quite successful without any landscape but some require small clusters of trees to create a sense of enclosure.

Many streets should be considered as public event places as well, especially if they have many entrances to stores and other activities.

These types of public places should provide effective, high-frequency access vs. limited, low frequency access. That is, simply allowing a pedestrian to walk to a place does not lead to higher levels of experience. Utilization should stimulate diverse, high level utilization from different population groups rather than selective, more “privatized” utilization.

Privatization does not mean that there is no public access – only that such public access is discourage and is incentivized by visual and physical characteristics that make a place less welcoming and rate the feeling that a visitor is not welcome or is intruding on someone else’s territory. The opposite feeling should be encouraged. As these places are created they should also embody features which build upon the historical, long-term cultural value rather than emphasize non-historical or non-traditional value. The key to these places is that they offer high levels of “every-day” activity for individuals and small groups but do not require any event planning. The individuals who use them do so as their own personal choice.



Source: GRAEF

Existing conditions of Heritage Park on the northwest corner of Milwaukee and 10th Avenues

The reason for the importance of these types of public places is that they tend to have the highest volume of users. Unfortunately no one counts how many people walk up and down a local street or sit at the café but, day after day, it usually represents a very large number. These are also spontaneous event places that are sought out by individuals for some specific purpose – they might be called “individual destination” places. There are no tickets or special times for attendance. Typical examples are individuals who wish to walk in a park (or take their dog for a walk), those who wish to engage in unorganized sports events (Frisbee, tag, playing catch, sledding on a hill, playing in a splash pad, using the children’s playground, flying a kite, having a picnic, swimming at the beach).



A photomontage of future opportunities for the north side of the 1000 block of Milwaukee Avenue, at the intersection with 10th Avenue, including improvements to Heritage Park, the Milwaukee Avenue streetscape, redevelopment, and restoration / rehabilitation of existing buildings

### **“Managed” Public Place Activity for Small Groups & Individuals**

This type of place, like the everyday even place described above, is open to all but it does require significant special programming. A good example is the farmers market, block party, or street festival. Programmed special events are often used to create high activity levels when (a) no every-day uses have emerged or (b) when there is a strong unmet need for the type of event. In some case these event spaces are relatively “open” and do not require any special payment or entrance process like some beach volley ball or a festival in a local park. In other cases special events are “closed” or private and require admission fees like major sporting or entertainment venues, theme parks, zoos and aquariums. These latter types of places are not usually defined by most personas “public places” but they do have great potential to create a strong sense of community. One of the undesirable features of this type of special event places, especially those outdoors, is that when they event does not occur, the place is usually empty and offers no sense of public value. In fact it often has the opposite impact of creating a negative emotional response when people see the empty space.

### **“Event” Places**

Every community needs places for special events like a concert, ceremony, or other form of civic activity intended to bring together large groups of people. These larger scale public events are not sufficient to animate public places on a year-round basis but they do contribute substantially to civic pride and identity. Typically these events are located in large areas used for other activities during the year including, for example, large recreational playfields, parking lots, and similar venues. While these places are important they do not substitute for the other types of every-day use, either “spontaneous” or “managed” noted above.

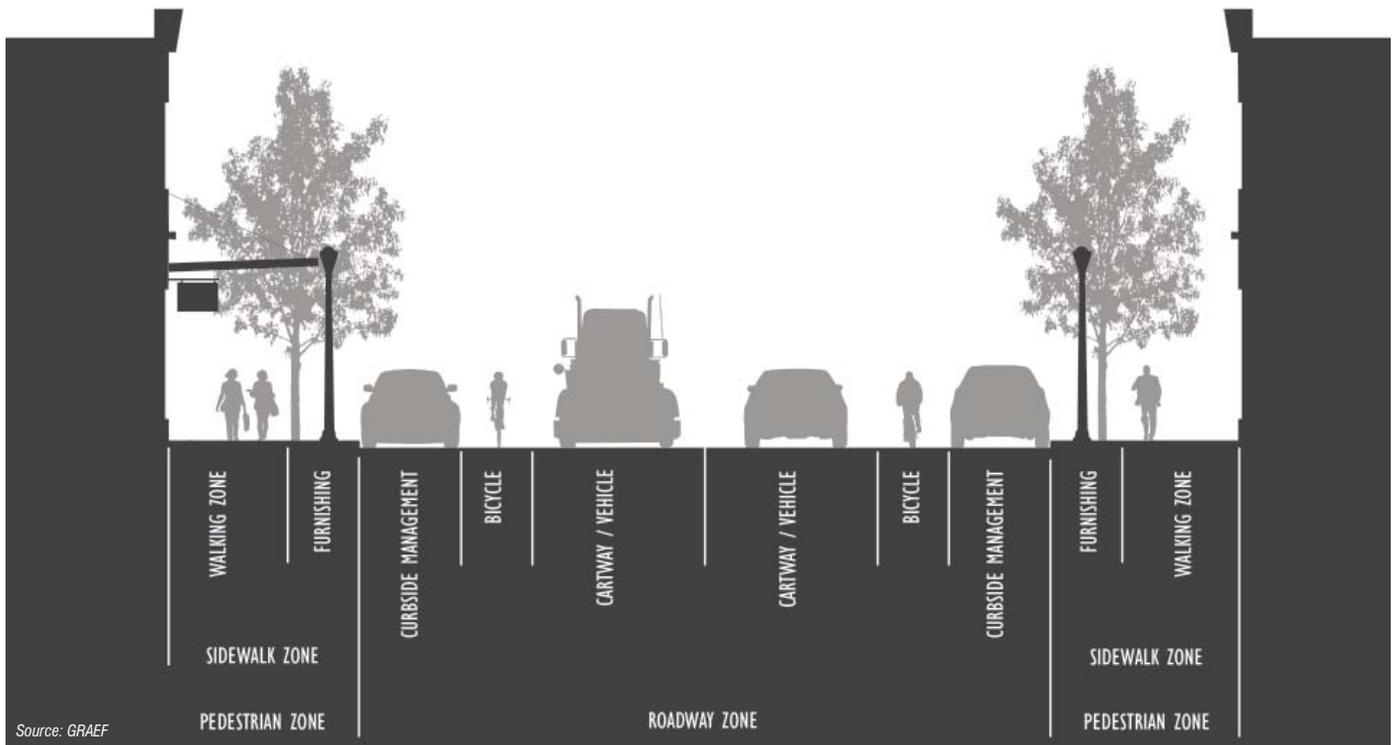
### **Low Occupancy Places to be Avoided**

Another type of public event place is that which is unoccupied. Unfortunately this includes some places intended for high occupancy that result, in fact, with empty lawns and vacant views. This can be as small as a landscape along a sidewalk or a large open garden in front of a major office building. The lack of occupancy is due not to a security fence but the simple unappealing nature of the place. Unoccupied public places have a specifically pernicious attribute – they are inexpensive to manage and maintain and, at the same time, can document a “good intention” by the owner (whether it is a public agency or a private business). Put another way unoccupied places can appear “politically correct” but act as social detriments.

## STREETSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

Streetscape design is a critical tool for improving the overall aesthetic of Milwaukee Avenue. Streetscape also helps define Milwaukee Avenue as a 'place', or the spot that residents, businesses and visitors recognize and can identify with. The following streetscape considerations look to improve the physical character of streets within the downtown, as well as contribute to the growth in economic and social activity.

For the purpose of this plan, streetscape considerations includes components within the sidewalk space (pedestrian zone) and within the street itself (roadway zone). The following pages provide an overview of different streetscape components as well as some specific considerations for the Downtown.



## PEDESTRIAN ZONE

### Sidewalk Zone

#### Pedestrian Zone Width

- » Pedestrian zone includes:
  - » The frontage zone – the section of the sidewalk that functions as an extension of the building.
  - » The walking zone
  - » The building/furnishing zone, which includes sidewalk cafés, sandwich boards, bike racks, bike share stations, bus stops, signage, lighting, and street trees.
  - » Sidewalk standards should accommodate higher anticipated pedestrian volumes and provide ample space for an expanded frontage zone, including street furniture, such as trash receptacles, bus stops, signage, and bike share stations.

#### Walking Zone Width

- » Clear walking distance should be at least 5 feet wide, 6 feet when abutting a building – to meet ADA requirements and large enough for two people to walk side by side.
- » Property values are strongly associated with walkability in nearly all metropolitan areas.

### Furnishings Zone

#### Furnishing Zone Width

- » The section of the sidewalk between the curb and the through zone in which street furniture and amenities, such as lighting, benches, newspaper kiosks, utility poles, tree pits, and bicycle parking are provided. See the following components for more detailed descriptions.

#### Bicycle Parking

- » Bicycle parking that is protected and highly visible is helpful in encouraging the utilization of bike lanes and help create destinations that attract users to the area and visit businesses and other downtown amenities.
- » Bike racks should be located within the terrace space and positioned parallel with the back of curb. This prevents bikes from sticking into the street or the pedestrian walking zone. Bike racks could also be positioned within new curb bump out areas.
- » Bike racks should be positioned between the regular rhythm of street trees and light poles.



Source: GRAEF

- » Bubl bike sharing stations should be supported by the City and positioned at high activity areas within the downtown.

### Lighting

- » Street lighting increases visibility for all street users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Lighting also provides the benefit of increasing safety and visibility of businesses within downtown at night.
- » The City should look to replace existing street light poles with new, updated poles and lamps (maintained by the City) that create a specific brand for Milwaukee Avenue.
- » Street lighting should be scaled for pedestrians. The inclusion of 15' light poles supports the walkability of the downtown area via a pedestrian design scale. Another option would be to include a taller, 30' pole that includes both street and sidewalk lamps (see image to the right).
- » Exterior treatment of light poles should complement the color of all other street amenities (benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, etc.).
- » All light poles should be equipped with double banner arms and electrical receptacles. Electric receptacles make seasonal lighting convenient.
- » Double banner arms allow for one banner to be placed on each side of the same pole. One of these banners should clearly identify 'South Milwaukee' on a year-round basis. The other banner should act as a local branding banner that can be switched out seasonally. These seasonal banners would vary depending on the area of downtown.

### Benches

- » Sidewalk seating provide opportunities to pedestrians to enjoy streets, businesses, wait for transit, and take rests, therefore encouraging walkability and connectivity.
- » Benches should be focused at intersections along Milwaukee Avenue. Secondary locations for benches should be explored by the City (transit stops, plazas, high activity areas, etc.).
- » If possible, benches should be grouped with other street amenities such as trees, planters and trash receptacles.
- » Exterior treatment of benches should match the color of all other street amenities (light poles, bike racks, trash receptacles, etc.).



### Sidewalk Cafes

- » Sidewalks that allow for sidewalk cafés and other amenities can add significant economic value to businesses, increase pedestrian traffic, and improve the street life and amenities to city dwellers (see image to the right).
- » The City should support the creation of sidewalk cafes to existing restaurants along Milwaukee Avenue.

### Street Trees

- » Trees provide shade, and have the potential to slow traffic speeds, especially when placed on a curb bump out in line with on-street parking.
- » Street trees frame the street and sidewalk, providing rhythm and nature to the life of the street.

### Planters & Planter Pots

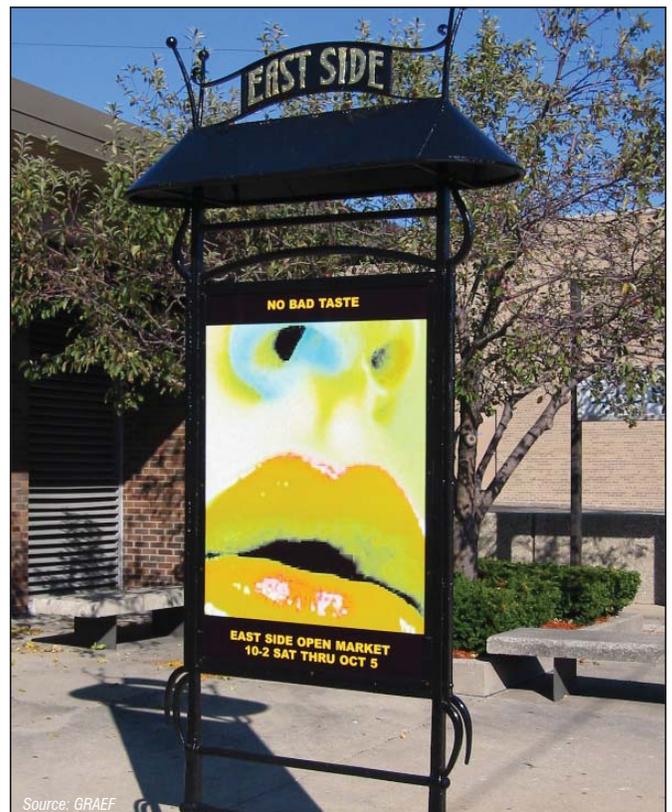
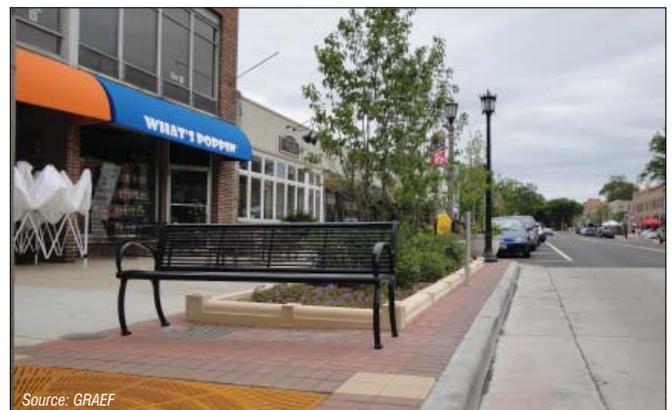
- » Existing planter pots along Milwaukee Avenue are dated and appear out-of-place. If the inclusion of floral vegetation and plant-life is still desired along the corridor, longer-term solutions (such as raised curb planters) should be explored (see image to the right).

### Street Furniture

- » Other street furniture not previously mentioned (such as trash receptacles), should be grouped with other street amenities, and match the exterior treatment of other amenities.

### Architectural Features

- » Architectural features include information kiosks, wayfinding signage, artwork, and other small, physical structures (see images to the right).
- » Information kiosks and artwork should be designed at a pedestrian scale and be located at high, pedestrian activity areas along the corridor (see images to the right).
- » Wayfinding signage can come in two scales: vehicular and pedestrian. Vehicular gateway signage should be explored at major entry points into the corridor such as the intersection of 10th and Milwaukee avenues.



## FAÇADE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- 1 Zone 1 Façade Base**  
The base anchors the building to the ground and is the interface between the building and people. The base of the building includes any exposed basement.
- 2 Zone 2 Façade Middle**  
The middle of a building abstractly communicates the building's function or use. The transition between the middle and the base or the middle and the top of a building is often articulated by the use of contrasting materials, or ornamental elements.
- 3 Zone 3 Façade Top**  
The top terminates the building against the sky and provides opportunity to create an interesting silhouette and, in conjunction with surrounding buildings, an interesting skyline.

- 4 Zone 4 Façade Base Encroachments**  
Base encroachments include any element at the base of a building that extend beyond the property line. Elements in this zone may include architectural features, signage, awnings, lighting, and other adornments.
- 5 Zone 5 Façade Middle & Top Encroachments**  
Middle encroachments include any element above the base of the building that extend beyond the property line. Elements in this zone may include architectural features, bay windows, signage, balconies, awnings, and other embellishments.
- 6 Zone 6 Interior Activities**  
Interior activities include uses that occur on the private side of a building's façade on the ground floor. This zone is important to ensure a certain amount of activity on the ground floor to enliven the street.



Source: Google and GRAEF

## ROADWAY ZONE

### Bicycle Traffic Zone

#### Bike Accommodations

- » The City should look to support the inclusion of bicycle traffic within the downtown. Two types of bicycle accommodations include bike lanes and shared use lanes. Bike lanes are typically 5' wide and are striped specifically for bicycles (see image to the right). Shared use lanes allow for both vehicles and bikes to use a widened lane.

#### Bike Route Signs

- » Signage provides clear route options to bicyclists and reinforces the importance of bike routes to motorists, increasing safety and recognition of transportation alternatives.



### Curbside Management

#### On-Street Parking

- » Existing on-street parking should be retained where feasible.
- » Existing demarcation of parking stalls should be retained in order to indicate to drivers how close they are to parked cars.

#### Loading Zones

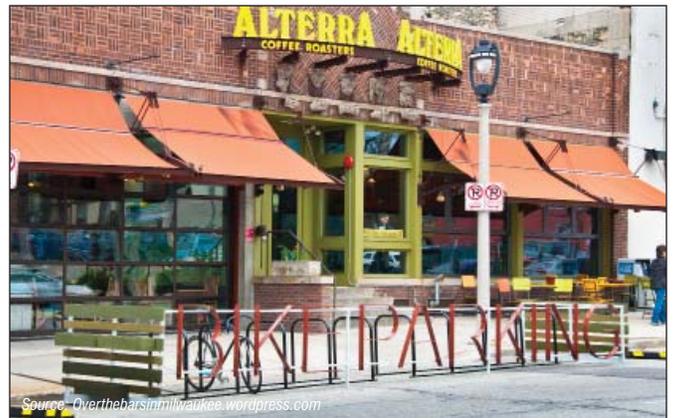
- » Loading zones should be located behind building when feasible. Any existing loading zones along the street edge should be retained where they currently exist.

#### Transit Stops

- » Enhancement of bus stops for transit users and passers-by through the addition of shelters, benches, area maps, plantings, and artwork can strengthen commercial corridors, communities, and transit systems, including increasing transit ridership.
- » Exploration of alternative designs for shelters beyond the 'standard' MCTS shelter design is encouraged.

#### Alternative Uses of Parking Lanes

- » Bike corrals typically replace one parking space and can accommodate 12-24 bikes (see image to the right).
- » Parklets are public seating platforms that replace anywhere from one to several parking spaces. They serve as gathering places and can complement local stores and institutions (see image to the right).



- » Parklets should be positioned in front of high pedestrian activity areas such as restaurants or retail shops.

## Intersection Design

### Marked Crosswalks

- » Crosswalks should be designed to provide as much protection and comfort to pedestrians as possible for a successful corridor. Stripes or strong patterns reinforce yielding of vehicles.
- » Crosswalks should be striped as wide or wider than the walkway it connects to, in order to facilitate the passage of two groups of people passing each other.
- » Treatment of crosswalks should be further explored. Options for crosswalk treatment include painted stripes, painted crosswalk boxes, colored concrete, and brick pavers. Major and minor intersections should be identified within the downtown area and corresponding intersection treatment should follow suit (example-major intersections may include colored concrete crosswalks while minor intersections include painted crosswalks). See images to the right for examples of crosswalk treatments.



### Decorative Intersections

- » Decorative intersections include a pavement treatment that allows the intersection to stand out in appearance from the rest of the roadway. Examples include scored concrete, colored concrete and brick pavers.
- » Similar to the crosswalk descriptions above, decorative intersection could be included at major intersections within the downtown. Treatment of intersections should be further explored.

### Mid-Block Pedestrian Refuge Islands

- » Creative traffic calming element that also reduces the exposure time experienced by a pedestrian when crossing the street (see image to the right).
- » Usually located between two, high activity areas of a street where pedestrians desire to cross the street mid-block.
- » This design solution could physically be accommodated within the existing street width by removing 4-5 parking stalls on each side of the street.



## SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

Regarding signage and changes in related zoning, several goals can be addressed:

1. Provide a way to save signage which might have a visual appeal due to its history or visual character. This might include, for example, older signs in the downtown district. The current ordinance seems to provide for this type of approval in the section for “special exceptions”:

### Special Exception

A special exception may be granted by the Plan Commission from the provisions of this chapter if it is determined that certain site or building characteristics or physical characteristics of the sign due to its unique design render.

This special exception could be applied, as we understand the code, to signs which would otherwise be prohibited as either “abandoned” or “obsolete” signs (also defined in the ordinance).

2. The following language, taken from another municipal zoning code in Wisconsin, might also be considered as a model for some areas with the city:

“Exemptions for historic signs. The following historic signs shall be exempt from this Section and may be maintained with altered messages: ... Any signage for the [Historic Building] located in [Location] which fits the time period [in which] the building was originally constructed...”

3. Special permission could be given to signs that have value due to their artistic or graphic design quality. These might include:
  - a. Signs in the central business district which add to the sense of activity and social interactions,
  - b. Signs with unique artistic merits, such as well-designed neon tubing signs,
  - c. Signs prepared in association with public art or a downtown theme.

To do this, the City would need to commission the drafting of special language for the zoning code.

4. In addition, there have been major advancements in the use of individually-cut, raised letters for signs. These are often found on major retail structures and are neither necessarily visually offensive nor out of character. Moreover, such signs are often a welcome relief to walls that would otherwise have no ornamentation or decoration. Consequently, the zoning code section on signage might make exceptions for signs composed of individual raised letters mounted on a building façade. Such allowances might be restricted to an overlay zoning district for a major arterial or the downtown. Also, for such signs, larger areas might be allowed provided there are provisions for accurately measuring the area, such as this language from another municipal zoning code in Wisconsin:

“In the case of a sign whose message is applied to a background which provides no border or frame (such as individual letters to a building face or awning), sign face area shall be the combined areas of the smallest rectangles which can encompass each word, letter, figure, emblem, and other element of the sign message per a scaled, fully dimensioned drawing approved by the Zoning Administrator. Where such drawing is not provided, said area shall be the smallest area enclosed in a single rectangle.”



Source: Jacob Rostermundt

## Sign Code Compliance

In other communities, compliance almost always creates a challenge because it involves a complex series of actions to identify, inform, and then penalize persons not in compliance. In reading the City of South Milwaukee sign code, the applicable section for compliance is as follows:

### 15.22 ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES.

(A) The provisions of this ordinance shall be enforced by or under the direction of the City Building Inspector, who in person or by duly authorized agent, shall have the right to enter upon any premises affected by this section reasonable hours for the purpose of inspection. (B) Any person, firm, company or corporation who violates, disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with or who resists the enforcement of any of the provisions of this ordinance shall, upon conviction, forfeit not less than \$1.00 nor more than \$200.00 for each offense, together with the costs of prosecution, and in default of payment of such forfeiture and costs of prosecution, shall be imprisoned in the House of Correction or County Jail of Milwaukee County until such forfeiture and costs are paid, but not to exceed sixty (60) days for each violation. Each day that a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense. In addition to the penalty above provided, any such person, firm, company or corporation shall, upon conviction, comply with the provisions of this ordinance. Upon failure to so comply, such person, firm, company or corporation shall be subject to appropriate action, initiated by the City Attorney or Building Inspector, to prevent, enjoin, abate, or remove such violation under the laws of the State of Wisconsin in such cases made and provided. (C) In any such action, the fact that a permit shall have been issued by any officer, board or department of the City of South Milwaukee shall not constitute a defense, nor shall an error, oversight or dereliction of duty on the part of any public official, body or department constitute a defense.

This language is generally sufficient to gain compliance – especially the notion that the fines continue for each day the person is not in compliance. The difficulty in this kind of language, for most communities, is deciding to send out an inspector, undertake the needed notices, get the conviction, and add the penalties to the tax bill. As such, the City of South Milwaukee should develop “incentive-based” (as opposed to “regulation-based”) approaches for creating compliance with the sign code. For example, the City’s nascent Downtown Revitalization Grant could provide funds for property owners to clean, maintain, and rehabilitate vintage property signs – and install new signage for the most current business operation – and utilize the review process for disbursing those funds as the time to review regulations and ensure compliance.

## Wayfinding and Destination Connections

Wayfinding refers to signage elements that serve the purpose of directing vehicles and pedestrian traffic towards different destinations. The City should focus on three main destinations for increased/enhanced wayfinding signage:

### 1. Downtown South Milwaukee

Downtown itself should be celebrated and be easily found by visitors entering the City of South Milwaukee. Vehicular wayfinding signage pointing visitors towards the downtown should be located at key intersections along College Avenue, Nicholson Avenue and Forest Hill Avenue. Entry signage to the downtown should also be included in coordination with the streetscape considerations described on the previous pages. See examples of both wayfinding signage and entry signage on the page to the right.

### 2. Natural Features and Facilities (Oak Leaf Trail/Grant Park/Parkway/Lake Michigan)

The downtown is in close proximity to a number of natural amenities that see a high pedestrian volume of both residents and visitors to the City. Pedestrian signage should be included in the downtown that direct users to the Oak Leaf Trail, Grant Park, and Lake Michigan. Similarly, wayfinding signage should be located at key intersections of natural amenities and streets directing visitors towards the downtown. See examples of wayfinding signage on the page to the right.

### 3. Public, Off-Street Parking Locations

The City should identify existing, off-street parking lots that allow public parking and include consistent signage for all of these lots. Increased pedestrian connections that connect these parking lots to Milwaukee Avenue should be explored. This may often include walkways and/or pedestrian spaces in between existing buildings that can be creatively designed in coordination with business functions. See examples of parking lot signage and pedestrian walkways on the page to the right.



Source: GRAEF

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

In any community, the downtown, or central business district (CBD), represents the heart of that community. It reflects local heritage, character, and community priorities. To outsiders, a CBD reflects how that community perceives itself. Beginning any CBD revitalization process is daunting. The good news for South Milwaukee is that it has a compact downtown with interesting buildings and multiple local assets to begin the process. For South Milwaukee's Milwaukee Avenue, there are thousands of examples of revitalized, successful CBDs nationally and multiple examples in Wisconsin. Many of these communities have accomplished their work with fewer resources and advantages than South Milwaukee has. With this context, the primary objective of these downtown strategies is how best to capitalize on local assets to ensure that South Milwaukee's downtown becomes one of these success stories.

Like many downtowns, South Milwaukee's downtown has experienced significant disinvestment over multiple decades. All downtowns are commercial districts, and the level of commercial activity defines the district's success as an economic entity. The businesses and uses traditionally associated with any downtown or CBD have changed dramatically over time, responding to market shifts, new consumer behaviors, and evolving trends. Change will remain the only constant throughout the implementation of these downtown strategies. Consequently, the ongoing and necessary improvements to Milwaukee Avenue will require many things--time, resources, the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes, persistence in pursuing the vision for downtown success, and in certain circumstances, political will. The result can be a regionally recognized amenity – a vital and unique South Milwaukee downtown.

The earlier market assessment used to develop these strategies considered the downtown's trade areas and underlying economics. South Milwaukee's downtown, as an established place, has well-understood boundaries, historically and economically. The City and CBD markets share similar demographic characteristics with the region. The downtown's successful business owners described a uniform custom market that attracts South Milwaukee residents and visitors from that trade area south of the community. The downtown's most prominent businesses represent a real asset as strategic implementation begins. Downtown's real estate and physical appearance are challenged. Rents are insufficient to support investment in downtown buildings, and interested tenants are poorly prepared to operate a business in a downtown environment. Upper story rental units represent the reliable revenue stream for many buildings. This spiral effect has resulted

in the current 28% ground floor vacancy rate and negative perceptions of the downtown. Several downtown locations appear unkempt. Within the assessment, multiple examples of how communities facing similar issues developed programs to address their specific downtown or CBD challenges. South Milwaukee's competitive advantages are well known. A revitalized downtown or CBD can become one of the community's strengths and most important amenities.

The consensus downtown vision, written in the Comprehensive Plan Update, states that the district will become:

**A vibrant, welcoming, and authentic city center recognized for its businesses, culture, and urban living opportunities.**

The fundamental question is how does South Milwaukee get there? For any community beginning the revitalization process, a shift in the local belief system is often required. This shift encompasses changes in attitudes, perceptions, and the roles of the private and public sectors in strengthening their downtown. South Milwaukee was variously described in this study's interviews as a small town, a blue-collar community, as self-deprecating, and as a community indifferent to change. The fact is that South Milwaukee is no longer most of those descriptors, and things simply cannot be done 'as they have always been done.'

South Milwaukee is an established, mid-sized suburb with diverse populations and income levels and with multiple competitive advantages. It has Lake Michigan and Grant Park. It is located within the type of affordable secondary metropolitan area with amenities known to appeal to Millennials and other market cohorts. The surrounding Milwaukee region provides access to important, innovative, and varied resources to assist in revitalization. Given the community and its many advantages, South Milwaukee and its constituencies must change and adapt. They need to ensure that the City realizes its continued promise as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. One critical component of this promise will be a great downtown to complement the City's homes, employment base, open space, and institutions and to be a true source of community pride.

Achieving success over time will require that South Milwaukee's public and private sectors become true partners as the revitalization process begins. Understanding the appropriate roles for the City and for downtown's stakeholders represents a critical foundation for success. Neither sector will be perfect in fulfilling its role in downtown work, nor will the ongoing relationship between the sectors. But recognizing how each sector can best address current or future downtown tasks or issues will be critical to

progress. Additional partnerships between any downtown management entity and many local or regional groups will be required. Again, ensuring that each group contributes to downtown change based upon their expertise will minimize any potential ‘turf’ wars or conflicts. In addition to multiple partnerships, resources are and will remain limited. Identifying new funding options or sources to complete downtown revitalization actions will be part of this work. By fostering all of these relationships, the City, its private sector partners, and future downtown management organization can focus on the downtown’s future. This work must be intentional, strategic, and focused on the downtown vision. All of these collaborative efforts will build a sense of community while making the downtown great.

## DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

Nine (9) downtown strategies were identified during this study process and are listed below. Each strategy includes supporting objectives, as appropriate, with detailed action plans. These supporting objectives frame the initiatives or projects needed for implementation. They also provide the rationale and incremental process for completing actions to revitalize the downtown. The action plans are located later in this chapter, in addition to Chapter 6.

These strategies are divided into the short- and long-term strategies. Short-term strategies are intended for implementation during the first five (5) years of the revitalization process. Long-term strategies require organizational experience and should be addressed after the first five (5) years of actions and learning. Each community must respond to their unique downtown issues. For South Milwaukee, some strategies may be implemented quickly; some may be deferred. How the process evolves often results from new opportunities that present themselves. Key to implementation is to comprehensively address these strategies and complete the recommended action steps. Examples of recommended actions are noted with each strategy and are described fully in the action plans.

### Short-Term Strategies

- » Organize a downtown revitalization structure to build the local capacity and credibility to conduct successful work over the long-term. The first short-term strategy will start the downtown revitalization process and is described in detail in the following section, Initial Downtown Priorities.
- » Increase the occupancy and investment in downtown properties to increase commercial activity and rehabilitate downtown properties. Improving the downtown’s buildings and tenancies will require multiple steps
- » Develop a comprehensive downtown business growth system, with provisions for business retention, expansion, growth, support, and succession. Outreach to develop partnerships and regional relationships between the downtown operating structure, downtown property owners, entrepreneurs, and the City will be ongoing to establish this system. These partnerships and relationships must be ongoing and reflect market conditions.
- » Engage South Milwaukee’s many constituencies in the downtown revitalization effort. Revitalization work requires help from many volunteers using their talents in varied ways. Asking for help and expertise will remain an ongoing part of the effort.
- » Expand downtown promotional work, supplementing existing special events and merchant promotions, to communicate downtown successes. Downtown marketing and promotion work includes three (3) aspects: Special events and festivals, business promotions, and image building and positioning. The downtown has great special events, and the CBA has organized business promotions that work. With these activities in place, the formal downtown structure can begin to craft a downtown image, promoting the revitalization successes through traditional and electronic media.
- » Address the downtown’s physical environment, enhancing the appearance and pedestrian experience and maintaining the downtown’s historic character. Examples include sidewalk cleanliness, landscaping and plantings, and snow removal.

### Long-Term Strategies

- » Evaluate downtown options for new cultural, recreational, or business sector opportunities for the downtown as they occur. Over time, South Milwaukee’s downtown revitalization group will identify and asked to participate in programs to link the downtown with a wide range of initiatives that can benefit the downtown.
- » Consider policies, processes, and best practices for new development at optimal downtown locations with the City of South Milwaukee, as the downtown increases in vitality. With economic strength, redevelopment interest in downtown sites will likely begin.
- » Identify parking management strategies, as the downtown increases in vitality. Parking is often cited as a downtown, or downtown, problem, and parking rarely is a problem until commercial activity increases significantly. Many

downtown's first parking issue is addressing downtown employees and (often) business owners parking in spaces proximate to their storefronts.

### Initial Downtown Revitalization Priorities

One question posed throughout this study was how does South Milwaukee start this strategic work? The truth is that no manual or set of right answers exists describing how to conduct downtown or CBD revitalization. There are only examples from communities that have succeeded in reinvigorating their downtowns. In these communities, locals come together, like South Milwaukee's DAC and City officials, to start this process. These locals, usually including municipal officials, business and property owners, and residents, form a steering committee to explore organizational structures to support a long-term effort to revitalize their downtown. Steering committees then work to identify local and regional resources that can assist with revitalization. These same committees also enlist other local constituencies to commit to the effort, given that steering committee members cannot do all of the work. By expanding the local base and developing a network of resources, these steering groups formally organize and start with a few small, visible projects to signal change.

To begin the strategic implementation process, the City and the DAC will need to address three (3) initial priorities. The DAC, City officials, and other downtown stakeholders identified these priorities throughout this study process. These priorities represent important first steps to initiate a comprehensive downtown revitalization effort in South Milwaukee. They also represent an important start to partnership between the City and the private sector. During this initial work, the downtown's public and private sectors will establish their necessary roles and responsibilities, accepting that both will evolve as local revitalization work strengthens and matures. These early efforts will set the tone for the partnership. Roles and responsibilities will reflect the strengths of each sector. Ultimately, the ability of both sectors to work together and focus on the future will determine if the downtown succeeds or continues to decline.

These three (3) priorities represent first steps in addressing the first of the downtown strategies – Organizing the downtown revitalization structure to build capacity and credibility. This strategy and its related priorities serve as the basis for initiating South Milwaukee's downtown work. The three (3) initial priorities are:

1. Defining the lead entity for revitalizing South Milwaukee's downtown. During this study, the DAC has preliminarily discussed how the downtown revitalization effort can be managed. Options considered include pursuing Main Street designation and Business Improvement District (BID) management organization. The DAC currently and functionally serves (and should serve) as an interim steering committee to start this process. The City can provide support and commitment to establishing and sustaining a partnership with this lead entity. For South Milwaukee, a new organization focused only on the downtown represents a fresh start. This organization must be apolitical and facilitate incremental downtown change. The specific organizing steps and rationale are described in the action plans. The Main Street, Connect Communities, and BID funded organization options are described below in the downtown Organization and Funding section below.
2. Identifying basic projects to improve the downtown's overall appearance. The DAC has started to identify some initial projects to improve the downtown's appearance. Actions noted are increased litter and trash removal, plantings and planter boxes, and removal of dead trees.
3. Working with downtown property and building owners to facilitate building improvements and tenancing of prepared ground floor lease space. Many of these tasks were defined in the preparatory tasks provided to the DAC in August 2015. This strategy component emphasizes initial actions to address the downtown's economic fundamentals, by incrementally adding tenants and improving revenues for businesses and property owners.

From a practical standpoint, initial discussions about downtown strengths, issues, or problems should be integrated into the implementation process. The DAC and City staff should assign these tasks to individual DAC or City staff members, or if needed, determine a working group to address more complicated actions requiring ongoing efforts. The action steps for each of these priorities comprise a total of sixteen (16) actions or ongoing efforts. In dividing up and assigning this work, individuals and groups become accountable for completing these important first steps.

Initiating partnerships for the future are part of each of these priorities. The Community and Business Association (CBA) is the first group to engage before forming any downtown organization and other business and property owners. South Milwaukee’s CDA should be engaged, given their involvement with visible downtown properties. The DAC or staff should also ask for participation and expertise from downtown institutions, including the Library, non-profits and major employers, and identify who should ask. Representatives from these groups may be able to provide advice about the organization process. Any interested residents who wish to participate should be encouraged. This engagement will expand the numbers of people available to do the work, build capacity to do longer-term work, and establish the foundation for an active downtown organization that gets things done.

These initial priorities also allow South Milwaukee’s current successful downtown programs or activities to continue and be linked to this emerging organization. The City currently organizes complete special events calendar with multiple high quality events. The CBA has developed effective downtown business promotions. Both sets of events complement each other and attract residents and visitors to the downtown to experience the downtown. These successful programs mean that the initial DAC and City organizing effort can focus elsewhere and develop supplemental promotion and marketing efforts later in the revitalization process. As noted in the strategies below, future marketing-related actions can capitalize on the downtown’s visible changes and how the community’s heritage and many assets converge to create a logical and positive image.

## OTHER IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

### Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for the public sector and private sector are described in the table below. Each sector assumes responsibility for those activities that they do best and will work jointly to address specific issues. Examples include the recommended coordination of efforts to improve downtown properties, the existing events schedule, and any future streetscape projects. As the revitalization occurs, the number of ongoing activities requiring collaboration typically increases.

While implementing the organizing, or first, strategy, the City and the private sector need to establish the foundation for their partnership. Long-term implementation will require continued collaboration. The ultimate goal is a great South Milwaukee downtown. What happened twenty years ago or yesterday is irrelevant. City officials operate with limited resources and within a political context. The downtown’s private sector, given the diverse constituencies, is subject to a wide range of ownership objectives, including profitability. Neither is bad nor good; they are just facts. As the downtown’s economy grows, both sectors benefit. Initially, both sectors need to identify and engage owners and South Milwaukee residents with important skills, such as fundraising. Two (2) questions to be continuously asked when identifying roles and responsibilities are--Who can do and complete these tasks or actions best? And how can the CBD organization, representing downtown interests, and the City assist?

### Roles & Responsibilities

Municipal Government	Downtown Organization
Fund downtown capital projects.	Advocate for South Milwaukee's downtown.
Provide partial funding for downtown programs, projects and/ or the downtown organization.	Collaborate with City on issues specific to their role and responsibilities.
Collaborate with downtown organization on regulatory, permit, or code issues.	Implement recommended strategic actions, and develop new programming to enhance the downtown's economic vitality.
Collaborate with downtown organization on community events and joint projects.	Develop partnerships, ad hoc and permanent, with local and regional organizations to benefit the downtown.
Recognize the downtown organization as apolitical.	Conduct ongoing out reach, attracting human and financial resources to the organization.

Source: BDI

## Central Business District Organization & Funding

In organizing for revitalization, the first consideration is linking the need for a downtown operating structure with its likely mission. A summary of downtown, main street and central business district organization types is included on the following page.

The Main Street Approach is one methodology applied by downtown organizations in over 40 states and 2,000 communities nationally. Developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the late 1970s, the Main Street Approach® provides a framework for downtown growth and resurgence. It leverages local strengths, including a downtown's unique independent businesses and vintage or historic buildings, to support long-term change in districts like South Milwaukee's CBD. The work to improve the downtown is incremental and driven by the local community. The Main Street methodology works best in communities where residents and investors, primarily property and business owners, are motivated to ensure that downtown returns to being their community's center. For South Milwaukee, Wisconsin's state program, based in the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), is among the strongest nationally and provides important support services and expertise for new and current local programs applying the Main Street Approach®.

The WEDC also offers the Connect Communities program. In some instances, Wisconsin cities have used the Connect Communities program to prepare for adopting the Main Street Approach®. This program recognizes that successful CBDs, or downtowns, require planning and resources. This program provides a network for Wisconsin communities not

using the Main Street methodology. As noted in the Action Plans, South Milwaukee's DAC, in partnership with the CBA and City staff, should meet with WEDC staff to thoroughly discuss both options. Guidance on certain initial questions to ask, such as preferred Internal Revenue Service Tax Exempt status, is noted in the Action Plans. Most important, with either Connect Communities or Wisconsin Main Street, participating in a network of communities addressing similar issues can provide invaluable ideas and examples for improving South Milwaukee's downtown. Both programs provide a framework for organizing actual downtown work.

A third organizational structure is a downtown management organization primarily funded by a Business Improvement District, or BID. A BID is a municipal funding mechanism, authorized under state legislation (Wis. Stat. 66.1109, 1 et al), allowing commercial property owners within a defined geography to impose a real estate self-tax through a municipal ordinance. BID processes and enabling legislation provisions vary from state to state. Most BIDs are initiated to fund programs to address physical problems specific to that district, or defined geography. The organizations fully or partially supported by BID funding also vary. Traditionally, BID organizations work to primary areas – 'clean and safe' to address cleanliness, appearance, and perceptions of safety and marketing to promote the area. BID organizations now develop programming for these activities and many others, including parking deck management and environmental work. The organization types vary significantly, too. Operating structures partially or fully funded by BIDs include Main Street organizations, independent downtown management entities developed as part of the BID process, City-driven efforts with a BID payer advisory Board, and subsidiaries of Chambers. All of these organizations have dedicated staff.

## Downtown, Mainstreet & Central Business District Types

	Chamber	Main Street	Business Improvement District (BID)	Merchant Organization	Municipal Program	Hybrid Organization
<b>Legal Framework</b>	Membership organization; some state or national affiliation; typically 501 (c)(6) or (c)(4)	Community-driven; part of coordinating program and national network; typically 501 (c)(3) or (c)(6)	Legislatively enabled by state; established by local ordinance; typically 501 (c)(6) or (c)(4)	Highly variable	Annual budget and staffing decision	Separate non-profit; variable IRS status
<b>Dominant Stakeholder(s)</b>	Business owners	Representative-business owners, residents, property owners, employers, and local government	Property Owners, Tenant Payers, and Municipal Government	Business Owners	Municipal Government	Multiple Commercial Stakeholders – business owners, property owners; & municipal government.
<b>Board Composition</b>	Major employers/businesses	Balance of Representatives Above	Tax Payers	Business Owners	None; Will typically have an Advisory Board, if BID Funded	Volunteer Board with stakeholder representation
<b>Staff</b>	Executive Director	Executive Director	Executive Director	None or Volunteer	Municipal Employee	Executive Director
<b>Mission</b>	Serve membership	Downtown economic vitality, historic preservation, and downtown advocacy	Increase commercial activity and investment value	Business promotion	Delivering government service	Increase local economic activity
<b>Short-term Projects / Objective</b>	Networking and advertising	Capacity building	Maintenance, beautification, perception of safety, and marketing	Sales generation	Coordinating local efforts	Increasing economic activity
<b>Long-term Projects/ Objective</b>	Unusual	Business growth and historic preservation	Appreciation in values through investment	Unusual, if any	Capital Improvements, process improvements, and possibly management	Balance of activities to benefit entire community
<b>Advocacy Role</b>	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Medium, given facilitation role
<b>Budget: Public Funding</b>	Special Circumstances	30% of budget	100%	Project driven	100%	70-100% from public sources
<b>Budget: Private Funding</b>	Dues	Memberships, sponsorships, and fundraising	Reimbursement for services	Dues, or cost sharing per project	Organized partnerships for specific events or purposes	Sponsorships and fundraising
<b>Strengths</b>	Independent Business focus Advocacy usually strong Communication	Proven methodology Community/volunteer driven   Quality emphasis Comprehensive and long-term approach	Payment connected to benefit Reliable funding Consensus focus Defined services only	Limited focus	Political consensus Reliable funding	External convening structure Communication among stakeholders
<b>Weaknesses</b>	Actions only for members Funding issues Larger members dominate Competition with other Economic Development efforts	Funding and fund raising challenges Volunteers needed to build capacity Preservation 'perceptions'	Legal process to establish.	Focus on business events versus improving entire district Funding Owner time constraints Different objectives among owners	Staff need to balance multiple roles Distrust of government	Influence or facilitation only Difficult to balance stakeholder interests Funding tied to perceptions of effectiveness

Source: BDI

## Funding Considerations

All downtown organizations rely on a diversity of funding sources to support programming and paid staff. These sources include memberships, sponsorships, fundraising (including multi-year donations), municipal financing tools, such as a Business Improvement District (BID), grants with administrative funding, and in-kind contributions.

A BID approval represents one potential funding source for downtown or CBD revitalization work. Using data provided by the City of South Milwaukee, the City’s list of downtown properties and the parcel data for those properties were combined for analysis purposes. The “Business Improvement District Funding Estimates” table displays ‘back of the envelope’ estimates of possible BID funding at three (3) separate percentage rates.

The City’s 2014 real estate tax rate was an estimated 2.75-2.85% of the estimated Fair Market Value. The total taxable value for the commercial properties within the downtown is about \$35 million, based upon the data provided. No provisions were made within the assumptions were made for delinquencies or non-payment. The funding estimates shown indicate the potential funding available at that levy percentage. Obviously, any potential funding levels would be subject to the BID’s annual operating plan and discussions with the City. These estimates indicate that initial organizational funding, assuming property owner support and subsequent detailed analysis, is possible

Another funding mechanism that has been applied in commercial district revitalization is Tax Increment Financing (TIF) through the creation of a Tax Increment District (TID), based upon Wisconsin’s Tax Increment Financing legislation. Wisconsin’s TIF legislation (Wis. Stat. 66.1105, 1 et al), like most states, prescribes the uses for TIF. Typically, any available increment can be used for specific expenses, programs, or redevelopment within the TID boundaries. Assuming downtown is fully or partially located in a TID, funding is used in three (3) primary ways: to fund or support incentives for building and infrastructure improvements within the TID; to support certain expenses identified in TIF legislation; and to fully or partially fund physical improvements.

## Business Improvement District Funding Estimates

<b>Downtown Fair Market Value</b>	<b>\$34,730,000</b>
At .001 (.1%)	\$34,730
At .0015 (.15%)	\$52,090
At .002 (.2 %)	\$69,453

*Source: BDI*

Four (4) parcels within South Milwaukee’s TID #1 are currently located within the downtown. In total, the City’s current TIDs are generating modest increment. For South Milwaukee’s downtown, the fundamental question will be timing. Currently, the downtown likely meets the ‘but for’ test under the TIF legislation. The fundamental question is how much increment could be generated and if now is the optimal time. South Milwaukee’s other taxing bodies may have issues, in addition to levy and value implications for a BID (if approved subsequent to any TID). The boundaries, including any implications for major properties, will require consideration. The downtown organization would need to work closely with the City and South Milwaukee’s CDA during the analysis, approval, and implementation of a TID. Organizing the downtown for revitalization should be the DAC and the City’s priority. Discussions regarding a future TID can begin after that occurs, perhaps in year 2.

## DOWNTOWN SUCCESS METRICS

Any long-term revitalization process requires metrics, or relevant measurements, to understand how the downtown or downtown is improving. These metrics should be readily understood and used to communicate and celebrate what is working. They also provide a means of communicating achievements throughout revitalization. The following metrics represent standard measurements for organization and City staff in the short term. Other metrics, some listed below or specific to the City, may be added as South Milwaukee begins to conduct more sophisticated work.

### Short-Term Metrics

Initial metrics are listed below. Reliable sources, such as City permit and administration data or County tax data, should be used to track downtown improvement progress and to routinely communicate downtown successes. If the downtown organization applies to become a Wisconsin Main Street community, the regular reporting of similar statistics is required.

- » Building rehabilitations/façade renovations
  - » # Buildings/projects
  - » Total dollar amount
  - » # New upper story dwelling units, if applicable
- » New building construction or infill
  - » # Buildings/projects
  - » Total dollar amount
- » Buildings sold
  - » # Buildings
  - » Total dollar amount
- » Business growth
  - » # Businesses opened
  - » # Businesses closed
- » Net gain (loss) in businesses
- » # Business expansions, relocations, or ownership changes within the downtown
- » Net gain (loss) in full time jobs created
- » Net gain (loss) in part time jobs created
- » New business inquiries/conversion to tenancies
- » Annual incentive program reporting, including leverage ratio for public/private investment
- » Annual survey/poll of downtown rents and vacancy rates
- » Annual survey/poll of downtown business sales growth
- » # Capital improvement projects or public amenities constructed within the downtown
  - » Total dollars spent
  - » Tracked as constructed

For marketing purposes, many downtown organizations also track electronic and social media activity, event attendance, and survey/poll sponsors for any of their events. Any data available for CBD events in South Milwaukee should be shared with the downtown organization.

### Long-Term Metrics

Longer-term, additional measurements should be added to the above and measured routinely—monthly, quarterly, annually, or as properties are occupied. For example, if a new housing development is constructed in the CBD, the number of dwelling units and residents should be tracked.

- » Any available sales tax or food and beverage tax data
- » Any pedestrian counts and updated traffic and transit usage counts
- » Aggregated merchant zip code data to update market conditions
- » CBD employee counts
- » Municipal revenue per acre for the CBD and other South Milwaukee commercial development

## SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

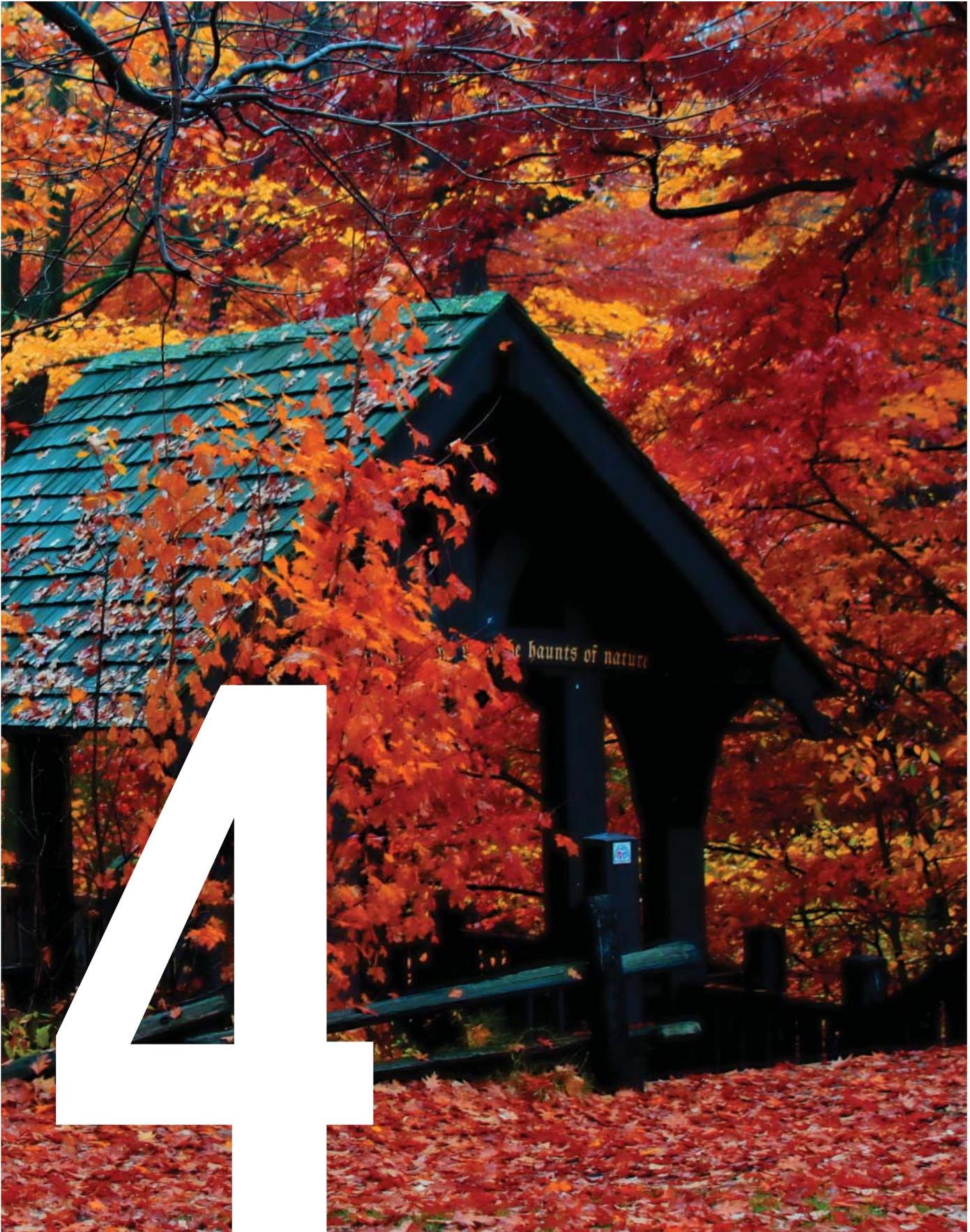
Recommendations described in the previous strategy section are summarized below. The detailed action plans, in Chapter 6, are components of each of the nine (9) strategies. These summary recommendations are also included within those action plans.

- » The City of South Milwaukee, the DAC, and the CBA should work together to identify the best type of organization for implementing these downtown strategies and action plans. The DAC should serve as the formal steering committee for this organization process. Initially, participation in Connect Communities is recommended as a preparatory step for application to the Wisconsin Main Street program. During this step, the City, the DAC, the CBA, and any resulting organization can evaluate the local community's willingness to volunteer and do downtown revitalization work. Remaining part of Connect Communities is an option.
- » City officials, the DAC, and the CBA must strengthen their partnership during the initial strategy implementation phase to ensure consensus during this organizing phase. The DAC, the new downtown organization, and City officials need to identify, contact, and solidify partnerships with local and regional organizations that can assist South Milwaukee with business growth.
- » A BID represents an initial opportunity to fund downtown work and staff, assuming property owner support for the municipal approval process.
- » Creating a TID may be useful for broader redevelopment within the downtown. Organizing the downtown's operating structure and completing the three (3) initial priorities first will be key to establishing the foundation for short and long-term downtown work.
- » As downtown improvements begin, the City and the downtown organization should use the short-term metrics suggested above. Long-term metrics can be added, based upon downtown growth.

## ACTION PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING SOUTH MILWAUKEE'S DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

The action steps described in Chapter 6 are structured to ensure that South Milwaukee's downtown becomes that central place truly desired by the broader community. Each plan includes actions organized around one of the nine (9) identified downtown strategies. These actions build upon the City and downtown's competitive advantages and opportunities. Most important, beginning and continuing the downtown revitalization process can bring the community together. South Milwaukee's downtown is unique. The South Milwaukee community expects quality in its schools, its institutions, and in its amenities. The community should now begin to expect quality in downtown business operations, in appearance and infrastructure, in building improvements, and ultimately, in redevelopment.





# SYSTEMS

South Milwaukee's amenities and community assets embody the systems that developed the city as a community of choice in the region. From its founders to newest residents, people appreciate the city because of its heritage, authenticity, and character. With access to highway and railroad corridors, travel between Milwaukee and Chicago is easy and efficient. The quality, affordable housing has attracted householders of various ages creating a multi-generational community. Grant Park and Oak Creek Parkway are arguably two of the most valuable urban green spaces in the region and dramatically improve the quality of life through access to woodlands, creeks, and Lake Michigan. With continued infrastructure maintenance, reliable community services, and fiscally responsible practices, the City provides for the "live, work, play" lifestyle that many residents enjoy. The Systems chapter will detail the current state of South Milwaukee's community assets and infrastructure, provide goals and strategies for improvement, and develop a vision for the future.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

## **HOUSING**

## **NATURAL & AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

## **HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

## **UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

# TRANSPORTATION



## VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » **Improve parking along main corridors.**
- » **Provide alternative solutions to traffic congestion around Rawson Avenue.**
- » **Increase transit options and expand service.**
- » **Provide bike accommodations and introduce other features and considerations to create safe, pedestrian-friendly access.**
- » **Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure under the railroad underpass on Marquette Avenue.**
- » **Revitalize and maintain properties adjacent to the rail corridor.**
- » **Increase sidewalks around residential areas for better safety.**
- » **Look into the feasibility of allowing Drexel Avenue to become more pedestrian-friendly.**

“Maintenance efforts by the City of South Milwaukee, such as the plowing of sidewalks along Milwaukee Avenue, produce GREAT appreciation. Don’t stop doing these kinds of activities.”

## GOALS

South Milwaukee recognizes that a multi-modal transportation system will serve the community by making it a more attractive place to live, work, and operate a business. Transportation is linked inextricably with its economic goal of continued reliance and enhancement of the community’s manufacturing sector and the necessity to move both goods and workers to, from, and within the city.

The City of South Milwaukee has two primary goals related to maintaining and improving its transportation system:

1. The City of South Milwaukee desires that the transportation network serving its residents and businesses be designed to adequately manage the flow of people and goods to, from, and within the City.
2. Transportation modes and designs should be appropriately sized and compatible with the character of the neighborhood through which any given mode passes or serves.

Due to an extensive local and regional transportation system, South Milwaukee residents and businesses can travel almost anywhere with extraordinary convenience.

- » South Milwaukee is just minutes from the expressway, and therefore numerous regional hubs are nearby for employment and recreation.
- » South Milwaukee has some of the finest examples of public recreational access to Lake Michigan, including a [private] yacht club.
- » Transit, sidewalks, recreational trails, and bike paths are available for residents and visitors in and around the city.
- » Downtown Milwaukee is 10 miles north of South Milwaukee, downtown Chicago is 87 miles south of the city.

General Mitchell International Airport is 5 miles from South Milwaukee, O’Hare International Airport is 72 miles south.

Clearly, South Milwaukee offers many more choices than most communities of its size. This means easy access for residents, freight, employees, and visitors to take advantage of the area’s commercial amenities and recreational opportunities. Future needs are focused on completing and enhancing existing transportation systems.

## EXISTING PLANS & SERVICES

In addition to defining its own goals and objectives, South Milwaukee recognizes that it is located in a regional transportation context and depends on these linkages. Area-wide and neighboring plans must be taken into account. An inventory of these plans and systems follows:

## ROADWAYS

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) serves South Milwaukee and the area as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MPOs prepare area wide transportation studies and plans, and allocate federal funding to help with implementing those plans.

It is important that local transportation plans support and do not conflict with implementation of regionally adopted plans. At the same time, every community should work with the MPO to assure that its goals, objectives, needs and concerns are understood and included within a regional plan and planning scenarios. The Vision 2050 plan is the continued effort by SEWRPC to propose Land Use and Transportation improvements for all of Southeastern Wisconsin. Prior to the introduction of Vision 2050 the 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin was introduced and focuses on regional roadway and public transit needs and improvements. Maps of existing roadways and transit are included in the following pages.

The SEWRPC 2035 Plan includes recommended functional improvements and jurisdictional changes to the arterial street and highway system in South Milwaukee. The following recommendations within the plan affect South Milwaukee.

Streets recommended by SEWRPC for widening to four lanes:

- » Drexel Boulevard, from Nicholson Avenue to 5th Avenue, including connecting Drexel Boulevard across the rail right-of-way. South Milwaukee prefers to maintain a two-lane cross section from 5th Avenue to 9th Avenue. This is a top priority for the City, which also seeks more consideration of both at-grade and grade-separated options.
- » Nicholson Avenue, from Rawson to Forest Hill Avenues. The roadway was recently improved between College and Rawson Avenues.

- » Rawson Avenue, from Nicholson Avenue to North Chicago Avenue. South Milwaukee prefers maintaining this street as a two-lane cross section unless additional studies can establish a clear need after considering other options for capacity enhancement.

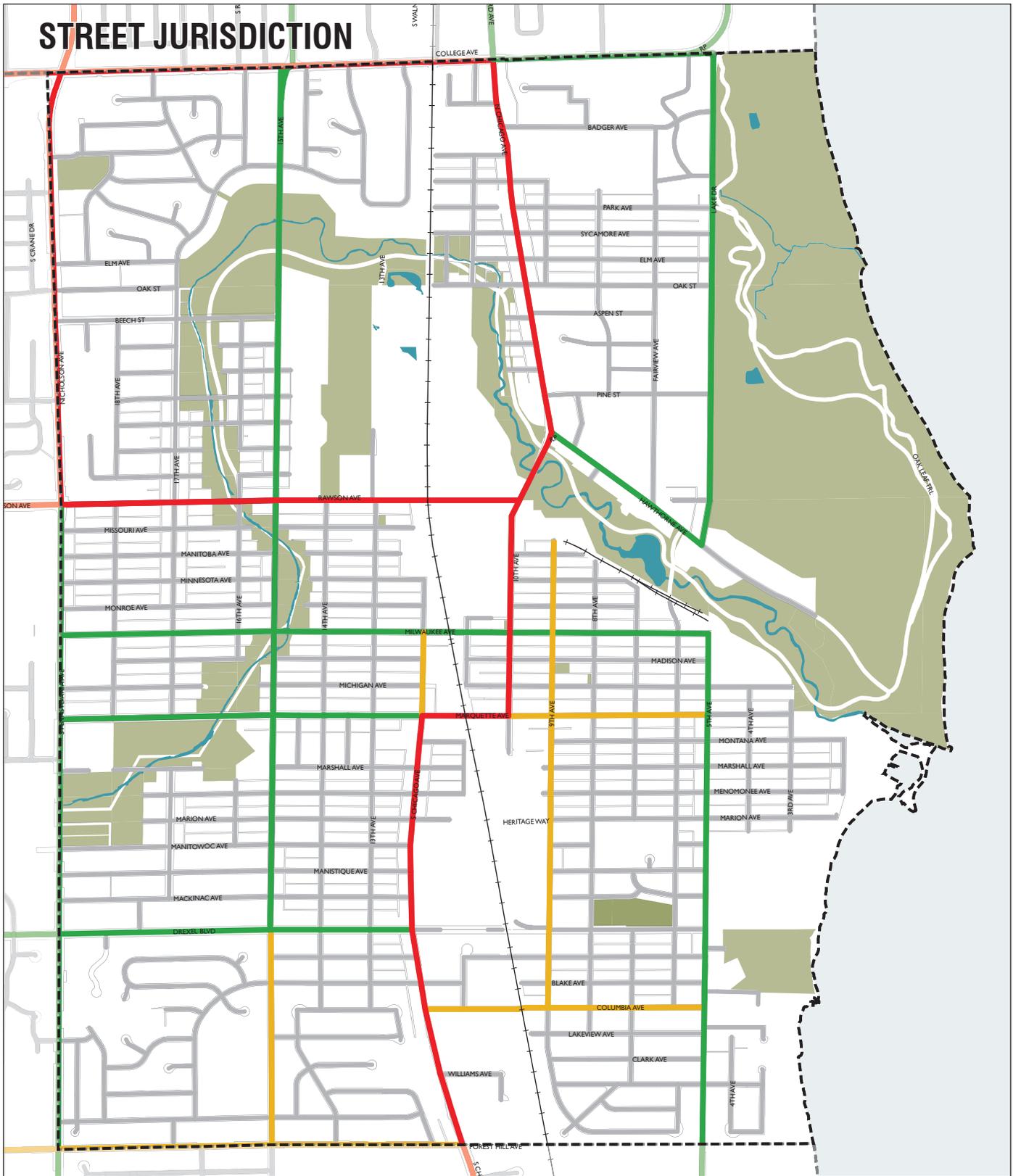
Streets recommended for jurisdictional transfer from local control to state control:

- » Rawson Avenue, from the west corporate limits to STH 32
- » Nicholson Avenue, from the north corporate limits to Rawson Avenue

## ROADWAY EXTENSIONS

South Milwaukee is fully built-out with an expansive street system. This street system reaches all areas of the City. Given this, there are some opportunities to increase connectivity in the City. These extensions include:

- » 13th Avenue from Rawson Avenue to the Oak Creek Parkway in the North Chicago Avenue Corridor and the Oak Creek Parkway Corridor
- » Drexel Boulevard over the railroad tracks for pedestrian access, possibly vehicular from the South Chicago Avenue Corridor to the Lakeview Neighborhood



- **PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL**
- **MINOR ARTERIAL**
- **COLLECTOR**
- **LOCAL**

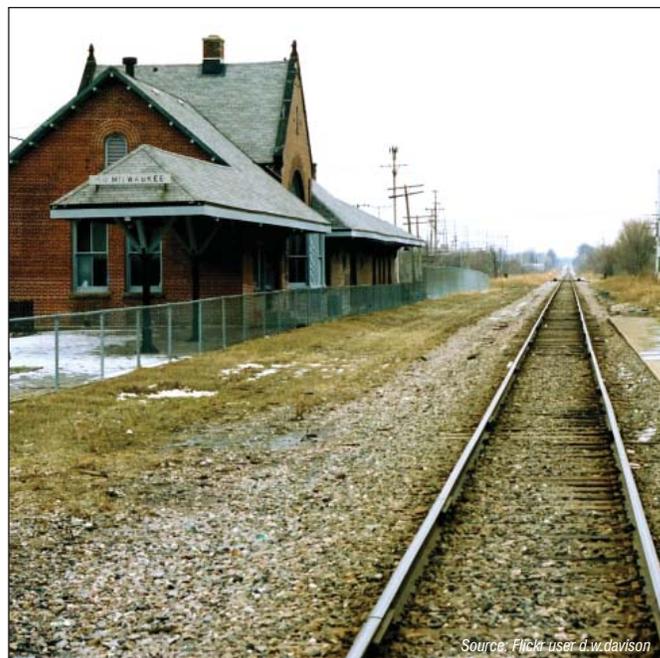


Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## RAIL FACILITIES

The Union Pacific Railroad's lakeshore rail line is generally aligned north-south through the center of the city of South Milwaukee and provides freight service. The line extends north to Milwaukee and south to Chicago. Several rail-related plans and studies are in development and may affect the Union Pacific line and South Milwaukee:

- » The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030, published in 2014, builds on Connections 2040, Wisconsin's adopted multi-modal long-range plan. This document reflects Wisconsin's future plans to further policy and implementation of freight and commuter rail. Priority recommendations include:
  - » Continue to support and improve intercity passenger rail service on existing corridors – between Milwaukee and Chicago, and between Milwaukee and Minneapolis-St. Paul
  - » In the long-term, implement the state component of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) that may add service to more communities and more corridors in Wisconsin
  - » Facilitate and encourage intermodal connections between all the ways people travel
- » SEWRPC conducted the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor Transit Study in 2003. Two rail-oriented alternatives were considered for potential extension of Chicago's Metra commuter rail services north of its existing terminus in Kenosha. Alternatives proposed extended service to Racine or Milwaukee. One of the Metra extension options would have included a station in Downtown South Milwaukee, providing momentum behind redevelopment. A third alternative proposed improved Express Bus Service between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee. Metra is the primary regional commuter service serving the greater Chicagoland area. As part of this proposal, a 0.5 percent sales tax was proposed for the counties of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha by the former Southeast Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority to fund the KRM (Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee) Commuter Rail. In June 2011, authorizing legislation for Wisconsin regional transit authorities was repealed, leading to the dissolution of the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority, which was leading the commuter rail planning. The project is currently on hold.



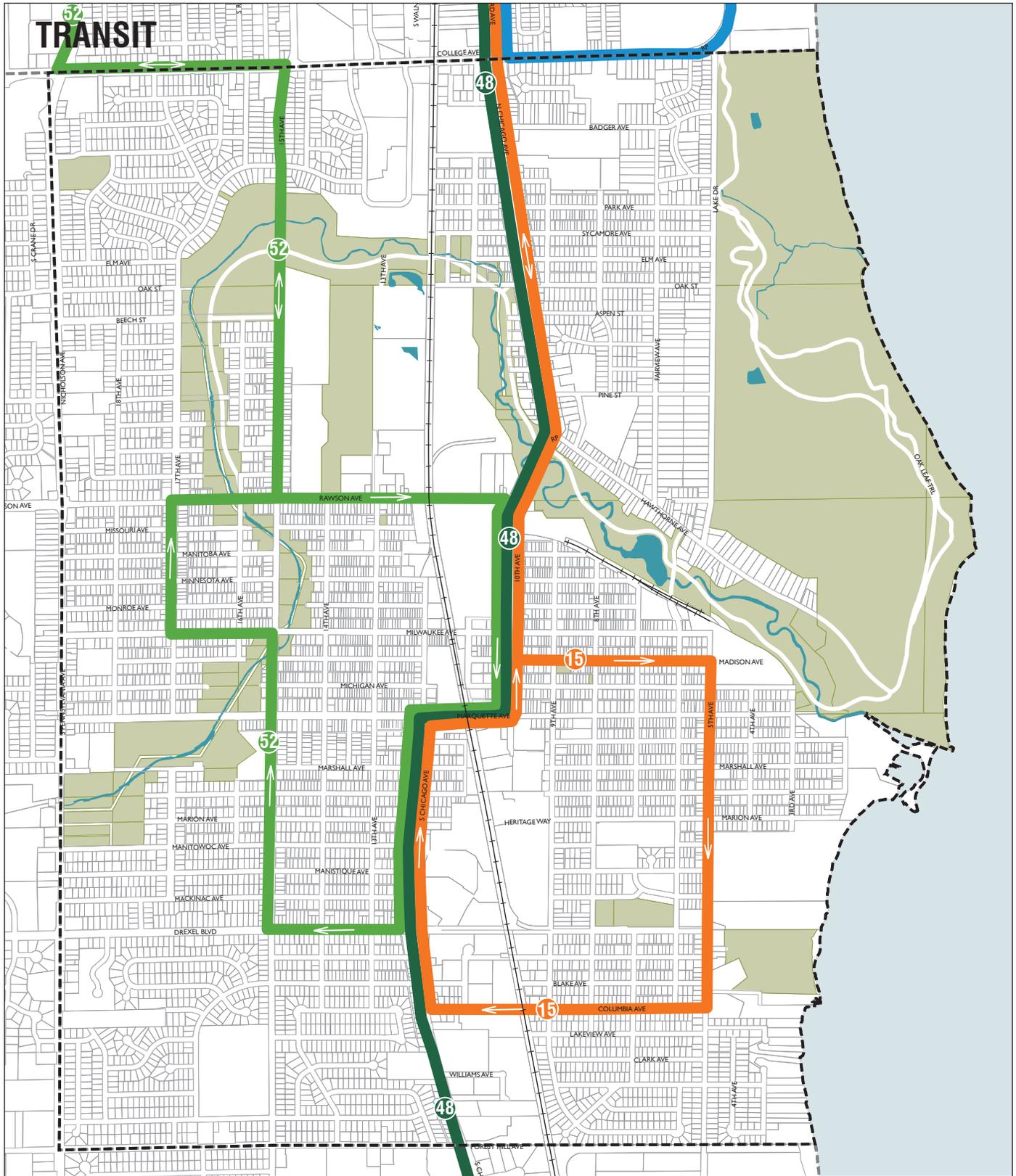
South Milwaukee's Union Pacific railroad line and former Chicago & Northwestern Railroad station – one of many South Milwaukee icons

## AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

South Milwaukee residents and businesses have several choices for convenient air travel. While no airports are located within South Milwaukee's boundaries, there are four airports nearby with a variety of functions:

- » Two commercial international airports serve South Milwaukee residents and business. General Mitchell International Airport is located in the city of Milwaukee just 5 miles away and O'Hare International Airport is a short 72-mile trip from South Milwaukee.
- » John H. Batten Airport, located in Racine, offers transport/corporate service, a category that includes corporate jets, cargo jets and small commuter aircraft.
- » Lawrence J. Timmerman Airport, located in Milwaukee, is the nearest general-utility facility, which provides service for larger general-aviation aircraft.
- » Sylvania Airport, a privately owned public-use facility located in Sturtevant, provides basic-utility service for the smallest general aviation aircraft.

The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 provides information about these and other airports. No new airports are anticipated for the area.



- 15** HOLTON - KINNICKINNIC
- 48** SOUTH SHORE FLYER (Operates on weekdays)
- 52** CLEMENT - 15TH AVENUE
- 88** CUDAHY (Operates most weekdays September to June)

➔ TRAVEL DIRECTION



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

Additionally, development plans for the Aerotropolis around General Mitchell International Airport present opportunities for cross-jurisdictional cooperation among surrounding municipalities. A joint planning effort could lead to increased economic development through coordinated strategies, programs, and initiatives across member communities.

## TRANSIT SERVICE

SEWRPC's 2020 Plan also considered public transit. The Plan included these recommendations for potential changes in transit routes that serve South Milwaukee:

- » Restructure the existing bus rapid transit route between the cities of Cudahy and South Milwaukee to the city of Milwaukee central business district to operate via Rawson Avenue, South Pennsylvania Avenue, Lake Arterial, and I-794.
- » Expand express transit service by adding a route from 13th Avenue and Rawson Avenue in the City of South Milwaukee to the City of Milwaukee central business district via Rawson Avenue, South Chicago/South Packard avenues, South Kinnickinnic Avenue and South First Street.

Currently, the Milwaukee County Transit System operates more than 57 bus routes in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area. While more routes are possible in the future and opportunities for expansion, three serve South Milwaukee today:

- » Route 15, the Holton – Kinnickinnic route, provides accessible bus service from South Milwaukee to downtown Milwaukee, Brady Street, and the Bay Shore Mall.
- » Route 48, the South Shore Flyer route, provides weekday service from South Milwaukee to downtown Milwaukee.
- » Route 52, the Clement – 15th Avenue route, provides service from South Milwaukee to Oak Creek and north to Historic Mitchell Street in Milwaukee.

Other transit services available to South Milwaukee residents and businesses are Milwaukee County Transit Plus, which provides door-to-door service for people with disabilities, and a "vanpool" program that provides carpool services to and from work.



Route 15 traveling northbound on the South Chicago Avenue Corridor

## BICYCLE FACILITIES

In South Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Oak Leaf Trail is aligned through Grant Park and largely along the Oak Creek Parkway. The trail is nearly 90 miles long and, location-to-location, uses off-road paths, parkway drives and municipal streets. The section passing through Grant Park was resurfaced and widened in 2015. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020, which is a comprehensive look at bicycling within the state, has two primary goals:

- » Increase levels of bicycling throughout Wisconsin, doubling the number of trips made by bicycles by the year 2010 (with additional increases achieved by 2020).
- » Reduce crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles by at least 10 percent by the year 2010 (with additional increases achieved by 2020).

Planning and engineering are tools identified in the plan to achieve these goals. Education, enforcement and encouragement are also considered important. Recommended routes, shared roadway signage, and bike lanes could be considered to increase safety. Based on feedback, it is recommended that bicycle racks be sited in key locations throughout the community, including Downtown and at strategic park locations.

## PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS

The City of South Milwaukee desires to have a completed sidewalk system throughout the community in accordance with an adopted policy. The City recently adopted a Sidewalk Plan to help the city achieve this objective by identifying streets where sidewalk will be installed. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation published Wisconsin Pedestrian Planning Guidance and a Pedestrian Policy Plan, which include guidelines for communities wishing to plan and develop pedestrian facilities.

# HOUSING

## VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » **Boost homeownership incentives: encourage Millennials and younger generations**
- » **Add condo options to retain long-time residents**
- » **Maintain housing options that are affordable to the residents in the community**
- » **Re-utilize existing space and infrastructure to develop multi-family housing options with amenities**
- » **Encourage and assist property owners with improvements and incentives that will bring value to the community**

South Milwaukee provides its residents with a variety of housing styles, both old and new, appealing to a range of income levels. Starter homes are plentiful and share the community with apartments, townhouses, and move-up single family dwellings. Similar to the pattern found elsewhere in the industrial Midwest, smaller traditional houses surround South Milwaukee's downtown and historic employment centers. However, the city also boasts newer, low-density, suburban-style homes at its fringes and offers more expensive living options along Lake Drive.

Through the use of statistics and surveys, the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan describes many of South Milwaukee's housing opportunities and challenges. Numbers will never fully capture the essence of any community as a place to live, but use of statistics remains a good means for starting this effort. In turn, it provides a basis for rationally determining the community's goals and objectives and, eventually, measuring the community's achievements in implementing housing policies designed to address existing needs and forecasted demands.

## GOALS

South Milwaukee's housing stock is a critical component in the health and wellness of the community. It serves to retain current residents, satisfy their needs and desires, and attract new households and families. To maintain the city's vibrancy and diversity, the following goals seek to strengthen housing within South Milwaukee:

1. Maintain the existing housing stock through regulatory actions (e.g., code enforcement) and financial incentives (e.g., rehabilitation grants).
2. Encourage high-quality, affordable housing for households of all sizes, including young professionals, families, empty nesters, the elderly, and the disabled.
3. Encourage highly designed, mixed-use, multi-family developments in key Opportunity Areas, particularly Downtown.
4. Emphasize the need for continuity between the character of existing neighborhoods and proposed developments by focusing on site layout, building massing, and the layout of the street grid (if appropriate).

## HOUSING INFLUENCES

1. A stable, overall population, consistent household size, and growing Millennial and Baby Boomer age groups are the dominant factors influencing future demand and housing policies in South Milwaukee.
2. The City's housing stock is in reasonably good condition, which means that housing supply is not harmed significantly through loss of dilapidated structures.
3. Relatively little land is available for new housing construction.
4. Demand for housing is forecasted to exceed current supply, but combined with modest increases in allowable densities, sufficient housing will exist to meet forecasted need.
5. Maintain and enhance the character, quality and livability of each residential neighborhood.
6. Ensure that the housing needs of South Milwaukee residents are met through programs that assure

## Housing Unit Characteristics

	City of South Milwaukee		City of Cudahy		City of Oak Creek		City of St. Francis		Milwaukee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	9,232	100%	8,099	100%	14,628	100%	4,907	100%	417,415	100%
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	5,357	58.0%	4,444	54.9%	8,585	58.7%	2,278	46.4%	194,837	46.7%
<b>Owner-occupied with mortgage</b>	3,615	67.5%	2,898	65.2%	6,190	72.1%	1,620	71.1%	136,428	70.0%
<b>Owner-occupied without a mortgage</b>	1,743	32.5%	1,543	34.7%	2,395	27.9%	658	40.6%	58,409	30.0%
<b>Rental</b>	3,214	34.8%	3,147	38.9%	5,481	37.5%	2,410	49.1%	184,800	44.3%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	661	7.2%	508	6.3%	562	3.8%	219	4.5%	37,778	9.1%
<b>Single-Family</b>	5,548	60.1%	4,182	51.6%	8,473	57.9%	2,329	47.5%	217,523	52.1%
<b>Duplex</b>	1,100	11.9%	1,505	18.6%	308	2.1%	409	8.3%	66,455	15.9%
<b>Multi-Family</b>	2,584	28.0%	2,325	28.7%	5,501	37.6%	2,169	44.2%	131,051	31.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

equal opportunity, maintain housing quality, and enhance neighborhood character.

- Continue to provide a full range of housing choices, especially addressing the needs of new families and Baby Boomers.
- Consider policies that encourage the use or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels, including increases in density, to assure that increasing demand for diverse housing types is met.

## HOUSING STOCK

The local housing supply was analyzed by looking at current and historical market data, the number and type of housing units available, housing tenure, vacancy rates, values, market rents, housing costs, subsidized and special needs housing, age of structures, and condition. When this information is compared with local housing demand, future needs can be identified.

### Market

Home sale prices have generally risen in the past several years. According to data from the 2000 Decennial Census and 2013 American Community Survey, the median value of homes in South Milwaukee increased 47 percent from \$111,300 in 2000 to \$163,100 in 2013. As compared to similar cities on the South Shore, South Milwaukee's increase in home price mirrored increases in Cudahy,

Oak Creek, and St. Francis. Additionally, Cudahy and St. Francis share the same median home value of \$157,500, which closely resembles that of South Milwaukee.

### Number & Type of Housing Units

Owner- and renter-occupied housing stock is primarily composed of single-family, duplex, and three- and four-unit multi-family homes and apartments. These types of housing account for 77.7 percent of all housing in South Milwaukee.

### Tenure

"Tenure" indicates whether a housing unit is owner- or renter-occupied. South Milwaukee has seen a stable distribution of 62% owner-occupied and 38% renter-occupied between 2000 and 2013. As the majority of land in the City is built-out, infill and redevelopment projects have been the major types of completed construction work in the past decade. Because of this mature built environment, this tenure data can be expected to remain the same in the future.

### Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates within a community are indicators of the strength and stability of the housing market. American Community Survey data from 2013 indicates that 92.8 percent of the city's housing units are occupied. While the 7.2 percent vacancy rate may be higher than South Milwaukee's 2000 rate of 4.7 percent, it continues to indicate a healthy housing market.

## Housing Age

	City of South Milwaukee		City of Cudahy		City of Oak Creek		City of St. Francis		Milwaukee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	9,232	100%	8,099	100%	14,628	100%	4,907	100%	417,415	100%
<b>Built 2010 or later</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	134	0.9%	13	0.3%	796	0.2%
<b>Built 2000 to 2009</b>	392	4.2%	590	7.3%	2,615	17.9%	531	10.8%	19,813	4.7%
<b>Built 1990 to 1999</b>	1,016	11.0%	857	10.6%	3,922	26.8%	385	7.8%	23,503	5.6%
<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	571	6.2%	493	6.1%	2,092	14.3%	129	2.6%	22,871	5.5%
<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	834	9.0%	786	9.7%	2,135	14.6%	904	18.4%	44,043	10.6%
<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	1,310	14.2%	1,163	14.4%	1,431	9.8%	502	10.2%	46,882	11.2%
<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	2,328	25.2%	1,508	18.6%	1,411	9.6%	1,407	28.7%	85,861	20.6%
<b>Built 1940 to 1940</b>	784	8.5%	507	6.3%	354	2.4%	419	8.5%	41,885	10.0%
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	1,997	21.6%	2,195	27.1%	534	3.7%	617	12.6%	131,761	31.6%
<b>Median Year Structure Built</b>	1958		1959		1987		1960		1954	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

### Condition of Housing Stock

The condition of the housing stock was examined to show the level of need for rehabilitation. Age of homes is often used as a surrogate measure of condition. The “Year Built” map illustrates the age of homes and other structures, in addition to the development pattern of the city.

Over two-thirds (69.5 percent) of homes in the City were built before 1969. The majority of which were built in two phases: 1) in the two decades following the City’s establishment in 1897, and 2) during the post-World War II building boom. Additional housing was developed outside of this older core in a pattern that approximates concentric circles.

### Contract Rent

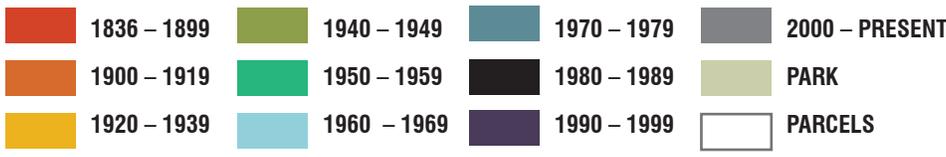
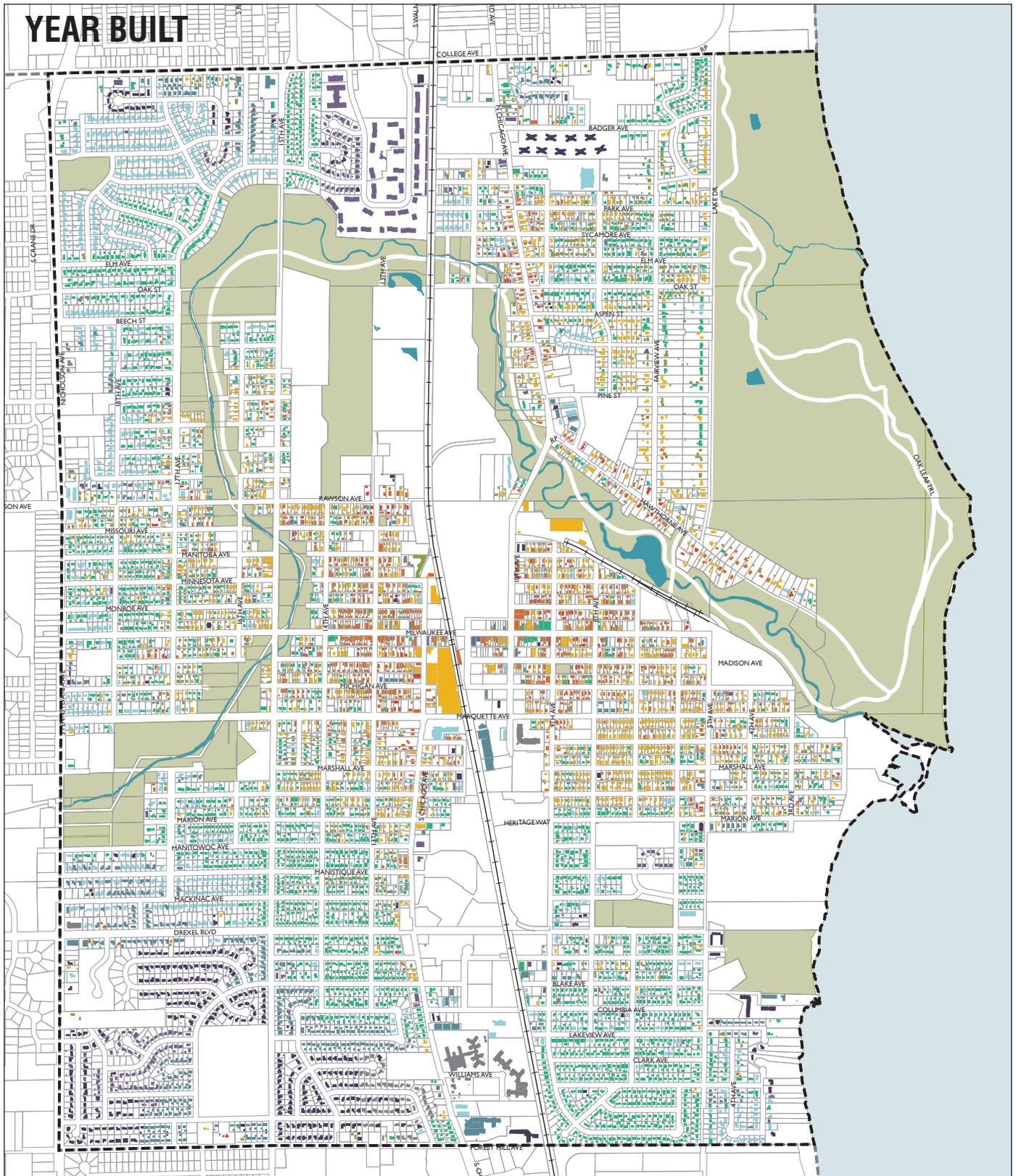
South Milwaukee boasts a breadth and depth of rental options, which are apparently sufficient to accommodate a wide range of rental needs. The City has 3,214 renter-occupied units with a median gross, monthly rent of \$727. Over 90 percent of renters pay between \$500 and \$1,500 per month – suggesting availability for a wide range of incomes. The large number of rental units within the city, along with a wide range of monthly rents and reasonable vacancy rate, suggest that the local supply is well-matched with demand.

### Affordable, Subsidized & Special Needs Housing

South Milwaukee is home to 299 units of affordable housing owned by private entities and the South Milwaukee Community Development Authority (CDA) with support from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The buildings are a series of multi-family properties that provide housing to low-income, elderly, and special needs residents. The multi-generational housing at Grant Park Square is of particular note, as it welcomes residents of various incomes and ages with 52 units that are well suited for families. Sunrise Village Senior Apartments provides 48 units specifically for elderly residents. The CDA administers Parkcrest Housing on 6th Avenue. The complex provides a total of 60 units of varying sizes that accommodate large and small households. In addition, 8 units are available for elderly and disabled tenants.

High-quality affordable housing can add diversity and vibrancy to South Milwaukee as it attracts residents and families with varying backgrounds – contributing to the city’s identity and character. The City should continue to consider these types of development as valuable additions to the community. Financial support for affordable housing can be sought through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

### Available Land

There is little land available for development in South Milwaukee. One area is located southeast of the intersection of Drexel Boulevard with Nicholson Avenue and a second area is east of Nicholson between Beech Street and Maple Street.

South Milwaukee would like to see residential development in place of the manufacturing properties located lake side and along the Oak Creek Parkway. The Future Land Use Element in Chapter 2 more fully describes this opportunity. Depending on the densities eventually allowed, upscale condominium-style development could provide new housing for about 900 South Milwaukee residents, depending on household size. Other locations may, over time, redevelop at somewhat higher densities. Throughout the city, this could accommodate up to an estimated additional 3,000 new residents.

If residential development occurs on available land and nonstandard lots and redevelopment occurs at higher densities in key locations, up to 4,200 residents could be accommodated. If these represent new residents, South Milwaukee could grow to about 25,000 – a theoretical maximum for the city.

### Infill Lots

Approximately 30 to 40 properties are vacant within South Milwaukee and are not buildable under the City's current zoning ordinance and building code because the lots do not meet existing requirements for frontage and lot area. They are scattered throughout the community. While these locations are vacant and not part of the current supply, with creation of a citywide infill policy or revised zoning, these properties may become part of the future supply of housing in South Milwaukee. For the purposes of this effort, infill residential may accommodate about 70 new residents, depending on average household size. The city wishes to address the nonstandard lots on a case-by-case basis through its conditional use process. To assist with this process, the City will prepare architectural standards.

Where the sense of openness afforded by the nonstandard lots is seen as desirable, the City should encourage the property owners to purchase adjacent open parcels, to assemble the properties into a single parcel. In cases where the infill lot is not owned by an adjacent property owner, the City may consider additional steps to facilitate use (development), sale or assembly of lots.

## Projected Housing Needs

Over the next 20 years, projections indicate that the population could rise from 21,236 in 2014 to 21,873 in 2035 – growth of about 637 residents. Using the average number of persons per household to calculate anticipated housing demand, it is projected that the new residents will need approximately 270 additional housing units. Implementing efficient land use management practices to encourage mixed-use developments with retail/office and residential, the City will be able to satisfy housing demand while also achieving its economic development goals. The City should focus re/development efforts at the Opportunity Areas and require higher density developments when appropriate.

## HOUSING MIX

As South Milwaukee evaluates future housing needs, changing demographics and markets will determine South Milwaukee's future housing mix.

### Maturation of Residents

Aging “baby boomers” in South Milwaukee continue to show their commitment and likeness for the city. Consistent with larger trends, this demographic is looking to downsize however, and are seeking housing that requires little or no maintenance. This means the population is looking to move out of their single-family dwellings in favor of apartments and condominiums, as well as ranch-style houses with small lot sizes. Both infill housing policies and lake side condominium development will likely appeal to these residents.

If and when new senior market opportunities are accommodated by developers in South Milwaukee, it is imperative to look at the next market of occupants for these units. To note, Millennials and Baby Boomers are likely to prefer age integration. Both generational groups also prefer vibrant walkable communities, and although the general preferences in retail may be different, both groups desire high-quality restaurant experience. In other words, developers, investors, and the City should make sure that as new housing units are designed and built, that they a) are built in a more dense urban style than currently exists in the local market, b) are high quality, and c) can suit the needs of future markets, particularly Millennials. There is no need to design units only for seniors, as at the very least, long-term age integration must inform the ultimate development product. The likely near-term product could focus on multi-family buildings that are 3-5 stories in height, with wood frame construction on the upper floors.

## Next Generation of Residents

As the children of the baby boomers age, the single-family housing made available by their “parents” will become available. They may also seek out “move-up” housing, creating a market for somewhat more expensive single-family dwellings. Some of the areas targeted for single-family residential development may be suitable for move-up housing.

## Starter Community

Given the marketplace, South Milwaukee will likely continue in its role as a provider of “starter homes” for young families. Recognizing this potential market, South Milwaukee has already invested in the school district. Adequate low-cost housing, likely in the form of multiple-family dwellings, must remain available to assure that the area’s young workers and others have a place to live locally. This demographic also enjoys proximity to downtown activities. Existing multiple-family dwelling opportunities may combine with higher residential densities anticipated to redevelop near the Downtown to accommodate these residents. As a so-called “suburb” or “bedroom community,” South Milwaukee is in a unique market position for new and/or younger employees due to its proximity to downtown and other regional employment centers, affordable high-quality housing stock, strong community, connections via bicycle trails, and proximity to transit. While these connections do not work for all employees, they do provide an attraction and, for some, an amenity that makes housing in South Milwaukee more desirable. This new and/or younger population of workers is not looking for a “starter home” but a “starter community” – a place where they can live and become part of a social and economic network. Conventionally this is referred to as a place to “live-work-play.”

After World War II, into the 1990s, smaller single family homes were the first choice for new workers. Now that more urban models of a “starter community” have become popular, there is a major opportunity for South Milwaukee to retool its character, especially when compared to other suburban communities with fewer assets, amenities and potential connections. Put another way, many suburban communities can be viewed only as decentralized places while South Milwaukee can take full advantage of its proximity to Milwaukee – South Milwaukee has the advantages of an urban experience along with the amenities of a small community, including a tight-knit social environment. Supporting this, the community has a strong vision and desire to strengthen its amenities.



# NATURAL & AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

## VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » **Activate the Lagoon and create safe areas for year-round activities, such as ice skating and fishing**
- » **Implement a management strategy for the vegetation along Oak Creek Parkway**
- » **Create more gathering places with dining and beverage options in Grant Park**
- » **Improve pedestrian access along Oak Creek Parkway**
- » **Create a walkway that will connect the north and south beaches**
- » **Address ravine and cliff erosion along Lake Michigan**

## GOALS

South Milwaukee residents cherish the city's natural resources. Grant Park, Oak Creek Park, and Lake Michigan's water resources lie at the heart of the city's identity. As these resources have been inextricably intertwined throughout the community's history, they must receive attention in the future.

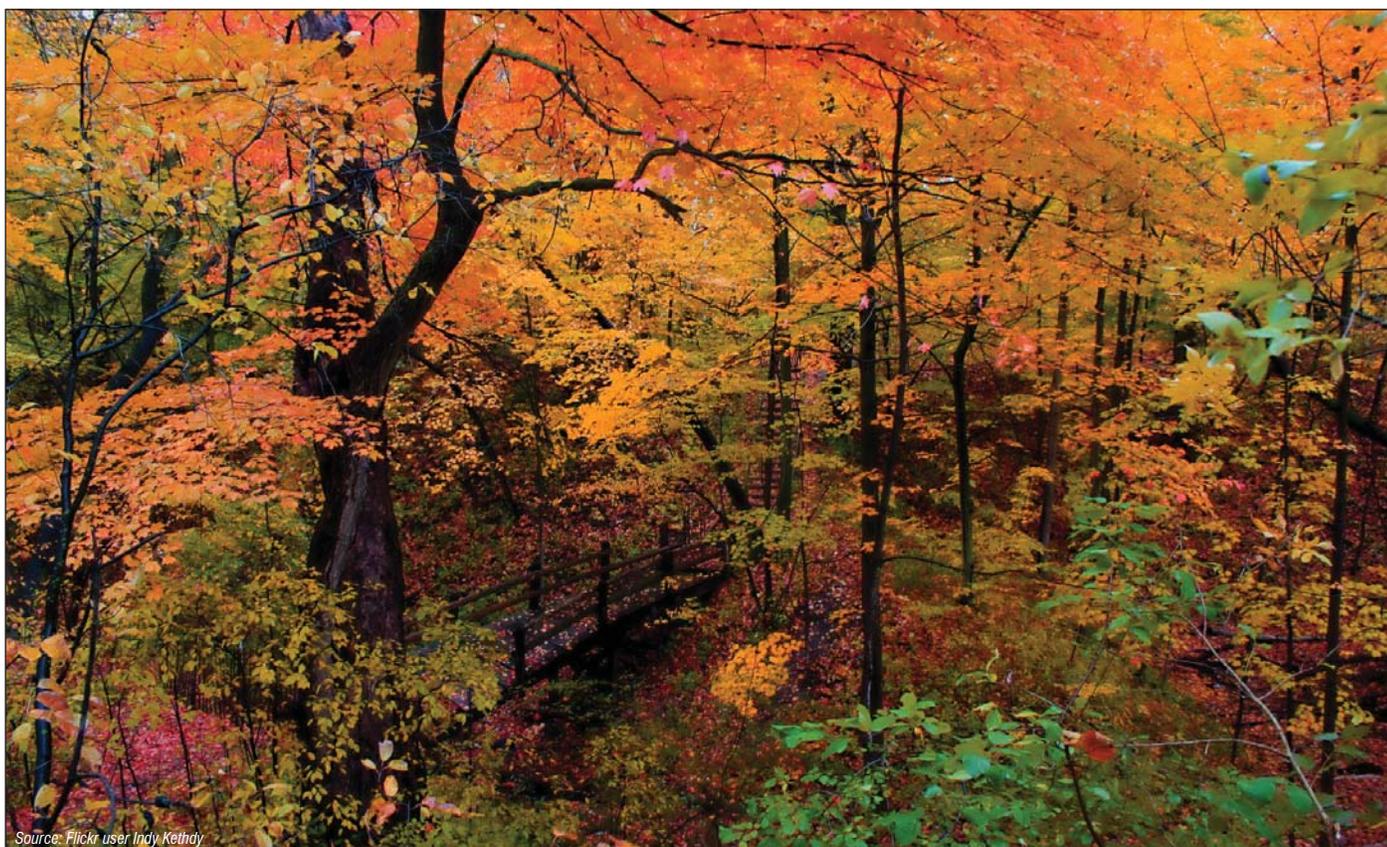
1. Build on and continue to protect the amenities in the open space and recreation system of South Milwaukee, especially Grant Park, the Oak Creek Parkway, and the Grobschmidt Pool.
2. Enhance and maintain parks and recreation areas to meet the needs of South Milwaukee citizens.
3. Preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the city.
4. Protect and conserve the city's physical environment by protecting air quality, reducing noise pollution, and protecting the city's environmental corridors.
5. Establish regulations and policies that preserve and protect cultural, historical, and natural areas of significance. Educate residents about the importance of these actions.
6. Recognize the importance of intergovernmental relationships to address natural resource issues, which often extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries.
7. Consider and seek out the numerous grants and programs that target resource protection.
8. Consider appropriate, established regulatory tools to assist with resource protection.

## PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES

In addition to the City's own efforts, Milwaukee County plays a major role in open space preservation and offers some recreation opportunities. Parks are the second largest land-use classification within the City of South Milwaukee, accounting for 25 percent of the land. Three large Milwaukee County Parks are located within the city: Grant Park, Rawson Park, and the Oak Creek Parkway.

In addition to formal parkland, the South Milwaukee Board of Education provides activities and programs through the South Milwaukee Recreation Department. The Recreation Department organizes various youth programs such as sports leagues and instruction, camps, arts and crafts, and special events. Adult programs are also provided.

“With the expansive Lake Michigan and Milwaukee County's Grant Park bordering South Milwaukee's east side, the community is the envy of many in the region who can only wish for close proximity to nature in an urban setting. The City cherishes its location and natural assets, which combine with a remarkable number of historic sites and buildings to help define a unique community. Quantifying these assets is one of the purposes of the Cultural and Natural Elements, along with considering what the future may hold as the community seeks to protect its past while reaching into the future.”



Source: Flickr user Indy Kethay

## Parks & Recreation Inventory

	Location	Acreege	Significant Natural Features	Significant Amenities
<b>COUNTY</b>				
1	<b>Rawson Park Nature Area</b>	28.1 acres	Oak Creek	Restrooms, reserved picnic, drinking water
2	<b>Oak Creek Parkway</b>	220.8** acres	Oak Creek, wooded and riparian habitat	Oak Leaf Trail*
3	<b>Grant Park</b>	381.4 acres	Lake Michigan Shoreline	Wil-O-Way handicapped grant program, restrooms, golf course, soccer, softball, beach, tennis court, concessions, pavilion rental, Tot Lot, cross-country skiing, reserved picnic, phones, sand volleyball, drinking water, recreation programs
4	<b>Grobschmidt Pool</b>			Swimming pool located behind City Hall in the Oak Creek Parkway with playground area
<b>CITY</b>				
5	<b>Little League Park and Mary C. Nelson Arboretum</b>	7.8 acres		3 lighted baseball diamonds, 50-car parking lot, concession stand, restrooms, equipment storage facility, dugouts, scoreboards, bleachers, arboretum
6	<b>Shoreline Park</b>	17.6 acres		New park, under development
7	<b>Library</b>			Film shows, book clubs, story classes, meeting space
8	<b>Community Center &amp; Senior Center</b>			Fitness classes, arts and crafts, health, nutrition and social services, senior citizen center, dances
<b>SCHOOLS</b>				
9	<b>Senior High School &amp; Park</b>	24 acres	Undeveloped acreage	Tennis courts, permanent benches, drinking fountain, windscreens, paved, lighted parking lot, open play field for baseball, softball, soccer, football, archery, golf
10	<b>Middle School Athletic Field</b>	6.5 acres		Lighted football field, 5-lane track, concession stand, bleachers, scoreboard, tennis courts
11	<b>E.W. Luther School &amp; Park</b>	1.5 acres		Modular play unit, playground games, playground supervised in summer
12	<b>Blakewood School &amp; Park</b>	23.5 acres	Wooded picnic areas	Play apparatus, ballfields, soccer field, basketball goals, playground games
13	<b>Lakeview School &amp; Park</b>	12 acres		Playground equipment and games, softball field, tennis courts, playground supervised in summer
14	<b>Rawson School &amp; Park</b>	12 acres		Softball fields, baseball diamond, youth football field, lighted basketball court and tennis courts, field house, playground equipment and games, playground supervised in summer
15	<b>Hickory Park</b>	2.2 acres		Drinking fountain, tennis courts, playground equipment and games, softball field, football field, benches, basketball goals and shelter, playground supervised in summer

\*A segment of this trail passes through South Milwaukee within the Oak Creek Parkway.

\*\* Oak Creek Parkway consists of a total 1055.5 acres.

Source: City of South Milwaukee



- PARK
- ATHLETIC FACILITY

- # RECREATION FACILITY
- WATERWAY



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## Oak Creek Parkway

The Oak Creek Parkway is located within the city of South Milwaukee along the south end of the outer loop of two concentric, connected, oval-shaped chains of parkways. It consists of 178.74 acres and connects with Lake Michigan Parkway South at the southern edge of Grant Park, along Oak Creek. Features of the parkway landscape include Oak Creek, the parkway drive, pedestrian paths, a mill pond, memorial, playground, signs, retaining walls, and mix of dense vegetation along the creek with open clearings in wider areas for recreational space.

Charles B. Whitnall included the Oak Creek Parkway in his initial study for the Milwaukee County Parkway System. The Oak Creek Parkway was envisioned to connect Grant Park, the southernmost park in Lake Michigan Parkway South, with the Root River Parkway. While the connection with the Lake Michigan Parkway South was successful, land to connect with the Root River Parkway was not acquired until recently. Plans for the first segment of the Oak Creek Parkway were adopted by the county board in 1926 and land was acquired by means of condemnation and an assessment of benefits and damages in 1930. Landowners dedicated additional land in 1932, 1934, and 1936.

The Oak Creek Parkway was originally envisioned to be used for pleasure driving and nature hiking with recreational activities, such as ice skating and fishing, taking place at the lagoon and comfort station. Today, the western portion of the parkway contains a playground, tennis courts, and a baseball diamond. The parkway drive also doubles as a segment of the Oak Leaf Trail. The trail is maintained by the Milwaukee County Parks Department. The Department most recently improved segments of the Oak Leaf Trail in South Milwaukee in 2015. Several pedestrian bridges crossing the creek provide connections to the adjacent neighborhoods.

The Oak Creek Parkway is listed in the National Register under Criterion A: Community Planning and Development and Criterion C: Landscape Architecture. According to the National Register nomination, the period of significance extends from 1931, when construction of Oak Creek Parkway Drive began, to 1960, when the National Register's 50-year cutoff is approached.

As outlined in the nomination, the historic boundary includes Oak Creek, the parkway drive, and the creek corridor between Grant Park in the north and Rawson

Avenue in the south. A small portion of Oak Creek between the drive and Lake Michigan that is not adjacent to the drive was excluded from the boundary and is included as part of the Lake Michigan Parkway South.

Two water features are located in the Parkway: Oak Creek and Mill Pond. Oak Creek meanders through the Parkway to Lake Michigan. In 1943, WPA-funded labor completed erosion control along Oak Creek by adding retaining walls and widening and deepening the Creek channel. Mill Pond is the largest body of water in the Parkway. It predates the implementation of the Parkway, as early settlers formed the Pond in the 1840s by damming it to power a grist and saw mill. However, the Pond was incorporated into plans for the Parkway and reshaped and expanded. The c.1930 shelter/warming house is located along the south bank of the Pond. A WPA-constructed dam, which replaced the nineteenth-century structure, is located at the east side of Mill Pond near 6th Street.

## Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan

Effective January 2016, the City has executed an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with SEWRPC, MMSD, and Milwaukee County Parks to prepare a restoration plan for the Oak Creek Watershed. The watershed planning efforts will include focus on issues related to (1) water quality, (2) recreational access and use, (3) habitat conditions, (4) stormwater and drainage, and (5) Mill Pond and the associated dam as it relates to the various issues. The watershed study is expected to be completed in a 2-year period, by the end of 2018. Following completion, the governmental bodies will have the key data necessary to make investments in the health and future of the watershed.

## Alliance for Great Lakes

The City is supporting a partnership between the Alliance for the Great Lakes and Milwaukee County Parks to study the restoration and protection of Grant Park's ravines, with the City supporting the study through public outreach, storm water information, and the identification of potential solutions to reduce erosion.

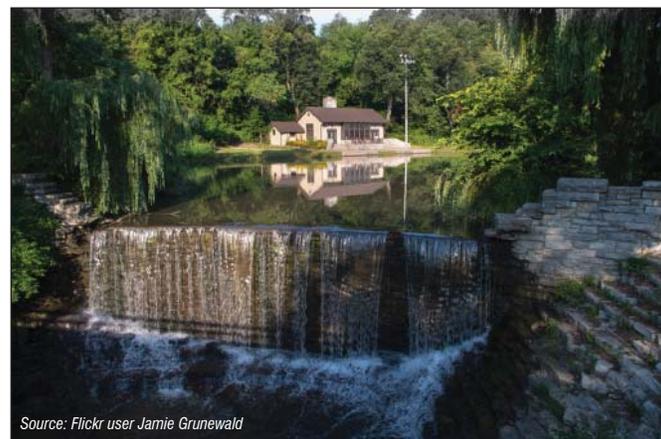
## Friends of Groups

The South Milwaukee community supports two organizations focusing on the natural features in the city. These include the Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc. and the Friends of Grant Park. Both groups meet monthly to organize their efforts.

The Friends of the Mill Pond and Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc. are an organization of over 50 members with the objective to restore and beautify the Oak Creek Parkway, watercourse and the Mill Pond. The benefits of this restoration will include:

- » Increased recreational use of the park
- » Enhanced area for community activities
- » Increased community awareness
- » Increased social value of this site during all seasons
- » Respect of this historic area and natural resources while providing a buffer for groundwater run off
- » Encourage sustained preservation

The Friends of Grant Park are organized to help preserve the natural areas of Grant Park, enhance unique features, encourage usage of the park, and provide a mechanism for private contributions to supplement public funding of Grant Park by Milwaukee County Parks.



### Grobschmidt Pool

Grobschmidt Pool is one of nine Milwaukee County Parks outdoor pools. The pool is located in the Oak Creek Parkway, at 2600 16th Avenue, behind the City Hall. The County Parks Department regularly improves this community asset. The most recent upgrades in 2015 include a new pool liner membrane, upgrades to the water supply system, and accessibility upgrades.

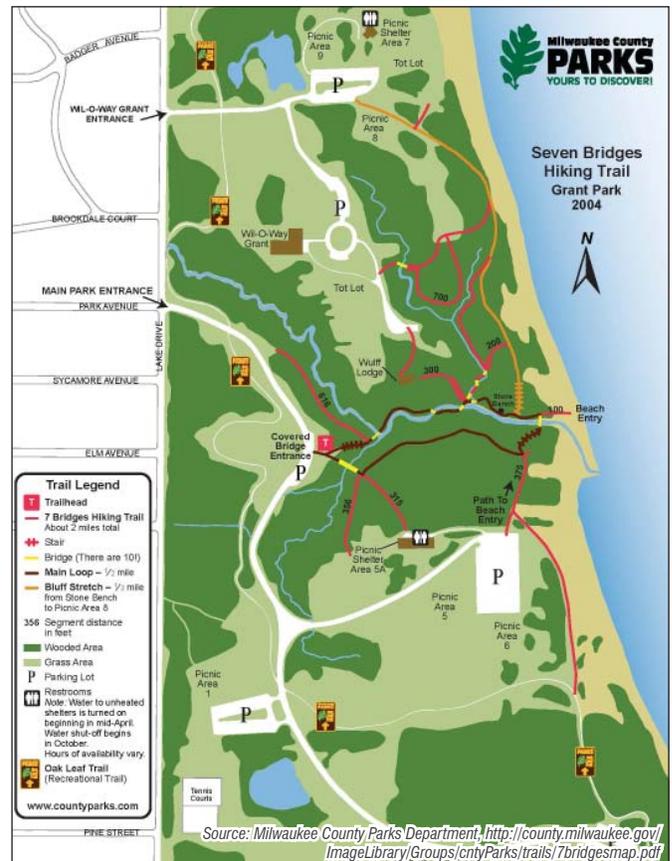


Source: City of South Milwaukee

### Grant Park & the Lake Michigan Parkway (South)

Lake Michigan Parkway South is located on the eastern edge of Milwaukee County along the Lake Michigan shoreline and is comprised of 455 acres of county-owned land. The parkway primarily consists of a series of connected parks, including (from north to south) Cupertino Park, South Shore Park, Bay View Park, Sheridan Park, Warnimont Park and Golf Course, and Grant Park and Golf Course. The parkway also connects with the Oak Creek Parkway at the southern edge of Grant Park. The parkway features a natural setting with a generally flat terrain above a bluff overlooking beaches and Lake Michigan, naturalized vegetation, and deciduous and coniferous trees.

Milwaukee County acquired Grant Park in 1910 and development began in the 1920s. Grant Park, as well as South Shore Park, were established prior to the implementation of the parkway plan, but were integrated into the overall parkway plan. Established in 1920, the Grant Park Golf Course is the first golf course developed by Milwaukee County.



Grant Park Golf Course and Seven Bridges Park

Detailed Trail Map of Seven Bridges Park, highlighting the park's ten bridges

By 1926 the park was the largest in the county system, encompassing approximately 400 acres and including bathing beaches, baseball diamonds, a track, pavilion, picnic areas, and tourist camp with access from Lake Drive. Work continued in this park through the 1940s with the construction of an additional service building, band stand (nonexistent), pavilion, shelters, and a bathhouse. Additional athletic fields and recreational areas were also developed during the time. The golf clubhouse dates to 1892 and is the former home of one of South Milwaukee's founding families, the Fowles.

### Seven Bridges Hiking Trail in Grant Park

“Enter this wild wood and view the haunts of nature.” As you wind your way through the ravine on unpaved and lannon stone paths, lannon stone staircases, and numerous foot bridges, you'll discover the delights of nature – a carpet of spring wildflowers, the songs of migratory birds, fabulous fall color, the refreshing sound of water rushing in a brook. Following the trails, you'll be led among enormous trees such as the native beech, along creeks, into secluded areas, and onto the shore of Lake Michigan.

In the early 1900s, Frederick C. Wulff, the first Superintendent of Horticulture for the park system, developed paths which served as the foundation of the Seven Bridges Trail. He lived with his family in what is now the park's overnight lodge, grew nursery stock in the Wil-O-Way area, planted many of the non-native trees found in the park, and raised pheasants and geese here.

In the '30s, the trail was further developed as a Works Progress Administration project. It required a crew of over 200 Civilian Conservation Corps workers to construct retaining walls along creek beds and throughout the ravine, and to create lannon stone paths and staircases.

Over the years the trail system declined, but in 1995–96, five young members of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, trained by Park Maintenance staff, reconstructed damaged sections of the trail, rebuilt staircases and six bridges, added railings and signs, and remodeled the overnight lodge. The covered bridge was renovated by Parks Maintenance staff.

*Source: Milwaukee County Parks Department*



*Source: Milwaukee County Parks Department*

Grant Park Club House



*Source: Indy Kethdy*

Seven Bridges Park within Grant Park



*Source: Indy Kethdy*

Seven Bridges Park within Grant Park



Existing conditions of Shoreline Park

## Shoreline Park

South Milwaukee's newest park is located off of 5th Avenue, between Drexel Boulevard and Sherman Avenue (south of the South Milwaukee Wastewater Treatment Facilities). The site is 18.5 acres, and is the location of the former Northwestern Barrel Company. The site was a Superfund site and deeded to the City in 2011. The site clean-up ended in 2012 and the City has been facilitating planning for the site since. The settlement agreement requires that the City provide public access to the site. The focus on public access provides the opportunity to create a new park, increase access to the Lake and shoreline, and make connections to other amenities. These opportunities for connections include the South Milwaukee arboretum and Little League (2 blocks west), the South Milwaukee Yacht Club (1/3 mile north ) and Grant Park (1/2 mile north). The graduate slope of the site from the shoreline is unique, where the majority of the shorelines are steep bluffs. A deep ravine on the site creates a unique coastal wetland.



Park concept for the new Shoreline Park, featuring public access and erosion control in the ravine

## PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAKE MICHIGAN

The South Milwaukee Beach and Yacht Club provides another unique opportunity for residents to enjoy Lake Michigan, one of South Milwaukee's most notable natural resources. The Yacht Club is located south of Grant Park along Lake Michigan and offers public access to the waterfront. The City leases the land to the yacht club and the club is responsible for maintaining the facility. As a condition of the lease, access to the lakefront is guaranteed to the public.

The Beach and Yacht Club is strategically positioned between the Milwaukee and Racine clubs, providing an attractive alternative for south suburban and Racine area residents. During the last 60 or so years, it has grown from a tiny strip of beach to a 14 acre site with a club house. There are 95 slips available for rent to members who reside within 30 miles of the yacht club. Piers range in length from 30 to 40 feet and can accommodate vessels up to 43 feet in length.

In the future, the City may consider additional uses for the site, such as a restaurant, that maintain the Yacht Club for use by its members. Any such work would be done in cooperation and partnership with the Yacht Club and its leaders.



Source: Google Earth

South Milwaukee Yacht Club



Source: Flickr user Dan Mullen

South Milwaukee Beach



Source: Flickr user Jamie Grunewald

South Milwaukee Beach



Source: Flickr user Jamie Grunewald

South Milwaukee Beach

## NATURAL RESOURCES

A number of seemingly disparate physical factors contribute to defining any community's natural environment. These include geography, soils, woodlands, lakes, streams, topography and climate. Today, environmental conditions related to air quality, brownfields and endangered species are also part of the discussion. These factors can combine to provide residents and visitors alike with a unique perspective and a clear sense of the community and its priorities. Equally important, many people would agree that these resources define not only the community, but its residents too. People take on aspects of their environment. With this in mind, the Natural Resources of South Milwaukee are described below.

### Geography & Climate

With 2.5 miles of shoreline, the city of South Milwaukee faces Lake Michigan, part of one of the largest and more unique freshwater lake systems in the world. The community's link to water merely begins there, because the city is located in the Oak Creek watershed of the Southeast Region Basin of Wisconsin. Oak Creek winds through the city and empties into Lake Michigan. Many portions of the floodway of Oak Creek are not developed and the Oak Creek Parkway keeps much of the riparian corridor in open space. And more than half of the city's Lake Michigan shoreline is protected by Grant Park. Throughout the area, if the concrete and buildings were stripped away, the gently rolling topography – carved by successive glacial activity and varying lake locations, and dominated by clay and silt loam soils subject to erosion – would become evident. Together, these waterways and natural areas preserve the community's linkages to its natural beginnings for generations to come.

South Milwaukee's climate is influenced by its proximity to Lake Michigan. Average annual precipitation is 32.9 inches. Temperatures range from an average high of 80 degrees in July to an average low of 11 degrees in January, a range that is moderated by the Lake environment.



Source: Indy Keithy

### Environmental Corridors

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has identified linear concentrations of unique recreational, aesthetic, ecological and cultural resources. It is a region-wide goal to protect and preserve these corridors.

Within the city of South Milwaukee, the Environmental Corridors consist of the Oak Creek Parkway and Grant Park, as well as the Lake Michigan shoreline and other locations deemed "special" for their natural or cultural significance. They consist of wetlands, woodlands, rare habitat, floodways, park and shoreland.

### Wetlands

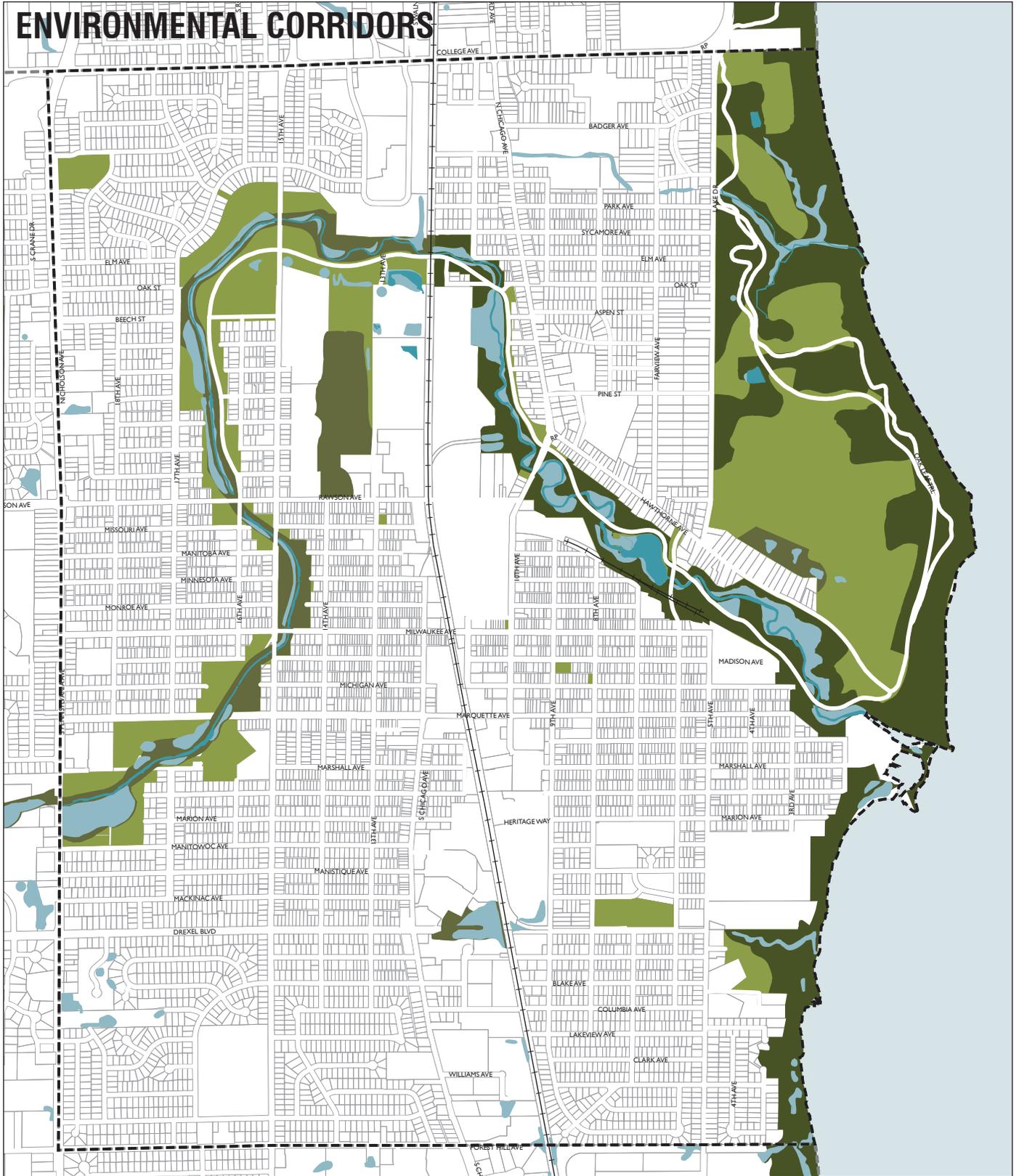
Wetlands occupy approximately 52 acres of land within the city. According to state statutes, wetlands include those areas that have soils indicative of wet conditions and where water is at, near or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophilic vegetation. The Environmental Corridors map shows the wetlands delineated by the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory and SEWRPC. South Milwaukee is located in what is known as the "tension zone" between the wetland types of northern Wisconsin and southern Wisconsin. This area contains a mix between the two, resulting in great diversity among plant species in wetlands. Wetlands are scattered throughout the city, with about half located within the Milwaukee County Park System. Wetlands are valuable for storage during a flood event and as a water quality filtering system. They also provide wildlife habitat.

### Woodlands

Woodlands occupy 237 acres of the city and are located mainly within the park system. Street trees and urban woodlands provide wildlife habit, aesthetic beauty, erosion control, protection of endangered resources, and shade during warm periods.



Source: Jamie Grunewald



- PARK LAND**
- PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR**
- SECONDARY ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR**
- WATERWAYS**
- WETLANDS**
- LAKE MICHIGAN**



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## Urban Forestry

The City completed an Urban Forestry Plan and City wide tree inventory in 2013 with partial funding through an urban forestry grant. Funding has been allocated for removal of dead, dying or diseased trees through the City's general funding with an emphasis on ash tree removal. The City is developing a tree planting plan and will proceed with a program for implementation.

## Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat

Forested uplands within South Milwaukee's parks and open spaces, and the vegetation along Oak Creek, can support a large number of wildlife and plant species. A list of species of special concern and rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species and natural communities in Milwaukee County is attached in Appendix A at the end of this chapter.

## Floodplain & Floodways

The majority of the floodplain in South Milwaukee is confined to the Oak Creek Parkway's open-space areas, making it relatively easy for the city to manage development within the floodplain. There are only a few structures located and mapped in the floodplain. Of course, future development should be guided away from flood-prone areas.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was created by Congress in response to the rising cost of taxpayer-funded disaster relief for flood victims and the increasing amount of damage caused by floods. The NFIP makes available federally backed insurance if a community adopts and enforces floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage. The city of South Milwaukee has participated in the NFIP, since 1980.

## Water Resources

Domestic and industrial water is provided by the South Milwaukee Waterworks via a surface-water intake system from Lake Michigan. The water is treated for taste and odor, undergoes particulate removal and is disinfected through a chlorinating process.

Groundwater contamination susceptibility of local soils is low, according to the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. The city's wastewater-treatment facility is the only identified potential point source of discharge to water. Therefore, it is the only identified potential source of water pollution. The city pumps treated effluent from its treatment facilities into Lake Michigan. As required, the city has a Water Quality Management Plan that guides the operation of its wastewater-treatment facilities. The plan is designed to help protect water quality.

South Milwaukee is located within the Southern Lake Michigan Coastal Zone, which is governed by the Coastal Zone Management Act. The Coastal Zone was established to assist in the management of land uses that affect Lake Michigan, deemed to have statewide and regional significance worthy of these extra efforts of protection. Therefore, any development in the coastal zone should be reviewed for consistency with Coastal Zone Management Act as a routine part of South Milwaukee's development review process.

## Erodible Soils

Much of the city is underlain with silty soils. Silty soils are typically well-drained to moderately well-drained, and are moderately to highly susceptible to erosion where slopes are greater than 6 percent. A variety of measures can be implemented to control erosion. These include use of erosion bales, silt fence, ditch checks, rip-rap, re-vegetation or slope sodding, inlet protection, and construction of detention basins. Also, silty soils are susceptible to low-bearing capacity, which needs to be addressed in road construction and building foundations.

## Environmentally Hazardous Areas

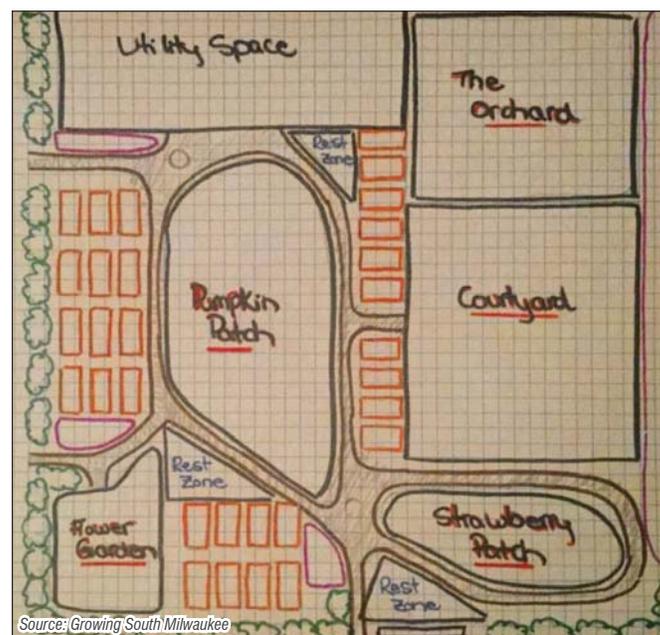
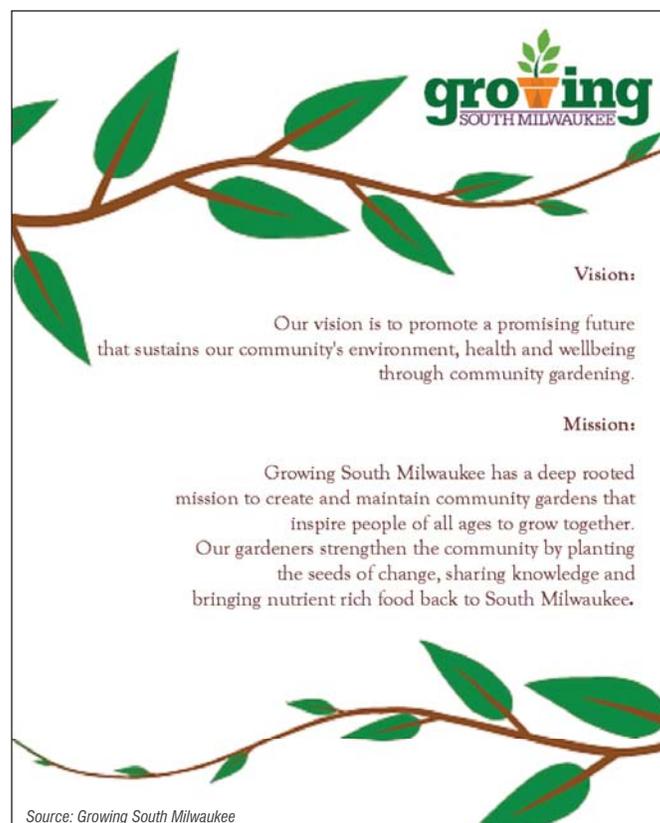
Most communities within southeast Wisconsin, especially those that have a history of industrial activity like South Milwaukee, must contend with clean up of its “brownfields.” A brownfield is an abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial property where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The state of Wisconsin has ongoing programs to help clean and redevelop brownfield properties. The Departments of Natural Resources, Commerce, Administration, and Revenue offer technical and financial assistance through several programs and initiatives that cities and property owners may use to encourage redevelopment of brownfields. In some of the more severe cases, the federal Environmental Protection Agency also provides assistance towards cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated properties. South Milwaukee has been able to take advantage of these programs and is committed to making formerly contaminated sites safe and developable again. Brownfield sites in South Milwaukee are highlighted in the Economic Development chapter.

## Agricultural Resources

There are not active farm operations in South Milwaukee at this time. While some lands are currently undeveloped, these areas are not intended for agricultural production. By acting to enhance the attractiveness of the community and allowing some increases in density, South Milwaukee is preserving agricultural land which lies elsewhere in the greater metropolitan area.

## Community Garden

There is increasing interest in establishing a community garden in South Milwaukee to provide a space for the community to participate in urban agriculture and have a venue for education and socializing. The group has established a vision, mission, and has begun plans for the garden. Although a final location has not been identified, various sites are under consideration, with the focus of visibility and accessibility for the community as a whole. A leading site for the new garden is the former Water Tower site, at 1214 Milwaukee Avenue.



Potential layout for the Growing South Milwaukee community garden

# HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Every community is influenced by its region's historical and recreational context. The greater Milwaukee area offers many opportunities for South Milwaukee residents within a short drive. These are well documented in other reports and the Comprehensive Plan will focus on those resources located within or adjacent to the City.

Two sources with extensive information about the historical resources found in and near South Milwaukee are the Wisconsin Historical Society and the South Milwaukee Historical Society.

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains records of potential historic properties in its Architecture and History Inventory. This inventory was reviewed and 23 records were found in South Milwaukee. Ten of the historic properties (and features in the case of the Oak Creek Parkway) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These include the U.S. Post Office, South Milwaukee Passenger Station, and 10 contributing features in the Oak Creek Parkway. The other sites are mostly houses and churches, but also include one retail building, one golf course clubhouse (a former house), and a cemetery.

The South Milwaukee Historical Society was founded in 1972 and is located at 717 Milwaukee Avenue in a former residence built in 1897. Members work to preserve the community's history and its artifacts. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the historic resources within South Milwaukee should be preserved

and incorporated where feasible into new development projects. A thorough inventory of each historic property would provide important information about the condition and significant features of local historic resources. In turn, the city should provide guidance about desired designs in new development that is both new and rooted in the past using the best preservation methods. As noted elsewhere in this document, the creation of architectural guidelines should be pursued in South Milwaukee, applying especially in the older and more historic areas of the community.

## GOALS

1. Work with the South Milwaukee Historical Society to interpret the significance of sites to add greater interest, preserve area history, and educate visitors about the significance of various sites.
2. Require the preservation of archaeological and historical sites on public and private lands.
3. Consider acquisition of sites that can be included in existing parks and resource areas, should the opportunity arise.



Source: GRAEF

The South Milwaukee Historical Society at 717 Milwaukee Avenue in downtown South Milwaukee.



Source: GCU



The Fowle House, built in 1848, located at 626 Hawthorne Avenue. Photo c. 1895



The E. Arthur building, built in 1903, still stands at 925-927 Milwaukee Avenue



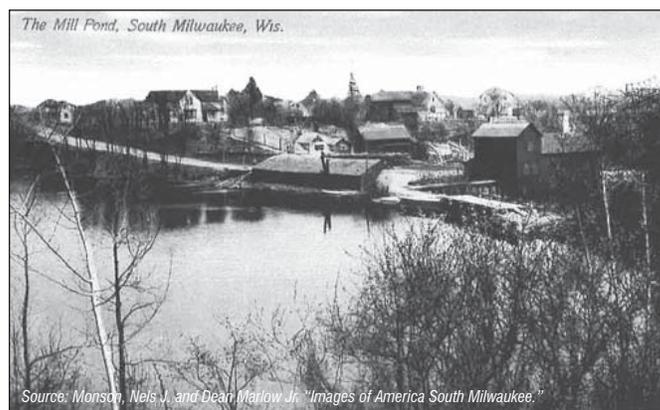
A view looking east on Milwaukee Avenue, at the former Lake View Club House and city water tower, built in 1894. Lake Michigan can be seen in the distance.



A view of the E. Arthur building's facade at present



The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot was opened on December 30, 1893 and continued regular passenger service until the late 1950s. The building was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



The old mill and dam along Oak Creek were some of South Milwaukee's most cherished landmarks, c. 1910. These structures were built around 1844 by John Fowle. The old mill was torn down in 1933 after the land was sold to the Milwaukee County Park system.



Source: www.southmilwaukeepac.org

The South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center website



Source: Flickr user Jason Staffin

The South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center's 786-seat theatre



The South Milwaukee Downtown Market website featuring year-round events

### South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center

The South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center is a professionally-managed performing arts center serving the School District of South Milwaukee (SDSM), community organizations, professional presenters and businesses throughout the greater Milwaukee region. The Center was founded in 2004 on South Milwaukee's legacy of outstanding theatre and music educators. The facility features a 786-seat theatre with a classroom-sized orchestra pit, expansive stage, exceptional lighting and sound systems, a 23-line set rigging system, projector and video screen, plus dressing rooms and adjacent areas for rental use.

Annual attendance of the Performing Arts Center is approximately 30,000, including regional and out-of-state visitors. The Center manages over 500 events annually, including 100 public events, annual series, student matinees, workshops, community outreach events, and School District of South Milwaukee events.

### South Milwaukee Downtown Market

A market is hosted in Downtown South Milwaukee on 11th Avenue, south of Milwaukee Avenue every Thursday, 3-7pm, May through October. The market was founded on July 23, 2009 to provide a unique shopping experience to residents and visitors, as well as a venue for local merchants to sell produce, baked goods, flowers, art, jewelry, and many other assorted goods. Local restaurants and performers showcase their offerings and talent to visitors.

The current location of the market is not yet permanent. The Market Committee is seeking a permanent home for the market with the goal of keeping it in the city center.



Source: GRAFF

The South Milwaukee Downtown Market in 2015

### Community Events & Celebrations

As a close-knit community that welcomes visitors from around the region, South Milwaukee hosts a variety of events that showcase the city’s many amenities and invites people to explore and enjoy Downtown, Grant Park, Oak Creek Parkway, and the local neighborhoods. Events include:

- » South Milwaukee Garden Tour
- » Evening on the Avenue
- » Heritage Week
- » Heritage Days Parade
- » Downtown Halloween Trick-or-Treat
- » Library Summer Reading Program
- » 4th of July Fireworks
- » Lionsfest
- » Community Night Out
- » Food Truck Festivals
- » Downtown Outdoor Movies



Source: Erik Brooks

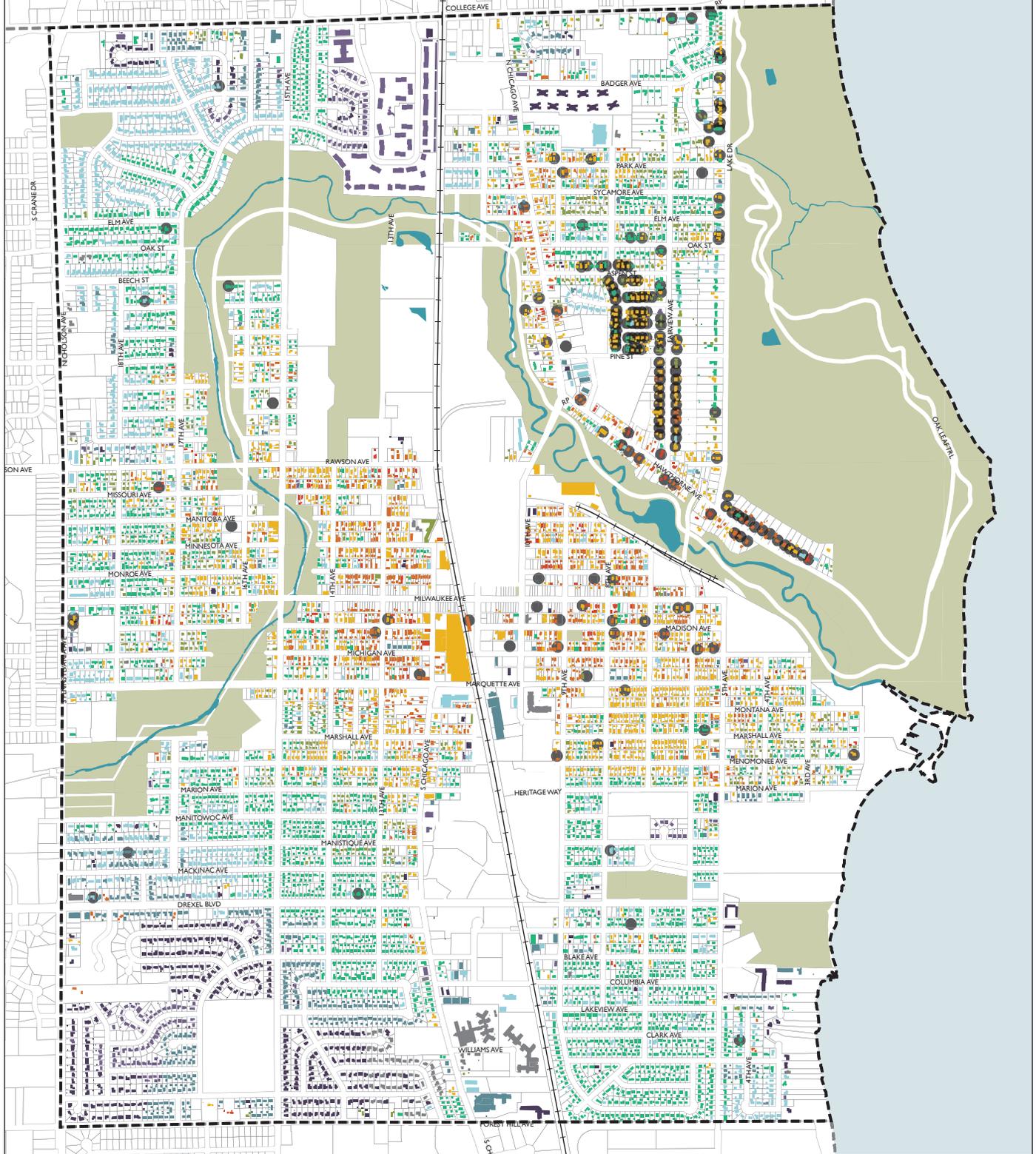


Source: Erik Brooks



Source: GRÄEF

# HISTORIC PROPERTIES + YEAR BUILT OF STRUCTURES



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## Historic Properties in South Milwaukee

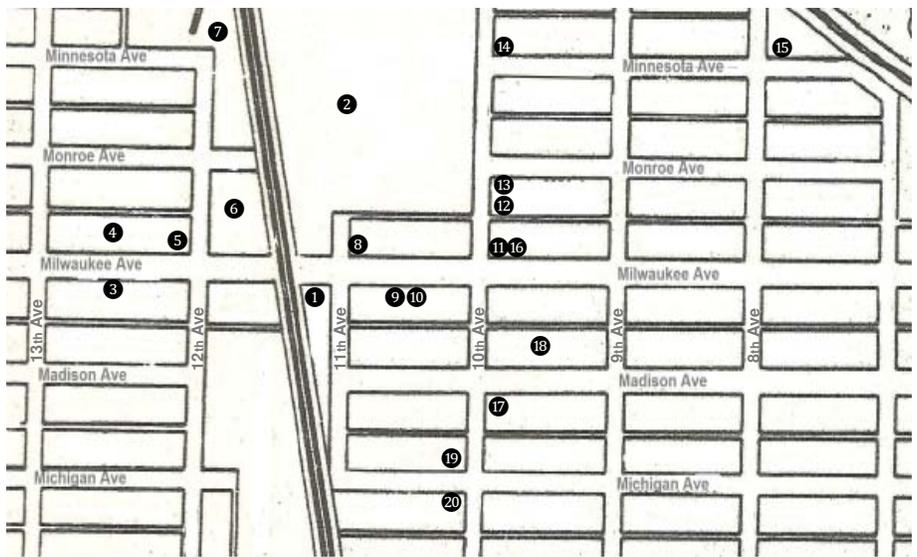
Historic Properties	Address	State Registry	National Registry
South Milwaukee U.S. Post Office	2210 10th Avenue		Yes – 10/24/2000
South Milwaukee Passenger Station	SW Corner of Milwaukee Avenue and 11th Street	Yes – 1/1/1989	Yes – 8/3/1978
Oak Creek Parkway – 1 contributing site, 2 contributing buildings, 7 contributing structures	Located between Grant Park at Hawthorne Avenue and Rawson Avenue	Yes – 8/20/2010	Yes – 6/27/2011
Elva and Sherman Hoar House	1503 Fairview Avenue		
Horace Nicholas Fowle House	626 Hawthorne Avenue		
First Congregational Church Cemetery	1111 N. Chicago Avenue		
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church	9th and Michigan Avenues		
Home State Bank	921 Milwaukee Avenue		
Residence	640 Hawthorne Avenue		
Residence	627 Hawthorne Avenue		
Residence	719 Hawthorne Avenue		
Residence	830 Hawthorne Avenue		
Residence	1710 Missouri Avenue		
Residence	2113 Nicholson Avenue		
Residence	2115 Nicholson Avenue		
Old City Hall	921 Monroe Avenue		
Residence	608 N. Chicago Avenue		
Residence	1020 Rawson Avenue		

*Wisconsin State Historical Society*

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

South Milwaukee has 178 structures that have been identified as historic and culturally significant to the community. Of these, 138 properties are clustered in the Grant Park neighborhood, however there are many dispersed through the Downtown District, in addition to the Historic Lakeview Neighborhood. It is important to note that while many structures have not yet been identified as “historic” in South Milwaukee, many are culturally significant and deeply valued by the community. The included map reveals the eras and patterns of development in South Milwaukee overtime. The oldest buildings in South Milwaukee are centered in Downtown, Historic Lakeview and Grant Park, with all development echoing after and filling in the city’s fabric.

- 1 C. & NW. Railway Depot (1893).** 1111 Milwaukee Ave. Charles Summer Frost architect. Served as passenger station for the Chicago & North Western Railway through the 1950s. This building was saved from the wrecking ball in 1981 by Mr. Edwin Benkowski and has been restored. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. South Milwaukee Landmark status. Currently the business offices for Benkowski Builders.
- 2 Bucyrus Steam Shovel & Dredge Company.** 1100 Milwaukee Ave. The company moved here from Bucyrus, Ohio in 1892, with plant operations beginning in May 1893. Bucyrus steam shovels were used in the construction of the Panama Canal (1904-1914). Bucyrus was purchased by Caterpillar in 2011.
- 3 South Milwaukee Hospital (1904).** 1215-1217 Milwaukee Ave. This 20 bed hospital was opened by a transplanted Canadian, Dr. Sidney M. Smith. Dr. Smith served as the city's mayor from 1908-1910 and was successful in lobbying for the construction of the first water filter process plant on the Great Lakes in 1911. The hospital is currently a private residence.
- 4 Site of the Lake View Clubhouse.** Built in 1892 and originally intended as a cultural and civic center, a "defective chimney" was blamed as this beautiful, 3-story building burned to the ground on March 2, 1893. This was the first major fire in South Milwaukee and led to the creation of the South Milwaukee Fire Department soon thereafter. This site was also home to the city's water tower from 1895 to around 2006.
- 5 Zych's Drug Store (1917).** 1200 Milwaukee Ave. This popular drug store had one of the finest soda fountains in South Milwaukee. Ice cream was sold for 10 cents a pint and in the summer could be enjoyed in the small, outdoor park with dance pavilion on the west side of the building.
- 6 Schutz Bros. Furniture Factory (1892).** 1919 12th Ave. First factory built in South Milwaukee. Their advertising claimed that they produced "3 1/2 miles of extension tables per week." The building was sold to the Racine Fire Engine Company around 1900 and was purchased by Bucyrus in 1911 and used for many years as a community center. Currently Papa Luigi's Restaurant.
- 7 Site of Hatch Cutlery.** N.E. corner of 12th and Minnesota. In 1893 Hatch Cutlery touted itself as being the "largest shears works in the world," turning out some 2,000 shears and scissors per day. Hatch Cutlery products earned several medals at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Owner Walter P. Hatch served briefly as village President. The building burned to the ground in January 1895 and the company moved shortly thereafter.
- 8 Site of the South Milwaukee Hotel.** 1028 Milwaukee Avenue. Built in 1891-1892 by Frederick Koch, it was the first commercial building constructed in South Milwaukee. This venerable old edifice served many local business purposes until it was razed in the late 1970s.
- 9 Palace Meat Market (1897).** 1009 Milwaukee Ave. Built by Henry Donsing, one of South Milwaukee's early civic and business leaders. On the second floor was Donsing's Hall, which hosted many community functions.



- 10 The Garden Theater (c. 1920).** 1005 Milwaukee Ave. Built by Edward Wagner, this popular movie house served the community until 1977. Currently Board Game Barristers.
- 11 Site of the Hotel Blatz.** 928 Milwaukee Ave. Originally built in 1894 as Bettinger & Zig's dry goods store. The building was taken over by Charles Franke around 1902 and served as the Hotel Blatz and later as the Franke Pharmacy for many years. Charles Franke would serve 8 terms as city mayor. The building was torn down in 1963 and replaced with current structure.
- 12 Site of the old City Hall.** 2005 10th Ave. Served the city from 1893 to 1929, when current structure was built. Currently apartment complex.
- 13 Bettinger & Sons' Department Store (1902).** 2001-2003 10th Ave. South Milwaukee's first department store opened December 23, 1902. Currently the Kane Building.
- 14 South Milwaukee House (1892).** 1815 10th Ave. Built by Michael Bedessem, this tavern was a favorite watering hole for local politicians and boasted the first electric lights in the city. The original tile floor remains. Currently Powers' On 10th.
- 15 South Milwaukee Musical Instrument Company (1892).** 726 Minnesota Ave. Built by Julius Schipkowsky, this company manufactured autoharps, zithers and guitars - and later office furniture before being converted into apartments.
- 16 Bergmann's Drug Store (1907).** 926 Milwaukee Ave. Henry F. Bergmann ran this drug store for nearly 40 years. Upstairs was a large hall that served as a movie theater. Currently Sorce Martial Arts.
- 17 Park Saloon (c.1895).** 929 Madison Ave. Captain John Wexstaff, a retired Great Lakes skipper from Kenosha, operated his business here for many years. The area behind this building was a park and consisted of picnic groves, winter ice rinks and baseball diamonds. Currently Kasper's Bar.
- 18 Welbes Dairy** 914 Madison Ave. Founded by Frank Welbes in 1907. The building along the alley was the Welbes Dairy plant until 1947 when the company was sold to Huebner Dairy in Cudahy.
- 19 South Milwaukee Post Office (1931).** 2210 10th Ave. James Wetmore architect. This beautiful neoclassical building still serves the community and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. South Milwaukee Landmark status.
- 20 Doerman Shoe Mfg. Co. (1923).** 2300 10th Ave. Founded by Scott H. Doerman in 1922. This factory employed 150 people and manufactured the popular "Great Scott" children's shoe line until closing in 1956. Served as a temporary home of the South Milwaukee Library.

Source: South Milwaukee Historical Society

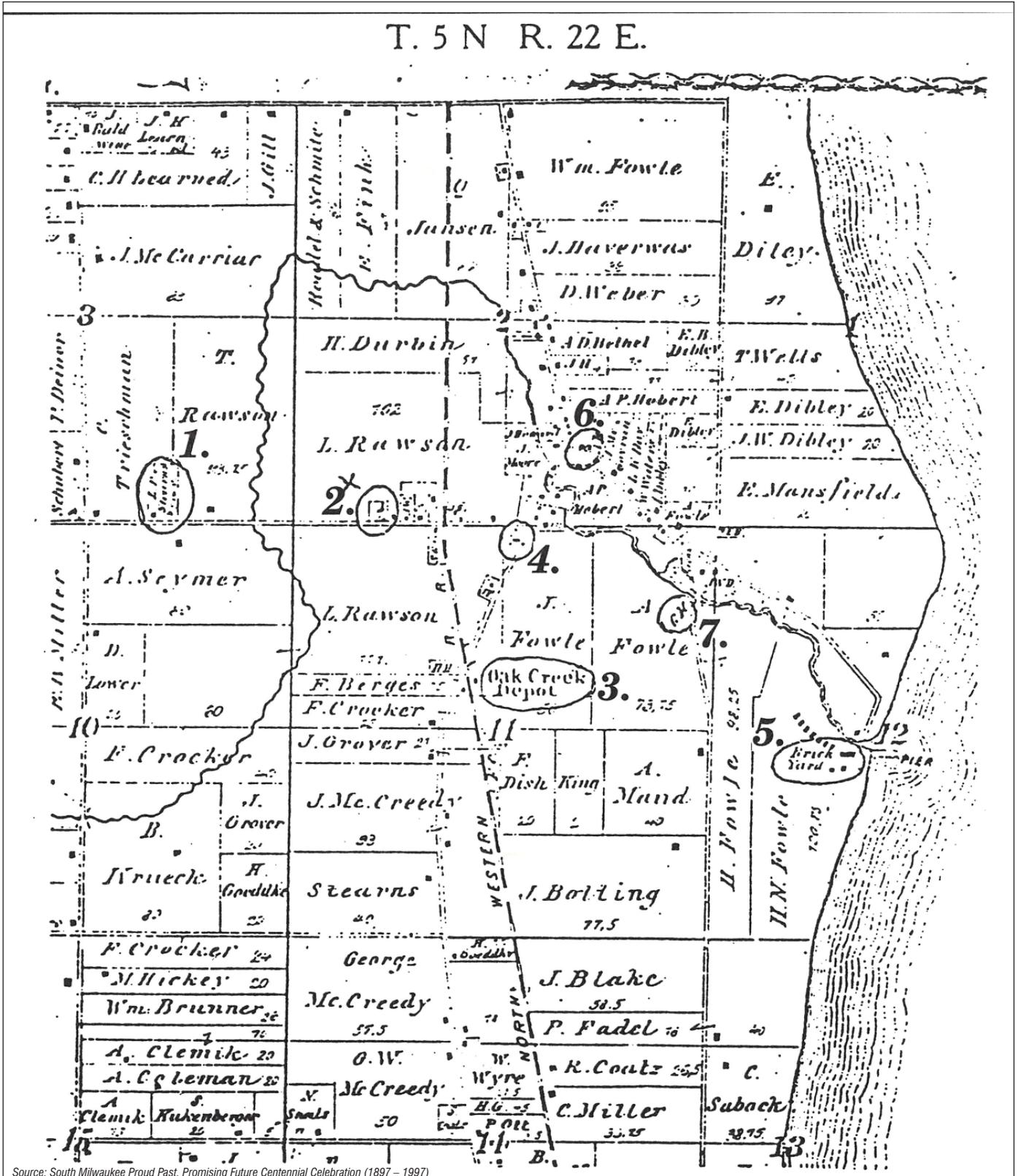
South Milwaukee Historical Society's Downtown Walking Tour Brochure, celebrating South Milwaukee's historic downtown district



A 1941 view of Milwaukee Avenue, looking east from 13th Avenue



A 1925 view of the 900 block of Milwaukee Avenue



A 1876 atlas of South Milwaukee and parcel ownership

# UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » **Maintain the alleyways**
- » **Enforce waste removal standards and schedules**
- » **Improve building inspection standards**
- » **Provide adequate staff and extend the hours of operation at deposit facilities**

South Milwaukee has long recognized the importance of addressing its utility and community facilities needs. With its excess water supply and sanitary capacity, the City is the envy of many Milwaukee metropolitan communities. Its public safety and medical coverages are balanced and available.

Further, the community has demonstrated a willingness to invest in its educational infrastructure, with upgrades to its downtown public library building and brand new high school, making sure that its youth and residents have the kinds of modern facilities needed to assure their future competitiveness.

The task of evaluating the demands placed on these services and infrastructure is made simpler by South Milwaukee's anticipated low growth rate. In fact, South Milwaukee should face minimal challenges in providing adequate utility and governmental services to its residents and businesses. Map X provides locations of South Milwaukee's community facilities.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Local Government Buildings

The city of South Milwaukee has a cluster of municipal uses located in the west-central part of the community. The City Hall and Police Department are co-located at 2424 15th Avenue. The Fire Department is centrally located at 929 Marshall Avenue and provides EMT services to South Milwaukee and its neighbors.

### Medical Treatment

In 2000, the Healthier Communities Initiative evaluated health care and other programs available in South Milwaukee and the surrounding communities. The study concluded that medical services appear to be available and well distributed throughout the area, especially with the recent additions in nearby Oak Creek of a new urgent care facility and the provision of medical services for under-insured or uninsured residents. Also, a trauma center can be found in Cudahy and the City of South Milwaukee offers some services through its Health Department.

### Schools

A sound and successful local educational system is seen as a sign of a healthy community. It influences everything from

## Comparison of School District Characteristics *with Surrounding Municipalities*

	South Milwaukee	Cudahy	Oak Creek/Franklin	St. Francis
<b>Total Schools</b>	6	7	10	3
<b>Total Students</b>	3,302	2,599	6,447	1,256
<b>Classroom Teachers (FTE)</b>	204.32	180.40	372.84	72.04
<b>Student/Teacher Ratio</b>	16.16	14.41	17.29	17.43

*Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014-2015 school year*

residential and business location decisions to property values. The City has four public elementary schools, a middle school, and a new high school, as well as two parochial schools.

In South Milwaukee's public schools, the number of students has declined somewhat due to well-known demographic trends. A new high school was built in 2003-4, due to a \$41.98 million referendum that was approved. The former high school building was renovated to house the middle school. The Performing Arts Center and the fieldhouse were part of these improvements, which were approved by referendum in 2002 and demonstrates the residents' commitment to education. The facilities were designed to be flexible for future changes and advancements in education.

### Public Library

South Milwaukee once boasted Milwaukee County's third oldest library system, beginning service in 1899. Since then, the library moved and was renovated, most recently in 1995. It is located at 1907 Tenth Avenue and is open six days per week. With more than 117,000 volumes and about 12,300 registered borrowers, the Library provides South

Milwaukeeans with the opportunity to borrow materials and participate in on-site classes. As a member of the Milwaukee County Federated Library System, residents also have access to the collections of surrounding municipalities.

### U.S. Post Office

Located at 10th and Michigan Avenues, the South Milwaukee Post Office has served the city for over eighty years since its establishment in 1933. As a site on the National Register of Historic Places, the Post Office is a treasure within the community continuing to serve as a hub of activity near Downtown.

### South Milwaukee Yacht Club

South Milwaukee boasts one of a handful of active yacht club facilities in southeastern Wisconsin along Lake Michigan. The South Milwaukee Yacht Club is a non-profit operation located on a 14-acre site leased from the city of South Milwaukee. With 95 slips, a clubhouse and bar, fuel dock, fish cleaning station, outdoor pavilion, and bathroom and shower facilities, the Club provides a valuable gathering place for boaters.



*Source: Mark Heltman*

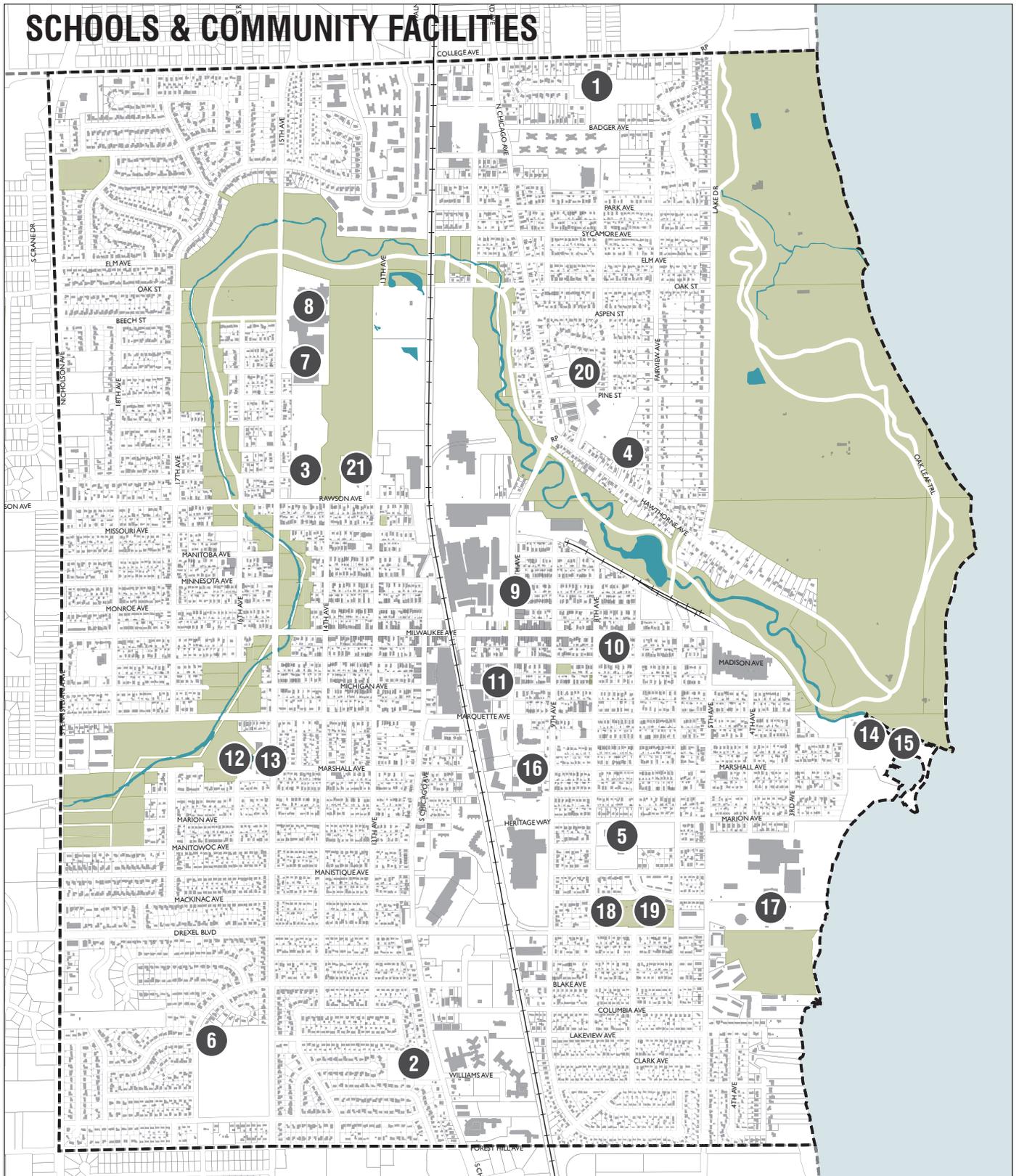


*Source: GRAEF*

## Community Facility Inventory

Facility	Location
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>1</b> Divine Mercy Catholic School	695 College Avenue
<b>2</b> Zion Lutheran School	3600 South Chicago Avenue
<b>3</b> Rawson Elementary School	1410 Rawson Avenue
<b>4</b> Luther Elementary School	718 Hawthorne Avenue
<b>5</b> Lakeview Elementary School	711 Marion Avenue
<b>6</b> Blakewood Elementary School	3501 Blakewood Avenue
<b>7</b> South Milwaukee Middle School	1001 15th Avenue
<b>8</b> South Milwaukee High School & Performing Arts Center	801 15th Avenue
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>9</b> South Milwaukee Public Library	1907 10th Avenue
<b>10</b> South Milwaukee Historical Society	717 Milwaukee Avenue
<b>11</b> South Milwaukee Post Office	2210 10th Avenue
<b>12</b> Grobschmidt Senior Center	2424 15th Avenue
<b>13</b> South Milwaukee Municipal Building and Police Department	2424 15th Avenue
<b>14</b> South Milwaukee Water Treatment Facility	100 Marshall Avenue
<b>15</b> South Milwaukee Yacht Club	101 Marshall Avenue
<b>16</b> South Milwaukee Fire and Street Departments	929 Marshall Court
<b>17</b> South Milwaukee Waste Water Treatment Facility	3003 5th Avenue
<b>18</b> Nelson Arboretum	700 Mackinac Avenue
<b>19</b> South Milwaukee Little League	700 Mackinac Avenue
<b>CEMETERIES</b>	
<b>20</b> First Congregational United Church of Christ Cemetery	1111 North Chicago Avenue
<b>21</b> St. Mark's Episcopal Church-South Milwaukee Cemetery	1314 East Rawson Avenue

*Source: City of South Milwaukee*



# **COMMUNITY FACILITY**
 **PARKS**
 **WATERWAY**
 **LAKE MICHIGAN**

0
1/4
1/2 miles

N  
↑

Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

## UTILITIES

### Water Supply

South Milwaukee's current usage is about 4 million gallons per day. The system's capacity is estimated to be 8 million to 10 million gallons per day, providing significant opportunity for growth in water demand within the city. This growth is less likely to be driven by increases in population than by the specific needs of future possible manufacturing businesses. Map X shows the water supply system.

### Stormwater Management

The City created a stormwater utility in 2007 to provide the funding for various stormwater related tasks and to meet the requirements of the State of Wisconsin Pollution Reduction Requirements. The goal of the utility include maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, improve stormwater runoff quality, reduce risk of flooding thru capital improvements, and reduce pollutants thru construction of facilities and continued operations, such as street sweeping.

### Sanitary Sewer

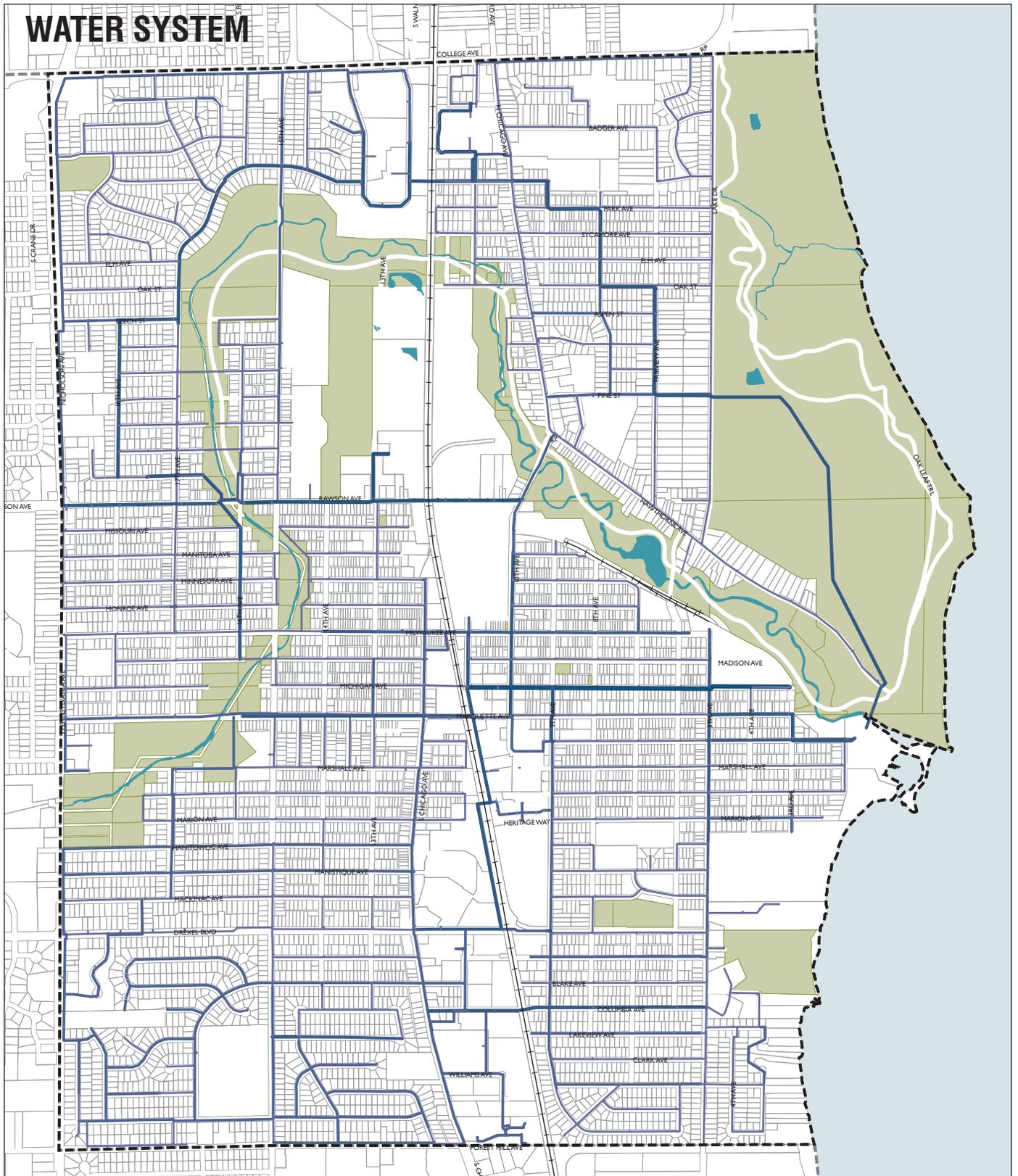
The city of South Milwaukee operates its own wastewater treatment facility. Surrounding cities and villages receive sanitary service through Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

The Treatment Plant sees a current average of about 3.25 million gallons of sewage and stormwater per day. It has a capacity of nearly twice that – 6 million gallons per day – and recently received \$3.5 million in system-wide updates.

South Milwaukee does not anticipate the need for capacity improvements. The city should keep in mind that significant redevelopment or new industries may result in the need to consider highly localized and development-related capacity enhancements. In many cases, these improvements may be charged back to the developer.

### Solid Waste and Recycling

The City provides residents and businesses with its own refuse collection and disposal services but contracts with a private operator for recycling services. The recycling market changes continuously and should be viewed as a program that requires regular reexamination and public education to make it effective for the City and to maximize the reduction to landfills.

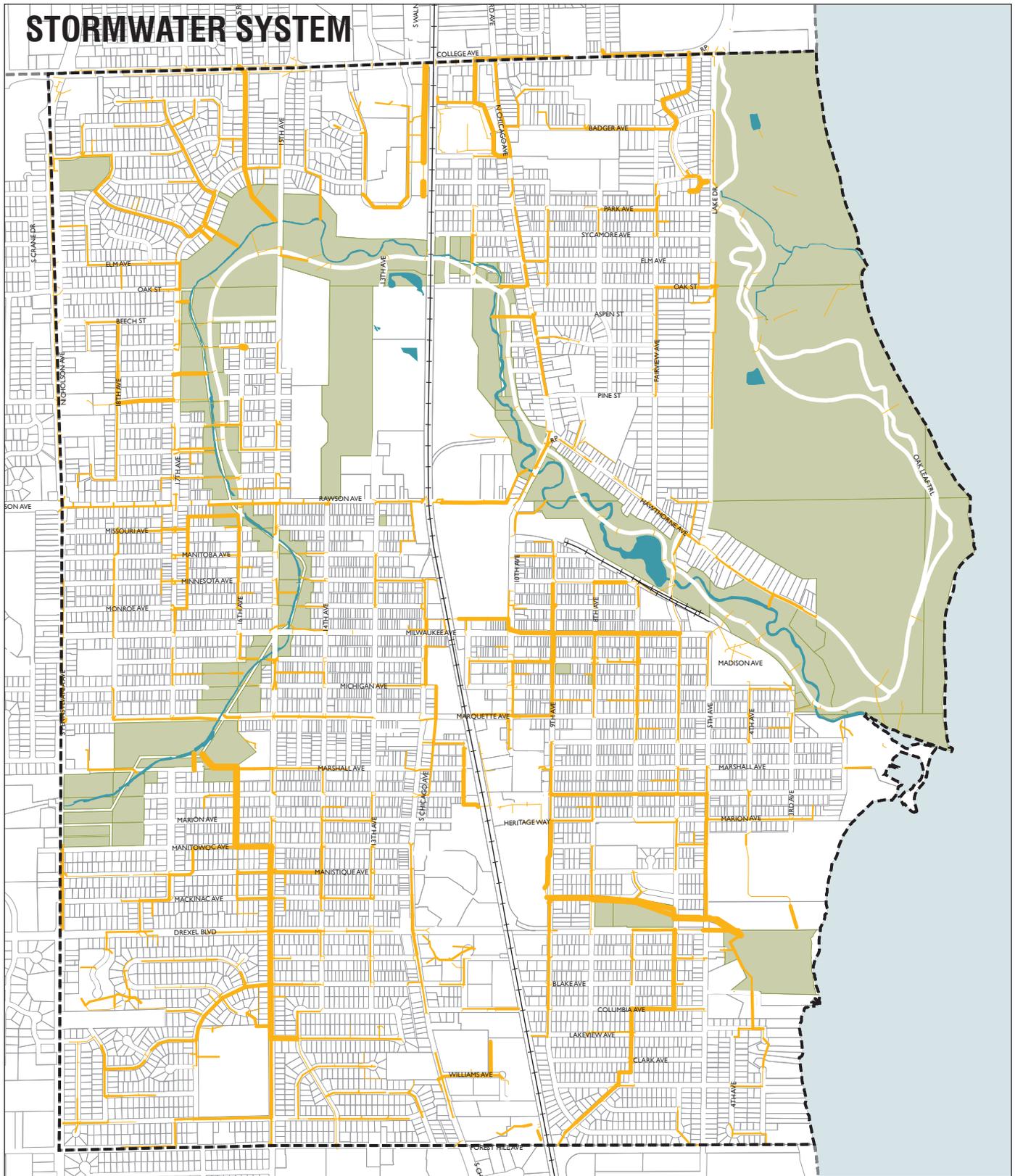


- WATER SYSTEM
- WATERWAY
- LAKE MICHIGAN

PARKS



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

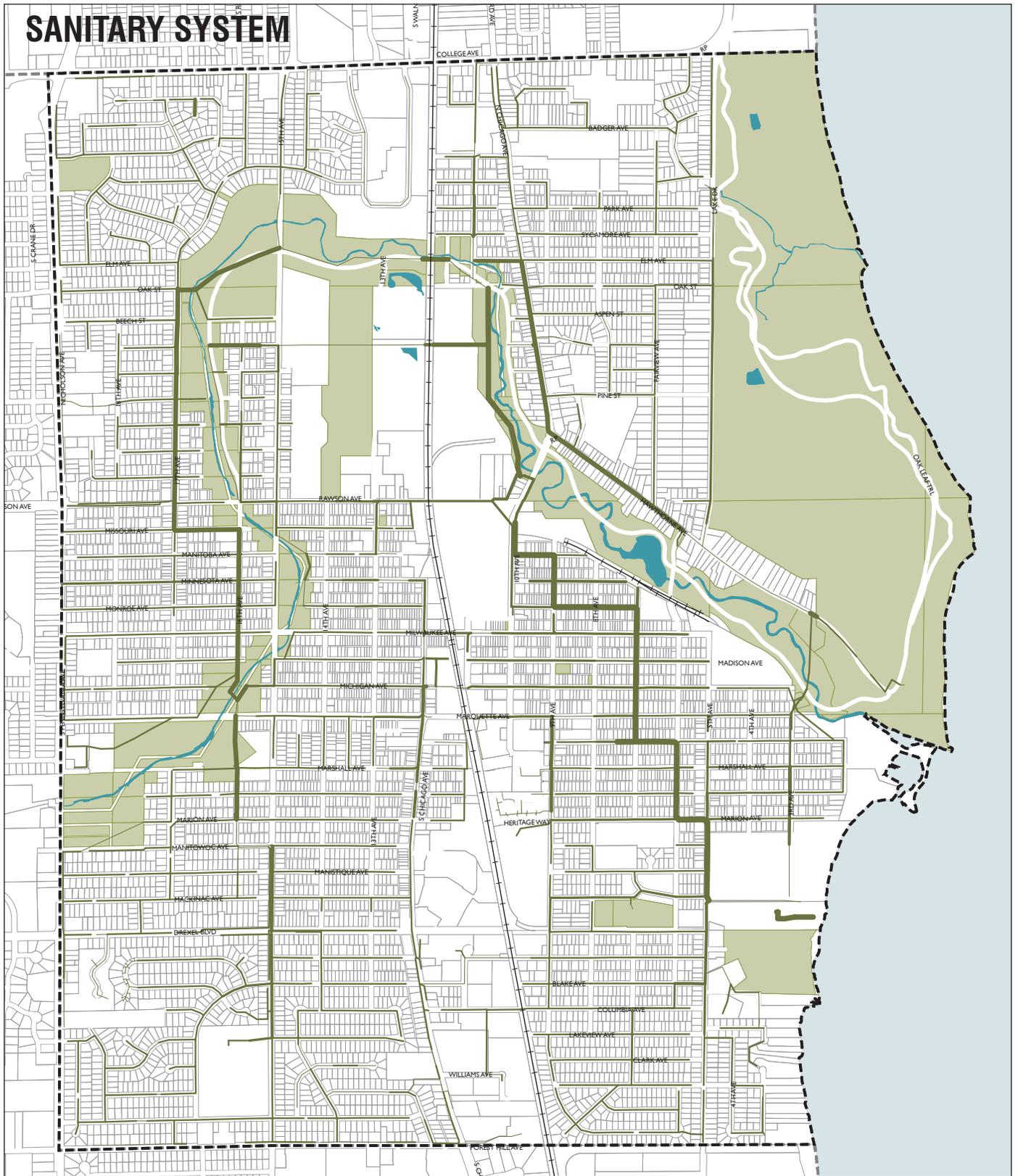


-  **STORMWATER SYSTEM**
-  **PARKS**
-  **WATERWAY**
-  **LAKE MICHIGAN**

 **PARKS**



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF



**SANITARY SYSTEM**      **PARKS**

**WATERWAY**

**LAKE MICHIGAN**

0      1/4      1/2 miles

N

Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## GOALS

The focus of South Milwaukee's community economy lies in Downtown at 10th and Milwaukee Avenues, and extends along the Chicago Avenue Corridor north and south. To strengthen and revitalize these districts and corridors, the city can focus on the following goals to build entrepreneurship and small business, support existing manufacturers, and encourage quality development.

1. Increase the customer base for local and regional retail, specifically restaurants and specialty retail.
2. Channel retail and industry growth **first** in downtown South Milwaukee (i.e., Milwaukee Avenue) and encourage spillover into adjacent commercial districts in the city.
3. Build a network of developers who are committed, long term, to quality construction in South Milwaukee.
4. Maintain and improve local and regional multimodal transportation networks, particularly those to the Port of Milwaukee, the General Mitchell International Airport, Interstate 94, and STH 794.

The community and the City have repeatedly cited these goals throughout conversations in 2015, and together **must remain collectively focused on these goals** to secure the future of South Milwaukee's economy.

In addition to the aforementioned economic development goals, the Economic Development and Capital Investment chapter includes the following focus areas:

- » Local economic character, competition, and trends,
- » An overview of brownfield sites in South Milwaukee as tabulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,
- » Conceptual design scenarios for the critical Opportunity Areas in South Milwaukee, and
- » A sampling of available tools and programs for achieving South Milwaukee's economic development goals.

The Economic Development and Capital Investment chapter is to be implemented in concert with the Downtown District section provided in the Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Chapter.

## VOICES *from the* COMMUNITY

- » Encourage infill development and the rehabilitation of existing land
- » Develop industrial properties on available land adjacent to the railroad
- » Create a more prominent gateway into South Milwaukee with signage and City logos on street signs
- » Encourage year-round events and promotions within the business community
- » Improve and diversify dining and shopping options
- » Keep streetscape improvements simple, while using materials that are sustainable

### South Milwaukee offers de facto advantages to businesses seeking access to:

- » Multimodal transportation of goods (truck, ship, rail, and air cargo),
- » A diverse, talented workforce located within a reasonable commute time,
- » Proximity to downtown Milwaukee, the state's primary hub of economic activity, and the Chicagoland region within an hour drive time, and
- » Valuable real estate with attainable lease rates and purchase prices.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC BASE

The local economic base is comprised of several elements: the local labor force, local major employers and driver industries, and the retail/finance/services sectors. The Community Profile section of Chapter 1 provides a snapshot of the local labor force, particularly for educational attainment and industry of employment. This section provides a glimpse of the subsequent areas of the local economic base.

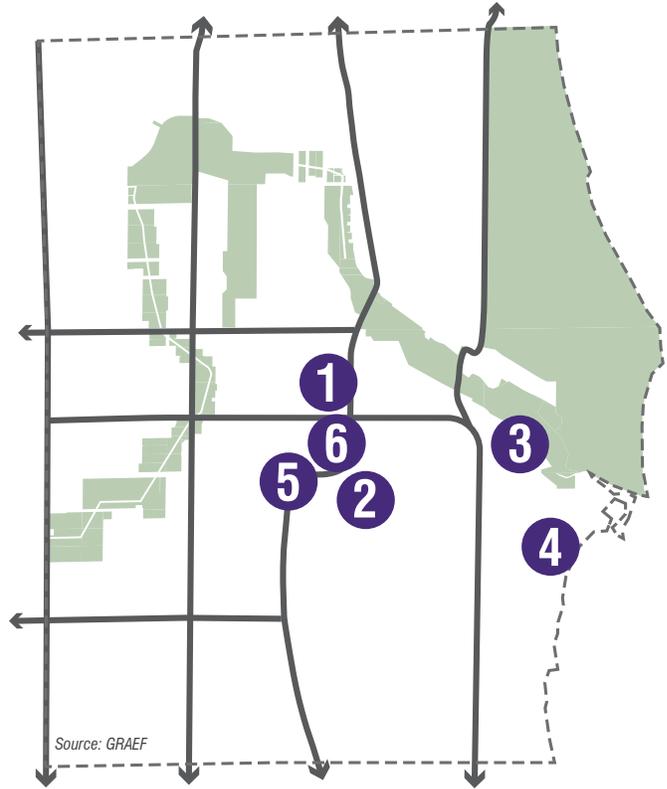
Major employers include:

1. **Caterpillar (formerly Bucyrus and Bucyrus-Erie in South Milwaukee)** of roughly 450 employees in South Milwaukee, which manufactures large excavation machinery used for surface mining, and has been a driving economic force in South Milwaukee since 1893,
2. **Cooper Power Systems (Eaton)** of roughly 500 employees in South Milwaukee, which produces switchgear and transformer components at the South Milwaukee location and was founded in 1939,
3. **Emerson Industrial Automation (formerly Appleton Electric)**, a manufacturer of electrical fittings in the city since 1927,
4. **Everbrite** of 110 employees in South Milwaukee, a designer and manufacturer of point-of purchase signs, displays and outdoor identity systems, founded in 1927 and moved to South Milwaukee in 1963,
5. **Johnson Health Tech (formerly Magnum Fitness)** of roughly 90 employees in South Milwaukee, which manufactures equipment for commercial and institutional gyms — from local high schools to fitness centers — across the globe<sup>1</sup>, and
6. **Metalcut Products, Inc.**, a machine shop with a state-of-the-art array of CNC milling and turning equipment.

Like many Wisconsin communities, the city relies heavily on manufacturing and its trained, locally-available workforce.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 3 provides additional information for Caterpillar and Johnson Health Tech.

“Build the customers, not the retail.”



Major employers in South Milwaukee



Source: Peterson Air  
Caterpillar



Source: Milwaukee Business Journal, Scott Paulus  
Cooper Power Systems

## EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

South Milwaukee experienced a net gain of 1,140 jobs between 2003 and 2015. Despite the 2008 Great Recession, the city’s employment profile is generally strong. Job growth peaked in 2010 at almost 6,000 total jobs, then decreased as a result of job loss in the health care and social assistance sector to finally support 5,416 jobs in 2015. Employment activity is centered along Milwaukee Avenue in the heart of Downtown and along Highway 32 as it travels south towards the city boundary. Primarily, these employment nodes are in close proximity to manufacturing facilities and retail centers.

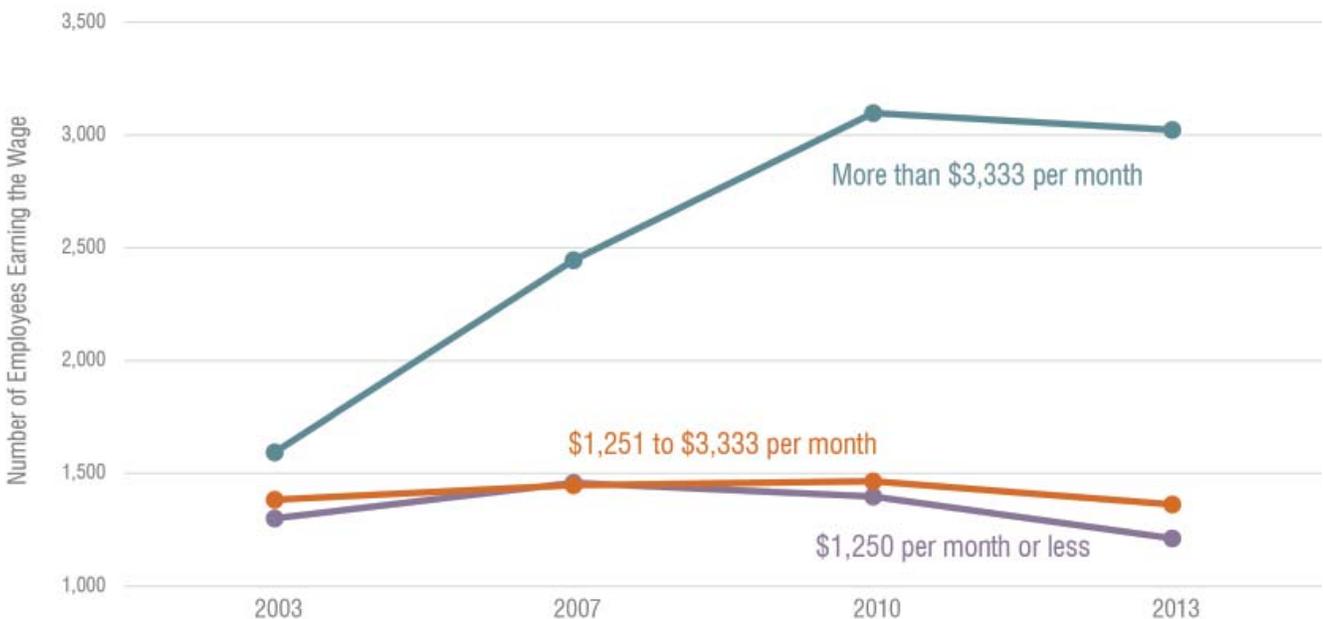
Employment data compiled from the Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation indicate that South Milwaukee’s economy is shifting and maturing. The following conclusions support this assertion:

- » **The number of jobs in South Milwaukee increased between 2003 and 2015;**
- » **The number of lower paying jobs decreased and the number of jobs paying a livable wage increased;**

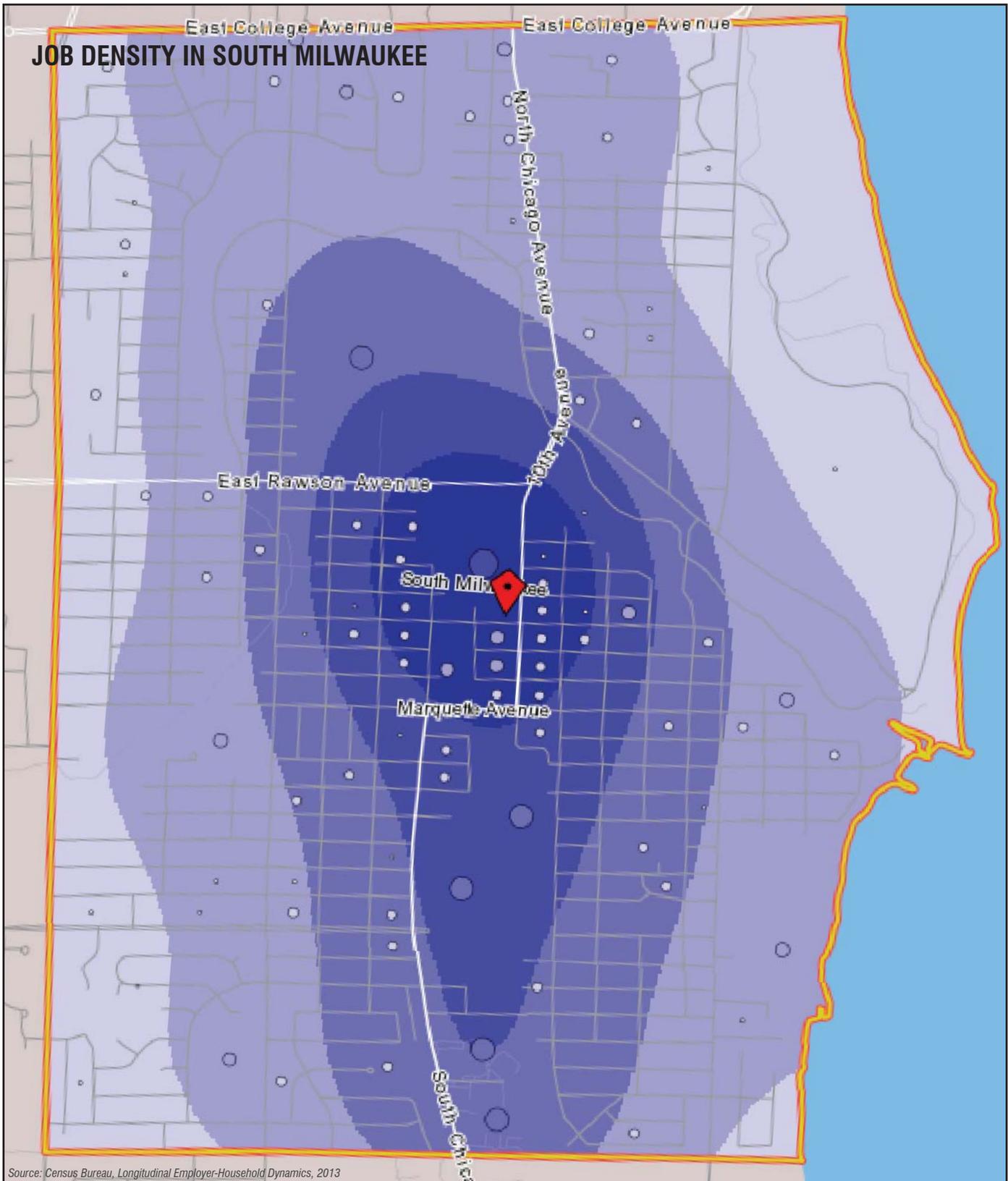
- » As there are more South Milwaukeeans working than there are available jobs within the city, there is potential for job growth within the city’s Opportunity Areas; and,
- » The City has the political will and resident support to attract and engage in community-centered development within the neighborhoods and Opportunity Areas.

Responding to the 21st Century’s technologically advanced economy, South Milwaukee’s business community and residents are flexing within the parameters imposed by new market demands. While the employment data are indicative of recent supply-side evolution to meet demand, the supporting political will to grow South Milwaukee – while maintaining its character – is both more important and promising. A commitment to unified, complementary growth in South Milwaukee creates a stable foundation for local economic development efforts.

Shift in Earnings for Employees Working in South Milwaukee  
2003 - 2013



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics & U.S. Census

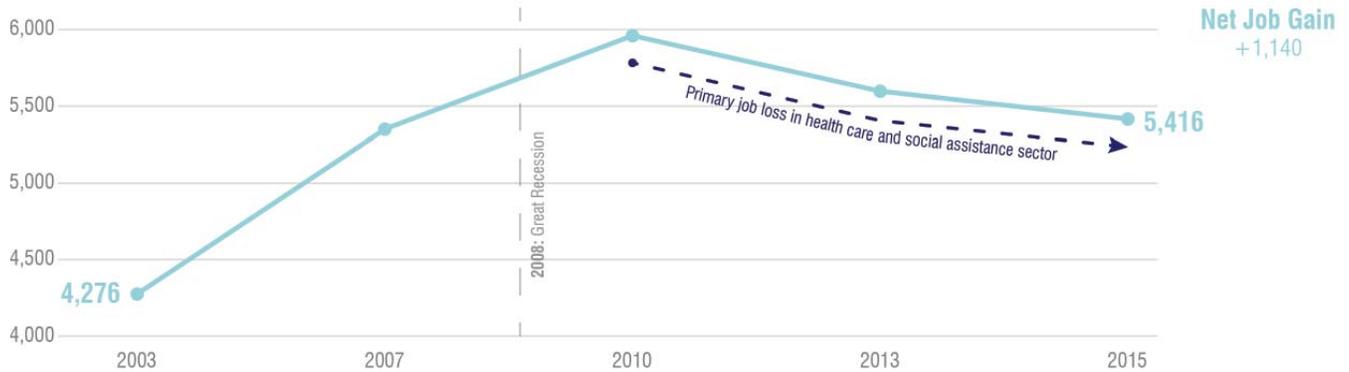


Source: Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2013

Job Density (Jobs/Sq. Mile) Job Count (Jobs/Census Block)

- |                    |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| • 1 - 3 Jobs       | ■ 5 - 236 Jobs/Sq.Mile       |
| ○ 4 - 46 Jobs      | ■ 237 - 930 Jobs/Sq.Mile     |
| ● 47 - 231 Jobs    | ■ 931 - 2,087 Jobs/Sq.Mile   |
| ● 232 - 730 Jobs   | ■ 2,088 - 3,708 Jobs/Sq.Mile |
| ● 731 - 1,783 Jobs | ■ 3,709 - 5,791 Jobs/Sq.Mile |

## South Milwaukee Job Growth 2003 - 2015



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics & U.S. Census

### Profile of Jobs within the City

Of the two employment profiles, the “Profile of Jobs within the City” assesses local job opportunities and the employment characteristics of people who work in South Milwaukee. When examining the total, filled jobs in South Milwaukee between 2003 and 2015, there was a 26.6% net increase.

From 2003 to 2013, the share of employees working in South Milwaukee earning more than \$3,333 per month (approx. \$40,000 per year) increased 89.8% (1,430 jobs).<sup>1</sup> Jobs paying less than \$3,333 per month decreased a slight 4.1%, or 109 jobs. The reduction in jobs paying a lower wage is not as significant as the increase in jobs paying a higher wage. Existing jobs were largely preserved and new, higher paying jobs were added.

The Top Five employment sectors in South Milwaukee by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes are shown in the following table. Each of these industries have added employees since 2003 except for educational services.

### Largest Employment Sectors in South Milwaukee

Sector	# of Employees
1. Manufacturing	2,636
2. Health Care and Social Assistance	984
3. Educational Services	572
4. Accommodation and Food Services	375
5. Retail Trade	270

Source: Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2013

<sup>1</sup> LEHD data are not normalized to account for inflation per the CPI between 2003 and 2015; that is, these figures are cited in nominal, not constant, dollars.

## Summary of Businesses in South Milwaukee

Category (NAICS* Codes)	Businesses		Employees	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting</b>	1	0.2%	1	0.0%
<b>Mining</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Utilities</b>	2	0.4%	22	0.4%
<b>Construction</b>	33	7.1%	127	2.3%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	26	5.6%	943	17.1%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	13	2.8%	994	18.0%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	59	12.6%	574	10.4%
<b>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</b>	5	1.1%	29	0.5%
<b>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings Stores</b>	4	0.9%	19	0.3%
<b>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</b>	3	0.6%	10	0.2%
<b>Bldg Material, Garden Equipment &amp; Supplies Dealers</b>	6	1.3%	43	0.8%
<b>Food &amp; Beverage Stores</b>	13	2.8%	131	2.4%
<b>Health &amp; Personal Care Stores</b>	4	0.9%	38	0.7%
<b>Gasoline Stations</b>	3	0.6%	9	0.2%
<b>Clothing &amp; Clothing Accessories Stores</b>	4	0.9%	12	0.2%
<b>Sport Goods, Hobby, Book &amp; Music Stores</b>	4	0.9%	12	0.2%
<b>General Merchandise Stores</b>	5	1.1%	245	4.4%
<b>Miscellaneous Store Retails</b>	7	1.5%	26	0.5%
<b>Nonstore Retailers</b>	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
<b>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</b>	12	2.6%	62	1.1%
<b>Information</b>	8	1.7%	40	0.7%
<b>Finance &amp; Insurance</b>	45	9.6%	437	7.9%
<b>Central Bank / Credit Intermediation &amp; Related</b>	32	6.9%	393	7.1%
<b>Securities, Commodity Contracts &amp; Other Financial</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Insurance Carriers &amp; Related Activities; Funds, Trusts</b>	13	2.8%	44	0.8%
<b>Real Estate, Rental &amp; Leasing</b>	23	4.9%	65	1.2%
<b>Professional, Scientific &amp; Tech Services</b>	28	6.0%	89	1.6%
<b>Legal Services</b>	5	1.1%	30	0.5%
<b>Management of Companies &amp; Enterprises</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Administrative / Support, Waste Management &amp; Remediation Services</b>	18	3.9%	53	1.0%
<b>Educational Services</b>	12	2.6%	538	9.7%
<b>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</b>	35	7.5%	661	12.0%
<b>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>	9	1.9%	53	1.0%
<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</b>	42	9.0%	376	6.8%
<b>Accommodation</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Food Services &amp; Drinking Places</b>	42	9.0%	376	6.8%
<b>Other Services</b>	75	16.1%	350	6.3%
<b>Automotive Repair &amp; Maintenance</b>	23	4.9%	62	1.1%
<b>Public Administration</b>	15	3.2%	115	2.1%
<b>Unclassified</b>	11	2.4%	18	0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,518</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*NAICS: North American Industry Classification System

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2015

## Profile of Jobs Held by South Milwaukeeans

The “Profile of Jobs held by South Milwaukeeans” describes employment characteristics about jobs worked by residents of the city. These jobs are located both within the city and in surrounding communities. In 2013, South Milwaukeeans worked in 9,927 jobs, which included full- and part-time employment.

Similar to employees working within South Milwaukee, jobs worked by South Milwaukee residents saw a shift towards higher paid jobs earning more than \$3,333 per month.<sup>2</sup> The shift was less prominent than in the “Profile of Jobs within the City”. Due to the fact that in 2015, 5,416 jobs were located in South Milwaukee while there were 9,927 employed South Milwaukee residents, there are opportunities for employers in South Milwaukee to grow by capturing the local workforce (where the educational attainment of residents aligns with local employment opportunities).

Of the jobs held by South Milwaukeeans, the Top Five industry sectors employ 58.9% of residents: manufacturing, retail trade, educational services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services.

## Inflow/Outflow of Jobs

Understanding the inflow and outflow of jobs in a community provides insights into employee commute patterns, wages and spending power, and the alignment of the educational attainment of residents with that required of employment opportunities.

**Of the 9,927 jobs worked by South Milwaukeeans, 960 of them are in South Milwaukee.** The remaining 8,967 jobs are located outside of the city. Of the 5,416 jobs offered in the community, 4,637 jobs are held by residents of other communities.

The significance of this inflow/outflow pattern may not be of importance because the needs of city employers align with the characteristics of city residents; that is, there is not a mismatch of jobs to skills. This should be seen as an opportunity. The employees who fill the 4,637 jobs commute to work each day and require certain day time amenities. They may need to run errands before, during, or after work; coworkers may go to lunch or dinner together; or, employers may need hotels for visiting employees or business partners. Development in the city’s Opportunity Areas could satisfy this demand and develop the city’s economy.

<sup>2</sup> LEHD data are not normalized to account for inflation per the CPI between 2003 and 2015; that is, these figures are cited in nominal, not constant, dollars.

## BROWNFIELDS

With proactive efforts underway by the City, 68 contaminated sites have already been cleaned with 16 currently in progress. The majority of projects lie along the Highway 32 corridor, running parallel to the railroad; as this was a key manufacturing corridor, it is to be expected that clean-up efforts have been focused there. In looking at the total number of brownfield sites within the city, the important indicator is the number of successfully remediated sites. Because the majority of remediation projects have already occurred, redevelopment may now be more efficient. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’s (WDNR) “BRRTS on the Web,” or Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System, provides additional detail about contaminated sites (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/brownfields/botw.html>)

In addition, the WDNR hosts and updates “The Financial Resource Guide for Cleanup and Redevelopment” to detail available grants, reimbursements, loans, tax incentives, and waterfront revitalization programs. This money can be used as a way to help property owners clean their land and subsequently provide for a healthier environment in the city.

## TOOLS, STRATEGIES & PROGRAMS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development occurs in a highly competitive environment. Successful communities are proactive, implement numerous strategies at once, and seek out the thoughts and guidance provided by their own business community. The strategies should be carefully evaluated and matched to suit the community's needs and abilities. They range widely in time, cost and scope. Those activities that have seen success in economic development across Wisconsin include, but are not limited to, the following:

- » New Markets Tax Credits (see subsequent section)
- » Healthy Food Financing Initiative (see subsequent section)
- » State Resources (see subsequent section)
- » Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) (see subsequent section on Tax Incremental Districts in South Milwaukee)
- » Streetscape Improvements
- » Business Improvement Districts
- » Neighborhood Improvement Districts
- » Historic Preservation / Historic Tax Credits
- » Revolving Loan Funds
- » Main Street Programs
- » Business Counseling Programs
- » Brownfield Financial Assistance Programs

In advance of implementing (or continuing to implement) these strategies, South Milwaukee has first prepared a market analysis, developed a downtown plan and citywide economic development analysis, and embarked in defining downtown design standards (an acknowledgement that enforcing design standards will enhance the community's value). These activities may lead to re-evaluation of the regulatory environment within the community via amendments to its zoning ordinance, development policies and procedures, and financial incentives. The City can position itself for these tasks by growing its staff and resource support as they pertain to economic development.

To carry out the aforementioned list of activities in South Milwaukee as they have occurred in other Wisconsin communities, a number of organizations must be involved. Again, it is essential that the choices here match the needs, abilities and personality of the community. These entities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- » City of South Milwaukee
- » South Shore Chamber of Commerce
- » South Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce
- » Main Street Programs
- » Business Improvement District(s)
- » Redevelopment Authority

Each organization offers its own advantages, and as such, are further described in the Implementation chapter of this Plan. For example, redevelopment authorities have greater flexibility to purchase, reassemble and sell properties compared with local government in Wisconsin. However, redevelopment authorities also require creating a new board, and sometimes employees, to manage the process, along with hiring outside experts to guide specific details associated with land assembly and other matters. Also, successful Main Street Program designation requires selection of a program manager, but many of the strategies associated with the program can be carried out directly by an existing local government or chamber employee.

How can a local government afford some of these strategies? Some government grant programs are available, but over the long term, the nature of these may change significantly. Loan programs also exist for businesses expanding or locating in targeted areas. As value is built within the community through economic development work, the City can generate enough revenue to recoup the dollars invested in implementing these strategies.

South Milwaukee should plan routinely to conduct detailed market analyses and amend this Plan to specifically employ many of these aforementioned strategies. The economic environment is sufficiently dynamic to take these steps every five years, if not more frequently.

**Public Funding for Business Development**

Among the U.S. federal government support for economic development, two programs are available to incentivize business development by leveraging private investment in the form of tax credits, loans, and grants. Three Census tracts in South Milwaukee qualify for both New Market Tax Credits and food desert funding.

**New Market Tax Credits**

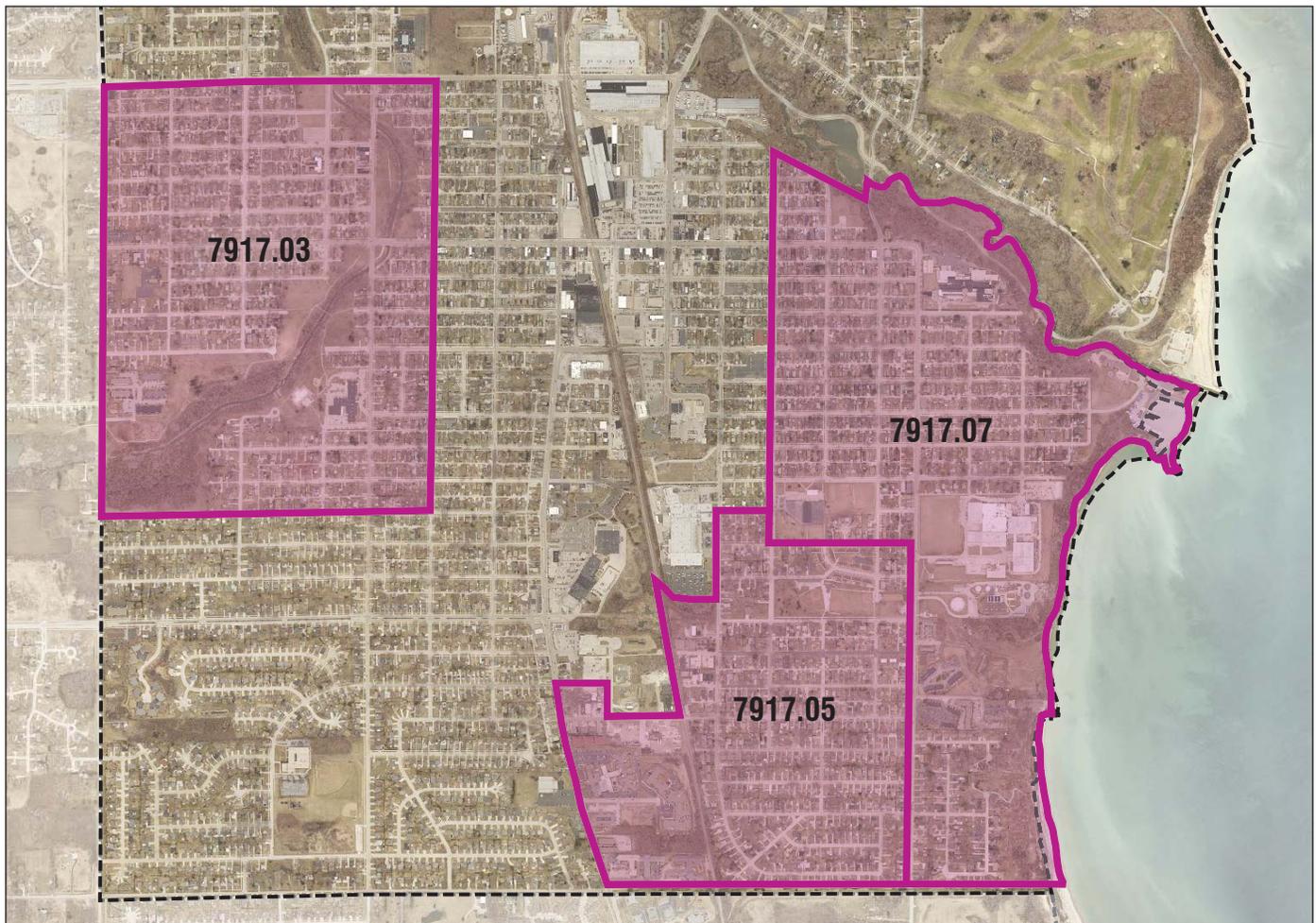
New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) are a public funding tool available through the U.S. Treasury Department’s Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund. To attract private investment in distressed or low-income communities, NMTCs allow community development entities to make investments with better rates and terms and more flexibility than traditional lenders. Investors are able to enter new, unsaturated markets before their competitors by investing in and redeveloping dormant manufacturing facilities and vacant commercial properties. NMTCs are a unique business development tool that incentivize investment

by lowering the level of risk. More information can be found through several national and local organizations.<sup>1</sup>

**Healthy Food Financing Initiative**

Food desert funding is made available through the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) – a collaborative effort between the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Treasury, and Health and Human Services. The purpose of HFFI funding closely mirrors that of NMTCs in that the private sector is financially incentivized to expand access to nutritious foods through low-risk, affordable financing for grocery stores and other healthy food retailers in underserved urban and rural communities. These business development funds are available through community development financial institutions, as are NMTCs.

<sup>1</sup> Resource organizations for NMTC or HFFI include the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation, and the Illinois Facilities Fund.



2010 Census Tracts eligible for NMTCs and Food Desert funding  
 Source: Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, 2015

## State Resources

There are many resources available to South Milwaukee businesses to attract, retain and grow. These following state resources are examples of programs that may be applicable to South Milwaukee (or represent a program that could be developed for South Milwaukee), and should be considered carefully to leverage creative economic development opportunities that would be otherwise challenging to employ.

### Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Resources

- » Brownfield Program
- » Business Opportunity Loan
- » Capacity Building Grants
- » Clean Energy Manufacturing Revolving Loan Fund
- » Economic Development Tax Credits
- » Enterprise Zone Tax Credit
- » ExporTech
- » Impact Seven Programs
- » Industrial Revenue Bond
- » Jobs Tax Credit
- » Small Business Association (SBA) 504 Loan Program
- » Qualified Wisconsin Business Certification
- » Special Project Loan Fund
- » Training Grant
- » Wisconsin Manufacturing and Agriculture Credit
- » Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) Business Lending

Additionally, WEDC provides marketing opportunities for land holders and communities via tools like [LocateInWisconsin.com](http://LocateInWisconsin.com), shown in this section.

## Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Resources

### Guarantee Programs

- » WHEDA Small Business Guarantee (WSBG)
- » Contractors Loan Guarantee (CLG)
- » Propane Guarantee Program (PGP)
- » Neighborhood Business Revitalization Guarantee (NBRG)
- » Agribusiness Guarantee (AGBG)

### Participation Lending

- » WHEDA Participation Lending Program (WPLP)
- » State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI)
- » Venture Debt Fund
- » Wisconsin Equity Investment Fund (WEIF)

### Tools

- » Wisconsin's Skills Explorer
- » Emerging Business Program
- » Workforce Development Program

### Real Estate Development Programs

- » New Market Tax Credits
- » Low-Income House Tax Credits
- » Multifamily Financing
- » Tax-Exempt Bond Financing
- » Stand-Alone Bond Financing
- » Preservation Plus Financing
- » RAD Financing
- » Tax Credit Development Financing
- » Construction Plus Loan
- » Rental Housing Accessibility Loan
- » 7/20 Flex Financing

**LOCATE IN WISCONSIN**

**SEARCH AVAILABLE SITES**

Simply use the tool below to find the building or site type that is best suited for your business needs.

Would you like more information about using this tool? [Click here to watch videos](#) that will help you search for properties, generate property reports and more.

**SUBMIT A NEW LISTING**

Brokers, realtors, municipalities and economic development professionals can list available commercial or industrial properties on the Locate in Wisconsin site selection tool. To begin, simply fill out and submit this [Password Request Form](#).

**For additional questions or technical assistance, email or call the economic and community development researcher:**

**Benjamin Lesiewicz**  
608.210.6823

**HELPING YOU SELECT THE PERFECT SITE**

Download more information about the benefits of using Locate In Wisconsin.

**LOCATE IN WISCONSIN HELP CENTER**

Whether using this tool for the first time or looking to use advanced tool features, our help center videos can help.

Businesses | Communities | Heat Maps | Local Layers | Compare | Certified in WI | Gigabit Parks | Add Properties | Help

**SEARCH** HEAT MAPS LAYERS COMPARE

Find:

Buildings Sites Businesses Communities

City County Metro Region

Type the name of the City below

SEARCH CITY

Or search the name by using the drop down

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

South Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Population: 21,237  
Labor Force Size: 11,215  
Bachelors Degree or Higher: 20.50%  
Household Median Income: 52,743  
Job Growth Rate: -1.88%  
Commute Travel Time: 22

Save to folder  
Full Report  
Labor Force Report  
Demographics Report  
Consumer Spending Report  
Wages Report  
Education Report  
Housing Report

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's "Locate In Wisconsin" Tool, which provides community profiles and a database of available properties  
Source: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, accessed February 2016.



## TAX INCREMENTAL DISTRICTS

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a common tool the City uses to support and implement various redevelopment projects. TIF is commonly used statewide to ensure that the infrastructure is in place when development is planned. To date, South Milwaukee has created four Tax Incremental Districts (TID):

### TID No. 1

- » *Creation:* 2000, amended in 2005
- » *Focus:* area surrounding 10th and Marquette Avenues
- » *Projects:* Marquette Manor Senior Apartments, Metalcut Products, Inc.'s expansion, and Marquette Square mixed-use development. Additional redevelopment along Madison and 11th Avenues could include public space, parking, and residential use.

### TID No. 2

- » *Creation:* 2000, amended in 2012
- » *Focus:* North Chicago Avenue corridor
- » *Projects:* Between 2002 and 2006, the City purchased and demolished seven obsolete and blighted properties facilitating construction of a new Walmart (117,000 sq. ft.) in 2012. The Walmart development serves the immediate neighborhood and surrounding South Shore neighborhoods. Projects also include two condominium properties (12 units). Remaining development in the TID includes property acquired along College Avenue, likely for commercial development.

### TID No. 3

- » *Creation:* 2005
- » *Focus:* rehabilitation of Grant Park Plaza within the South Chicago Avenue corridor
- » *Projects:* As of 2015, the plaza is nearly 100% occupied, anchored by a remodeled Pick'n Save, Planet Fitness, and Walgreens, with outlots for Associated Bank and

Auto Zone. The adjacent plaza, Shops at Drexel Square, includes Aldi Food Store, Dollar Tree, Little Caesars Pizza, and Dunkin Donuts. This shopping district serves the immediate neighborhoods along with neighborhoods along South Chicago Avenue in the adjacent City of Oak Creek. Drexel Boulevard provides access to a new I-94 access ramp, completed in 2014. The City is looking into redevelopment opportunities connecting to this plaza.

Other projects include residential redevelopment along 9th Avenue, namely the Heritage Reserve Condominiums. Decreased housing values and demand during the economic recession has created challenges in completing the development; however, the developer has committed to completing the project.

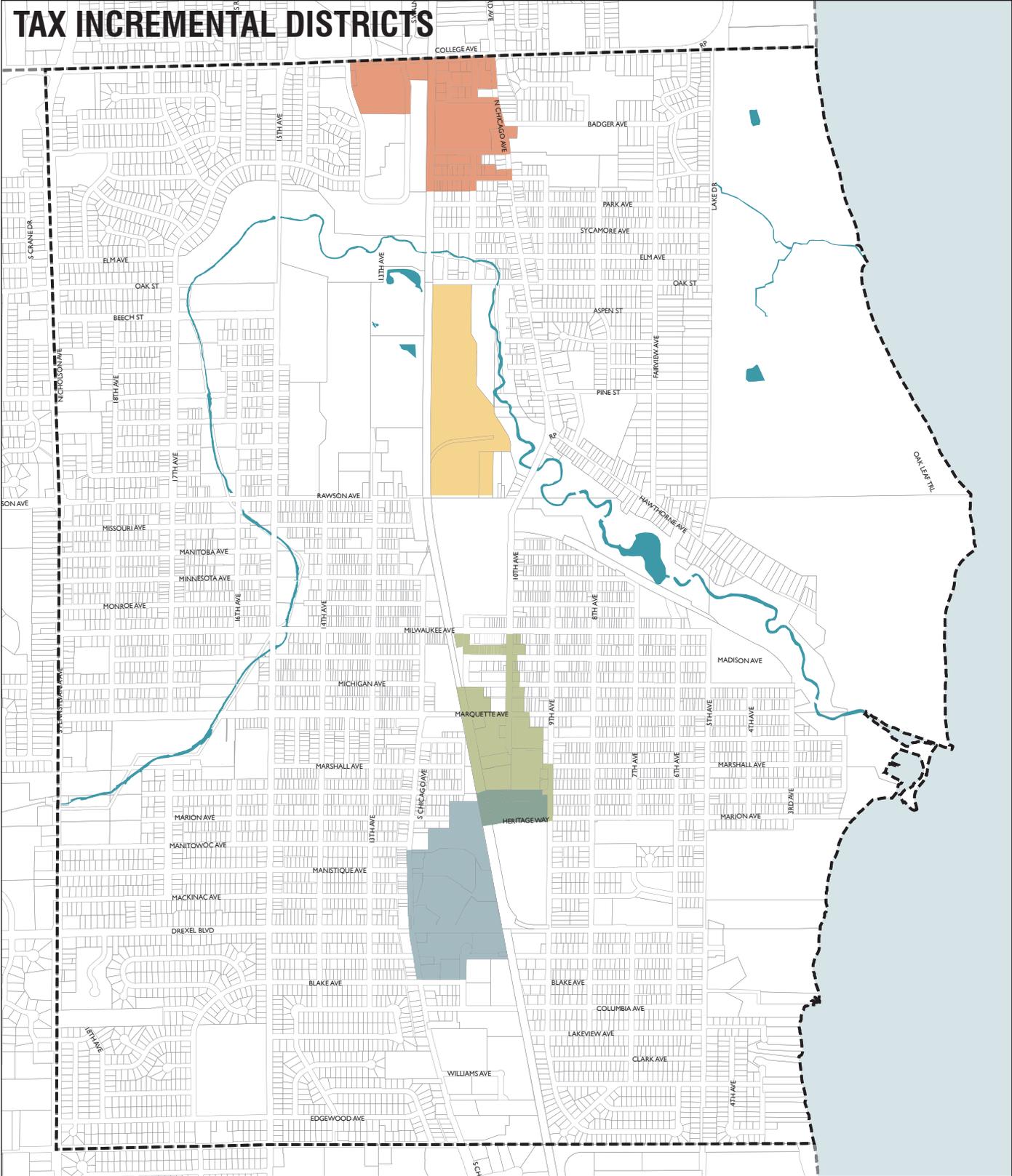
### TID No. 4

- » *Creation:* 2006
- » *Focus:* single project TID to support redevelopment and expansion of Bucyrus International (now Caterpillar).
- » *Projects:* Resulted in the elimination of a blighted property on the north side of Rawson Avenue, extensive improvements of the main campus between Milwaukee and Rawson Avenues, and the creation of jobs. The downturn of the mining industry has reduced operations. The development agreement includes guaranteed assessed values through 2030. As a major part of the city's Downtown, continued active use of the properties is imperative to this TID's success.

The TID project plans and annual reports include further project information. The City may create additional TIDs for implementation of key projects. Financial analysis of any additional TIDs will need to be evaluated before implementation to ensure that TIDs are successful and closed within statutory limitations and create value without burden to taxpayers.

The City has acquired other parcels for redevelopment which are not part of existing TIDs, including a foreclosed property at 2001 7th Avenue (former Masonic Lodge) which will create redevelopment opportunities for the immediate tax base when developed.

“The presence of over 5,200 employees within 5 minutes of the downtown's center reinforces the potential for downtown businesses to capture additional employee spending power.”



- TID #1
- TID #2
- TID #3
- TID #4



Source: City of South Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

# OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The 2015 comprehensive planning process has resulted in the identification of numerous opportunities for reinvestment and re/development in South Milwaukee. These opportunity areas hold the potential to increase the value – environmental, social, and economic – of the surrounding properties in which the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors are nestled.

An era of innovative reinvestment and re/development in South Milwaukee will catalyze further positive change in the city's neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. The ensuing opportunity areas are all urban in nature, given that the city is fully built-out.

Community buy-in, dedication, innovative strategies, partnerships, and funding will see these opportunity areas to implementation. Twenty-five opportunity areas have been identified throughout the comprehensive planning process. **As part of this Plan, possible design concepts have been developed for three of these opportunity areas.** These three areas are the most strategic or catalytic within the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. As the availability of these sites for reinvestment and re/development present themselves, these concepts will assist the community in formulating discussion and a plan regarding future uses. The South Milwaukee Community Development Authority maintains a profile of properties available in or near the Opportunity Areas. These sites can be potential catalysts for future re/development.

## DETAILED OPPORTUNITY AREAS:

1. Downtown – 10th and Milwaukee Avenues
2. Oak Creek Parkway – 1601 North Chicago Avenue & 2001 7th Avenue
3. Ebbs Creek – 307 North Chicago Avenue

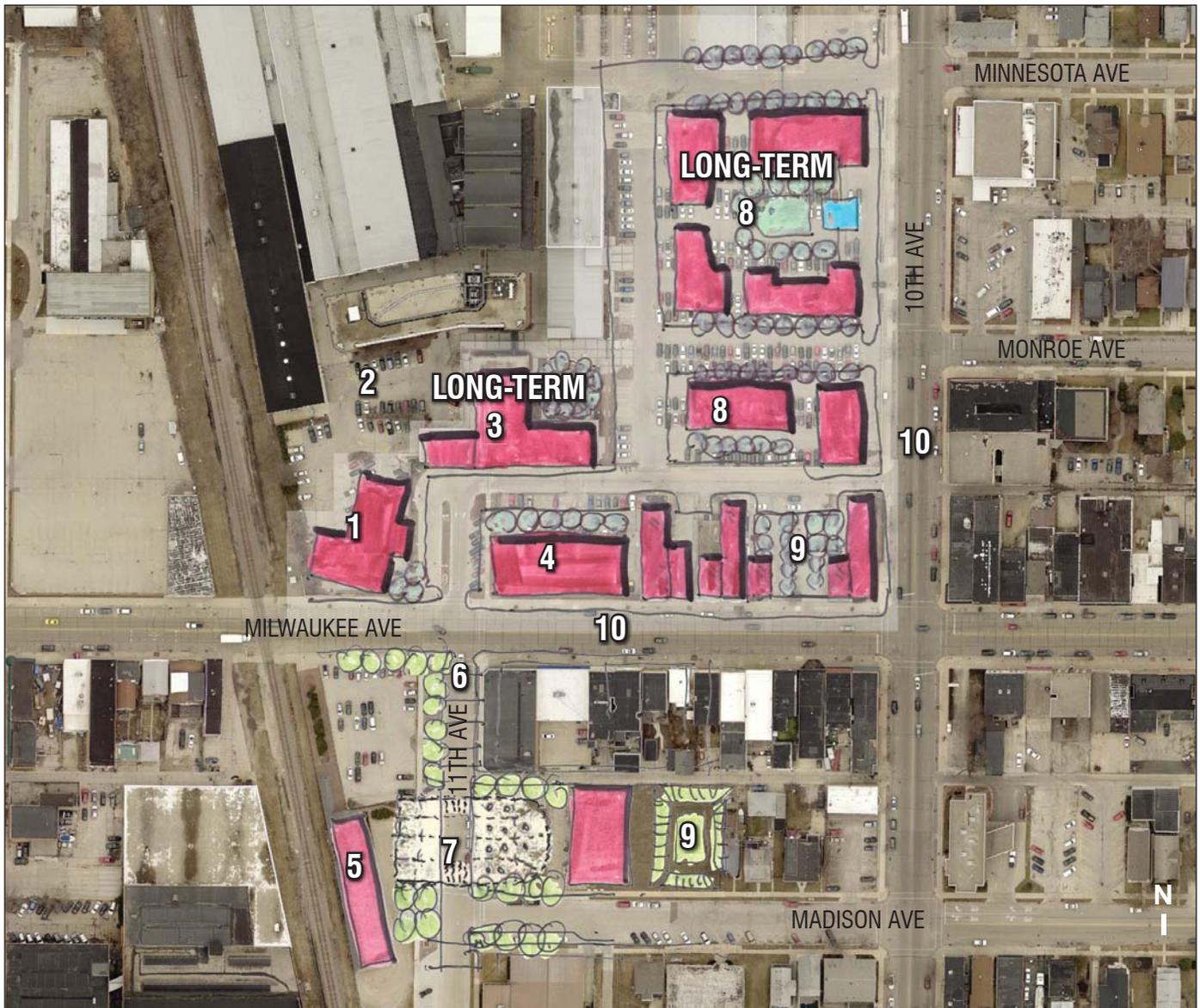


- DETAILED OPPORTUNITY AREA
- OPPORTUNITY AREA
- PARK LAND



Source: City of South Milwaukee, SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, GRAEF

# DOWNTOWN 10th & Milwaukee Avenues



## DOWNTOWN: 10TH & MILWAUKEE

### Options for Future Development

Sites surrounding 10th and Milwaukee Avenues offer many opportunities and challenges for integrating the disparate, yet key, assets in this part of Downtown. What differentiates these sites from others, however, is that they lie at or near the 100% corner of 10th and Milwaukee Avenues - Downtown's center of activity. To activate these spaces, suggested uses include: a variety of public places, residential structures, and retail activity. The opportunity lies in creating a combination of structures and places where the assets complement each other, offer feasible implementation strategies, and use available land wisely.

These concept illustrations try to blend opportunities for the farmers' market, increased activity on Milwaukee Avenue, and connections to a system of public places. Specific components of the concepts, as shown in the illustration, include:

1. This site, south of the current manufacturing facility, is suited to a multi-family mixed use building with retail on the ground level and 3 or 4 floors of residential units. The site location could contain surface parking in the rear for both residential and retail uses. Alternatively, parking for residential units could be contained below grade.
2. Surface parking in this area should be public and can provide ample parking for retail uses.
3. **Long-term:** This site too can accommodate new residential uses above retail. The building height should be approximately 4 to 5 stories. Like the adjacent buildings, it should be constructed close to the street edge and complement, rather than contrast, the existing buildings to the east.
4. This site should house additional residential units (especially since there are existing retail uses along this street face) and more potential to the south. Parking on the west side could also be used by the retail uses in the area.
5. The existing train station is an invaluable historic amenity that helps "brand" the downtown and should be enhanced by surrounding uses.
6. This is a key entry area that should have an expanded streetscape that complements existing investments and vehicular circulation, but adds more value for special uses, like the farmers' market and community events.

7. This is a future option for a public place – possibly "station" square – that could be used as a basis for increased activity changes. Alternatively, the existing street configuration could be redesigned (not shown in this illustration) as a linear "galleria" that enhances the surrounding uses.
8. **Long-term:** This site can accommodate mixed-use residential structures (3 to 4 stories) with parking below grade. Adding more residential units downtown is essential to increasing the customer base for retail.
9. This garden area can provide a quiet respite for residents and customers. It is not intended as a high-activity zone but more as an intimate garden-like space. (If needed, it could be configured for continued parking spaces, as shown in the photomontage in Chapter 3.)
10. The existing street can be improved over time with additional streetscape elements, while retaining its value for street parking and localized vehicular movements.

### Phasing of the Development

The City and property owners can collaboratively prepare to strategically phase re/development over the long term beginning at the intersection of 10th and Milwaukee Avenues. To ensure the stability and certainty of the first few projects, the City should target investment on properties within its control and incentivize development through the use of subsidies.

The first development should incorporate ground-floor retail uses with apartments on the upper floors. Residential units will increase the population density in Downtown and drive retail demand. As retail and residences are complementary uses, developments including both can help catalyze future projects.

Developments should maintain and continue to create a street edge as they move along Milwaukee Avenue. To increase pedestrian activity, high-activity public places – like a splash pad – would attract families. By providing outdoor seating, these spaces would also attract other residents and create diversity.

Providing parking to customers and residents is also important. The City can be judicious and strategic in parking space allocation and location to create a "park once" environment that promotes pedestrian activities.

### Other Downtown Recommendations

The Downtown chapter (Chapter 3) provides additional detail on this concept, including photomontages of the northern street edge of Milwaukee Avenue.

# OAK CREEK PARKWAY 1601 N. Chicago Avenue 2001 7th Avenue



## OAK CREEK PARKWAY

### Options for Future Development

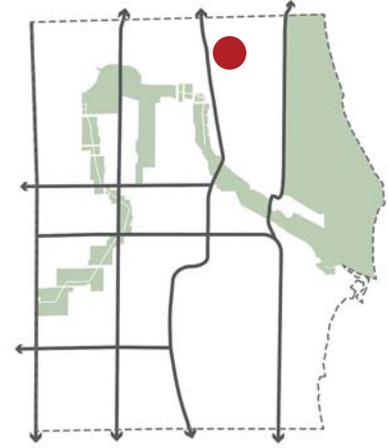
This large site area includes a broad range of options, each of which has different opportunities and challenges for the neighborhood and the City. **An underlying principle that guided concepts for this area is the potential for linking the neighborhood more effectively with both the downtown (to the west and south) and to the parkway (along the diagonal border on the northeast).** Other underlying principles for this Opportunity Area include the following:

- » Focus on the use of vacant lots
- » Create defined trail and parkway connections
- » Generate retail use along 10th Avenue
- » Construct higher-value, multi-family residential buildings with below-grade parking, high-quality building materials, maximized views, and building heights and landscape elements that fit the context

To illustrate this concept, several ideas have been combined in the attached illustration. Many other possibilities might be developed in consultation with neighbors and other residents and land owners. The key items in this illustration include:

1. Conservation of the existing retail building with parking in the rear. This building holds the edge of this important street intersection, which marks to visitors heading southbound on Chicago Avenue of their arrival in Downtown South Milwaukee. Over time this building could be reused and rehabilitated if the current operation changes.
2. This building could be a new mixed-use development with some retail on the ground floor and 2 levels of apartments above. Residents could park below grade, while ample parking could remain in the rear for the retail use.
3. This intersection would be the primary street entrance and linkage to 10th Avenue.
4. The surface lot conceptualized here could accommodate about 40 cars.
5. Depending on the market condition, these two buildings could be multi-family or combined with some retail use on the ground floor facing 10th Avenue. Residents would park below grade and the surface lot could accommodate business parking.
6. This small park is envisioned as a terrace overlook with connection to trails for hikers and bicyclists. The park space may include a small pavilion or playground. Some parking spaces are also provided.
7. This multi-family development could provide exceptional views to the west, north, and east. These would be 2-, 3-, or 4-story buildings with below-grade parking. The interior courtyard could accommodate additional parking or gardens.
8. The courtyard opens to the east with direct connections to the parkway area.
9. This is a location for a neighborhood terrace or overlook with trail connections and views.
10. This area could offer additional trails along the top of the bluff (the old railroad right-of-way).
11. Trails would extend into the parkway and lower to the pond and pavilion.
12. A neighborhood terrace or overlook with trail connections and views could be a focal point for residents and visitors.
13. Trails would extend into the parkway.
14. A multi-family development with exceptional views north and east, high-quality building materials, and landscape buffers could complement the neighborhood here. Buildings would have 2, 3, or 4 stories and below-grade parking.
15. The interior courtyard faces north, connects to the parkway, and increases the value and amenity of the views.
16. The south side of the multi-family site would be a landscaped surface lot (1 bay wide) along with a garden feature and a double row of trees. Combined, these two elements should provide a buffer to housing further south.
17. These streets were identified as potential opportunities for improved streetscape, pedestrian features, and possibly bicycle lanes, all of which increase connectivity from the downtown to the parkway for visitors, customers, and residents. There are small streetscape/gateway features at this intersection and along 10th Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue. The goal is to symbolize and strengthen pedestrian links to the parkway and, over time, increase the recognition and value of this housing area.

# EBBS CREEK SITE 305 N. Chicago Avenue



## EBBS CREEK SITE

### Options for Future Development

This site offers few, if any, non-residential uses that are compatible with the area. Sites like this, in the middle of residential areas, are used on some occasions for institutional uses like a church or school. A small office might also be compatible, but it would have little visibility. A small park might be compatible, but not a park as large as the whole site. For these reasons, a concept for this area should assume that the best use for the site is residential development, primarily single-family, with some small park and recreational areas. The difficulty with this approach is that the residential market, at this time, may not be sufficiently strong to make residential lots attractive. Larger lots (more suburban in character) could be developed, but large lots would be out of character with the neighborhood and further the appearance of neighborhood incongruity, which can jeopardize property values and general demand for the area.

The attached illustration depicts a residential area with 21 new single-family lots. The concept also includes one commercial structure, a small park space, and an extended street pattern. Details of the illustration are as follows:

1. A small commercial/retail structure at this corner would have significant visibility and offer viability for business operators given its location on Chicago Avenue. The footprint shown is approximately 3,000 to 4,000 square feet.
2. There are 12 surface parking spaces in the rear (a ratio of 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet).
3. There may be an option for a small walking trail along the backyard of the proposed lots.
4. These are single family lots with driveways that access rear garages. The lots follow, or are slightly wider and longer than, the other lots in the neighborhood.
5. This is a small neighborhood park with an open air structure (gazebo or pavilion) and lawn area with benches and garden elements. It is a small, neighborhood-scale park and could be owned and maintained by a homeowners association or by the City (with an annual assessment to new owners).
6. A small green area south of the park abutting an existing private property could serve as a gateway and buffer between surrounding property owners. This area would be landscaped, if desired, to complement or screen the private residence to the west.
7. This is a second open space with an amenity. It could be a small neighborhood playground, another park, or, if needed, a stormwater detention area. The space complements, rather than blocks, the north façade of the abutting building along the south edge.
8. This is the approximate location of where the existing street system (on the west) would connect to the new expanded street pattern.
9. This is the approximate location of where the existing street system (on the east) would connect to the new expanded street pattern. Given the existing property lines, this configuration will require negotiation with the abutting property owner to ensure a compatible land ownership arrangement.



# IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter is the key to the success of this plan and will help bring the community's desires to fruition. As the strategies set forth in this chapter operationalize the goals, ideas, and recommendations made in the previous chapters, it is important to understand and act upon the responsibilities and time frames for each strategy. The actions – whether seen individually by chapter or collectively in the plan – complement and supplement one another. Their interaction depends on the successes resulting from the community's execution of the plan and adherence to its principles.

The implementation strategies are grouped by the chapter in which they appear. They are more fully described by providing the timeframe in which they should be completed and who is responsible for their implementation. The timeframes for the Downtown strategies are more detailed, to provide more guidance for all groups involved in revitalization of the city's central business district. Timeframes for the Comprehensive Plan Elements are based on Short-, Medium-, and Long-term to increase flexibility for implementation.

Select strategies are developed in detail to provide additional guidance to responsible parties and maximize efficiencies by interweaving various strategies to increase the benefit to the community.

## **DOWNTOWN**

### **NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS**

#### **SYSTEMS**

- » Transportation
- » Housing
- » Natural & Agricultural Resources
- » Historical & Cultural Resources
- » Community Facilities & Utilities

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

# »» DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 1:

## ORGANIZE A DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRUCTURE TO BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY & CREDIBILITY TO CONDUCT SUCCESSFUL WORK OVER THE LONG-TERM

**Purpose:** To ensure a comprehensive, incremental, and focused approach for South Milwaukee’s Downtown revitalization efforts over the long term.

**Rationale:** The City’s Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) provides current leadership in Downtown decision making. This task set will initiate the transition of the DAC’s interim downtown effort into a formal downtown management structure that will work for South Milwaukee over the long term. This structure must be well managed, properly funded, and focused exclusively on revitalizing Downtown and being its “champion.” With the proper structure in place, South Milwaukee can incrementally develop greater local capacity to improve and strengthen Downtown.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<p><b>A</b> Establish a partnership with South Milwaukee Community and Business Association (CBA) to: (1) understand their program plans; (2) identify how those plans can fit within a formal downtown management structure; and, (3) discuss how Downtown’s businesses would financially support Downtown management via multi-Year Endar pledges, typically 3 Year Endars.</p>	<p>Now/Through Year End 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identified DAC members*</li> <li>» CBA</li> </ul>
<p><b>B</b> Contact Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to: learn about the requirements for and resulting benefits to Downtown from a 2016 application to the Connect Communities program; learn about the requirements to submit an application to the Wisconsin Main Street program, and determine if Main Street is the most appropriate revitalization program; and, seek recommendations for two (2) Main Street communities and two (2) Connect Communities to visit South Milwaukee to obtain local perspectives about each program and how they work.</p> <p>» Cost: Fee for Connect Communities</p>	<p>Now/Through Year End 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City staff</li> <li>» Identified DAC members*</li> <li>» CBA</li> </ul>
<p><b>C</b> Visit the four (4) Main Street communities and Connect Communities identified above. Each South Milwaukee visit team should include 1-2 DAC members and 1 City staff member.</p>	<p>Now/Through Year End 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City staff</li> <li>» Identified DAC members*</li> <li>» CBA</li> </ul>
<p><b>D</b> Join the National Main Street Center, Inc., as a Standard Member (\$250 annually) for ongoing access to information about downtown revitalization.</p> <p>» Cost: \$350 Standard Membership Fee</p>	<p>Now/Through Year End 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City staff circulating relevant ListServ and publications to DAC</li> </ul>

Action Steps		Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>E</b>	Determine whether Connect Communities or Main Street is a network and resource for South Milwaukee's Downtown. As appropriate, identify a working group from the DAC and City to complete an application.	Now/Through Year End 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» DAC</li> <li>» City staff</li> </ul>
<b>F</b>	Identify initial funding sources for Downtown management. Potential sources include: (1) a Business Improvement District, or BID; (2) potential pledges by downtown businesses and property owners, as noted above; and, (3) other local resources, including City, major employers, and resident memberships. For individual and family memberships, see Main Street Libertyville, Illinois' membership information at: <a href="http://www.mainstreetlibertyville.org/member-sign-up-donate">http://www.mainstreetlibertyville.org/member-sign-up-donate</a> . Crowd funding opportunities should also be considered.	Now/Through Year End 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» DAC</li> <li>» City staff</li> </ul>
<b>G</b>	Complete legal requirements for the new Downtown organization: State non-profit incorporation and other regulatory filings; FEIN/TIN numbers; IRS Tax status; and, non-profit corporation by-laws. Begin to develop internal controls to ensure compliance and tax filings are completed in the future.	Now/Through Year End 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» DAC</li> <li>» City staff</li> </ul>
<b>H</b>	Establish the organization and promote it. Also, establish a timetable for funding and a possible Director hire. (WEDC can assist with this and the above task set.)	By Year End 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City staff</li> <li>» Identified DAC members*</li> <li>» CBA</li> </ul>

\*Identified DAC Members assume that tasks will be divided equally among the Committee membership to ensure completion for making decisions.

## »» DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 2:

### INCREASE OCCUPANCY & INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES TO INCREASE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY & REHABILITATE DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES

**Purpose:** To work with Downtown property owners on an ongoing basis to enhance the quality of building improvements.

**Rationale:** Improving buildings and lease space for tenant readiness will ensure income to owners that will enable investment in Downtown's historic buildings. Local and other incentives will be initial components of this work.

	Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>A</b>	Prioritize existing ground floor lease space by condition to understand which spaces can be occupied immediately, within 12 months with minimal improvements, and which require significant work to be tenant ready.	By 3rd quarter 2016	» City staff with DAC help
<b>B</b>	Work with owners of tenant-ready space to promote the space, including to potential tenants from the resources above, and with owners of 'need to improve' space to activate their space with temporary uses, such as pop-ups, or to display the work of local artists in vacant storefront windows.	By 3rd quarter 2016	» City staff with DAC help
<b>C</b>	Work with property owners with challenging lease space to understand their objectives for their property and tenanting plans. Determine if incentives or other measures would assist the owner in improving his property.	Early 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
<b>D</b>	Maintain ongoing relationships with all property owners and local commercial real estate brokers. This includes working with owners to improve the quality of upper-story rental units.	Early 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CDA members » Downtown organization
<b>E</b>	Complete current work on Downtown Revitalization Grant, and refine the grant requirements as needed, to respond to Downtown change.  » Cost: City budget allocation	By 3rd quarter 2016	» City staff with DAC help
<b>F</b>	Consider the development of additional incentives to support Downtown improvements.  » Cost: Varied	After 2017	» Downtown organization

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<p><b>G</b></p> <p>An incentive for design assistance to hire qualified professionals, including those with historic building knowledge, to ensure quality projects and construction for Downtown's vintage and historic buildings and more timely approvals for applicants.</p> <p>A cost-sharing incentive for major expense items is needed as an incentive category, particularly for restaurants. Possible costs to share include sprinkler systems or other major expenses to bring properties up to code for occupancy by potentially successful businesses.</p> <p>A loan pool with one or more local banks to serve as a companion program for the Downtown Revitalization Grant, enabling larger building rehabilitations.</p>	<p>After 2017</p>	<p>» Downtown organization</p>
<p><b>H</b></p> <p>Add companion funding sources to supplement the City's Downtown incentives. Potential sources include: » Cost: Varied</p> <p>SBA programs through Strategy 3 partnerships.</p> <p>Community Development Block Grants, or CDBG, for permitted purposes.</p> <p>Tax credit layering for larger projects, including use of the Federal and Wisconsin Historic Preservation Tax Credits for qualifying projects.</p> <p>Conventional and Microlenders, including those using Crowdfunding and Crowdsourcing techniques. Examples include Fundrise.com and zip.kiva.com. For historic preservation projects, crowdfunding information is available at: preservationfunder.com.</p> <p>Other potential regional partners, such as financial institutions serving South Milwaukee and the region. First Bank Financial has participated in local incentives in multiple Milwaukee area communities.</p>	<p>After 2017</p>	<p>» Downtown organization</p>
<p><b>I</b></p> <p>Integrate these actions with Strategy 3 action plan steps.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization</p>
<p><b>J</b></p> <p>Develop a 'case for improvements.' To start, use the University of Wisconsin Extension publication at: <a href="http://cced.ces.uwex.edu/2014/11/24/an-analysis-of-downtown-storefront-improvements/">http://cced.ces.uwex.edu/2014/11/24/an-analysis-of-downtown-storefront-improvements/</a>. As improvements occur in South Milwaukee's Downtown, the City and Downtown organization should develop a 'before/after' file for web display about each project and track the incentives used for each project.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization</p>

## » DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 3:

### DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS GROWTH SYSTEM WITH PROVISIONS FOR BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, GROWTH, SUPPORT, & SUCCESSION

**Purpose:** To develop key partnerships for the new Downtown organization, to support business/tenant growth, and to serve as a Downtown business resource.

**Rationale:** South Milwaukee’s Downtown has multiple strong and successful destination businesses – all vested in the community. Filling Downtown’s vacancies with stronger businesses will spur additional downtown reinvestment and attract more consumers to South Milwaukee and Downtown. The role, as an important resource, will be important for the City and the resulting Downtown management structure over time.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<p>Contact the following service providers to understand programs that will assist South Milwaukee's current and future ground level businesses:</p> <hr/> <p>Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) regarding financing, new business training (including business planning), business support services, and business plan pilot with Waukesha. Information at: <a href="http://www.wwbic.com">www.wwbic.com</a>.</p> <hr/> <p>WEDC programs, specific to small ground floor businesses and small downtown employer growth.</p> <hr/> <p>SBA Resources, including UWM's Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and SBA Webinars available at: <a href="http://www.sba.gov/tools/sba-learning-center/search/training/all">www.sba.gov/tools/sba-learning-center/search/training/all</a>.</p> <p><b>A</b> Build Your Business' Wizards available through the SBA Webinar series above (see 'Starting a Business' on the page in the above bullet point) or <a href="http://businessusa.com">businessusa.com</a>.</p> <hr/> <p>Additional resources available through UWM and MATC to assist either Downtown businesses or overall Downtown programming.</p> <hr/> <p>FaB Wisconsin regarding food and beverage industry support.</p> <hr/> <p>Emerging support services or networks, such as Scalerator for established businesses, Milwaukee Makers and Maker Faire for emerging business types, or BizStarts Milwaukee for incubator and start-up services (<a href="http://www.bizstartsmilwaukee.org">www.bizstartsmilwaukee.org</a>). Identify any potential links to major Downtown employers, such as Caterpillar Global Mining and Johnson Health Tech.</p>	<p>By Year End 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City staff</li> <li>» Identified DAC members</li> </ul>

	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Role &amp; Level of Responsibility</b>
<b>B</b>	Maintain regular contact with the above resources, and explore potential partnerships, as appropriate.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>C</b>	Conduct a business plan competition for a highly visible Downtown space, once the network of business resources is established. Examples in Milwaukee area include Silver City District's Business Plan Competition.	Late 2017	» Downtown organization
<b>D</b>	Remain current on emerging local/regional resources and any changes to existing resources.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>E</b>	<p>Complete a 'Downtown Business Resources Guide' with the following components, and prepare it for the City's website and distribution via inquiry.</p> <p>Welcome by the Mayor.</p> <p>List of key departments and contacts at the City.</p> <p>All relevant permits and licenses required, identifying any specific to certain business categories such as restaurants.</p> <p>All applications, approval timeframes, and required staff or commission approvals. The correct sequence for these approvals should be clear, and any provisions for staff review or guidance should be noted.</p> <p>Available incentives, including their requirements and approval processes and timeframes.</p>	By 3rd quarter 2016	» City staff
<b>F</b>	Based upon feedback, initiate a joint process with the DAC and CBA (and the Downtown organization) to identify process and regulatory improvements that can be easily accomplished and fit with the City's standard procedures.	Early 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
	Conduct ongoing outreach with Downtown business owners to identify opportunities to facilitate growth through access to resources and relationships. Examples include expansions, new locations, and succession planning.	Early 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
	Host City events that foster interaction with businesses, i.e., business networking breakfasts, community tours, etc.	By Year End 2016	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
<b>G</b>	Grow the "Business Night" initiative that has recently kicked off among Downtown South Milwaukee businesses. These business nights allow business owners to network and discuss critical issues (e.g., social media and marketing) facing their businesses.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization » Downtown businesses
	Coordinate with all Downtown businesses to stay open for community events that take place Downtown.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization » Downtown businesses

## » DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 4:

### ENGAGE SOUTH MILWAUKEE’S MANY CONSTITUENCIES IN THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION EFFORT

**Purpose:** To ensure that there are sufficient numbers of people to complete the work to revitalize South Milwaukee’s Downtown.

**Rationale:** One staff person cannot do all of the work required to ensure a successful Downtown. Residents and businesses need to contribute time and expertise. In organizing for success, volunteers will be needed. Determining valid tasks or projects to assist with revitalization will be critical, as will recognizing them for their work. Important to this process is the changing nature of volunteerism nationally. Many volunteers prefer to do projects on their own time versus attending meetings. Managing the work in this context will be key to building the Downtown organization’s capacity to get work done.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>A</b> Identify local volunteer resources – through media, schools, Downtown institutions, employers, and Downtown events. In addition, identify the likely expertise available through each resource. Examples may include volunteer or project opportunities with Caterpillar or Johnson Health staff. Refine these resources as needed.	Early 2017 and ongoing	» To start, DAC and CBA, then Downtown organization
<b>B</b> Develop projects and related responsibilities for completion by volunteers, and discuss with prospective volunteers.	Early 2017 and ongoing	» To start, DAC and CBA, then Downtown organization
<b>C</b> Match volunteers to work opportunities, and ensure that work/projects are completed.	Early 2017 and ongoing	» To start, DAC and CBA, then Downtown organization
<b>D</b> Develop a program to thank and recognize volunteers routinely. Recognition should be individual and collective.	Ongoing	» To start, DAC and CBA, then Downtown organization

## » DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 5:

### EXPAND DOWNTOWN PROMOTIONAL WORK, SUPPLEMENTING EXISTING SPECIAL EVENTS & MERCHANT PROGRAMS, TO COMMUNICATE DOWNTOWN SUCCESS

**Purpose:** To communicate Downtown change and to provide visibility and exposure to the Downtown’s businesses and to Downtown improvements.

**Rationale:** Downtown marketing and promotion work typically includes special events and festivals, image building and positioning, and business or cluster promotion. The City continues to support and organize a complete calendar of special events in the Downtown. The CBA organizes business promotions. The new Downtown organization may become involved in the events at some point, but the organization’s initial emphasis should be telling Downtown’s story and communicating positive change.

	Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>A</b>	Use the Downtown's heritage and unique story as the basis for communicating changes in process, including building improvements.	Early 2017	» Downtown organization
	Establish an online and social media presence for the new organization, when established.	Early 2017	» Downtown organization
<b>B</b>	Maintain up-to-date business information on websites like Google (Google Maps), Foursquare, Yelp, Trip Advisor, and others to further free and accessible marketing for businesses in South Milwaukee, particularly Downtown.	Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>C</b>	Develop collateral and printed materials, including business directories and parking maps, for the Downtown, and update every six (6) months.	Early 2017	» Downtown organization
<b>D</b>	Collaborate with the City and CBA on their current events, and assist with any changes to those events or the event calendar. This task can include any discussions evaluating the success and purpose of events.	Ongoing	» City staff » CBA » Downtown organization
<b>E</b>	Develop promotions or events for the Downtown's larger business clusters, in partnership with the City and CBA.	2018	» City staff » CBA » Downtown organization

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>F</b> Work with ground floor business owners on promotional activities, such as merchandising or employee training, to enhance the Downtown experience.	2018	» City staff » CBA » Downtown organization
<b>G</b> Ensure that all promotional materials are current.	Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>H</b> Formulate a brand strategy, based upon revitalization success and emerging opportunities.	2019	» Downtown organization
<b>I</b> Develop a new City logo and slogan. Consider historic logos and slogans and add a modern twist.	Early 2017	» City staff* » Downtown organization
<b>J</b> Pursue branding the historic train depot as “Where You Greet,” due to its heritage as the location of war departures and arrivals and its current representation of the farmers’ market.	Early 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members

## »» DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 6:

### ADDRESS THE DOWNTOWN’S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCING THE APPEARANCE & PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND MAINTAINING THE DOWNTOWN’S HISTORIC CHARACTER

**Purpose:** To continue ongoing work to improve Downtown’s appearance.

**Rationale:** The DAC should continue their initial work, identifying large and small projects to improve the look of Downtown.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b> Continue to identify locations or issues, such as trash removal, throughout Downtown.	Ongoing	» DAC members
<b>B</b> Identify programs or locations where the DAC and future Downtown organization can work together. For example, the DAC can assist the City in identifying enforcement programs; Downtown bar owners can work together to clean up cigarette butts and broken glass; or, the DAC and CBA, given the planter initiative at the market, can identify a common (nice and inexpensive) planter for display outside storefronts with a common palette of plantings.	By 3rd quarter 2016	» Identified DAC members or CBA members
<b>C</b> Obtain feedback from DAC and CBA members regarding their best appearance-related practices.	By 2nd quarter 2016	» Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
<b>D</b> Work with Downtown businesses and property owners to identify additional areas for low-cost, high-quality appearance improvements.	Ongoing	» Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
<b>E</b> Create business competition for façade and other revitalization funds for Downtown properties.	2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization* » Downtown businesses
<b>F</b> Include appearance-related issues in conversations with City regarding regulatory and enforcement changes.	Early 2017 or earlier	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members

	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Role &amp; Level of Responsibility</b> * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>G</b>	Integrate other appearance improvements with infrastructure and streetscape plans, such as an anti-crime task force, increased liquor license enforcement, regulations addressing sidewalk cleanliness, wayfinding and signage, or public art programs (either temporary or permanent) to showcase positive change.	2017	» City staff* » Downtown organization
<b>H</b>	Address improvements to Downtown's infrastructure and streetscape on a phased basis to match available funding.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>I</b>	Pursue a blight elimination TID around Milwaukee Avenue.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>J</b>	Address long-standing Downtown vacancies through outreach and consideration of a vacant property ordinance that requires registration and fees to increase maintenance and tenancies.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>K</b>	Develop design guidelines for Downtown properties to promote the maintenance and rehabilitation of key commercial properties throughout the city.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>L</b>	Collaborate with the City on streetscape and infrastructure projects, as budgeted and scheduled. Work should include business support during construction mitigation, communication to businesses and property owners via all media, and design coordination with ongoing appearance work.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>M</b>	Focus physical changes in Downtown South Milwaukee at 10th and Milwaukee Avenues and on the block faces of the 900 and 1000 blocks of Milwaukee Avenue.	By 3rd quarter 2016	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>N</b>	Improve the image of the city through key investments along the routes to reach Downtown South Milwaukee.	2017 and after	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>O</b>	Initiate the installation of Downtown signage on major roadways (general South Milwaukee signage is already installed). Work with WisDOT first for Interstate 94. Work jointly with the County and City thereafter regarding connecting arterials.	2017 and after	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>P</b>	Use banner poles to advertise businesses at adjacent locations.	By Year End 2016	» City staff » Downtown organization

## » DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 7:

### EVALUATE DOWNTOWN OPTIONS FOR NEW CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL, OR EMERGING BUSINESS SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

**Purpose:** To capitalize on new opportunities for economic growth occurring in and near South Milwaukee’s Downtown.

**Rationale:** Change is inherent in all downtown work. New ways to attract people and businesses to South Milwaukee’s Downtown can supplement successful efforts developed as the revitalization process strengthens.

Action Steps		Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b>	Enhance links to South Milwaukee's lakefront and Grant Park, particularly as redevelopment occurs.	After 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>B</b>	Enhance links to South Milwaukee's cultural institutions, identifying ways to increase collaborations and joint promotions.	After 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>C</b>	Identify emerging business categories that can support Downtown growth, and complement the Downtown's existing business mix.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>D</b>	Encourage and incentivize temporary use of commercial spaces to bring foot traffic, help entrepreneurs, and market available properties for lease and sale.	By Year End 2016	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization*
<b>E</b>	Attract 1-3 new trendy and family-friendly restaurants to Downtown South Milwaukee.	Begin in 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization*
<b>F</b>	Create a permanent location for the South Milwaukee Downtown Market.	Begin in 2017	» City staff » Identified DAC members or CBA members » Downtown organization
<b>G</b>	Collaborate with the City to identify ways to enhance Downtown cultural options, such as public art, as redevelopment occurs.	Begin 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>H</b>	Invest in and increase activity in the public spaces on the northwest and southeast corners of 10th and Milwaukee Avenues.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>I</b>	Create parklets for sidewalk cafes and additional public space along Milwaukee Avenue (and consider additional side streets).	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization » Downtown businesses

## »» DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 8:

### CONSIDER POLICIES, PROCESSES & BEST PRACTICES FOR NEW DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AT OPTIMAL LOCATIONS WITHIN THE CITY OF SOUTH MILWAUKEE

**Purpose:** To ensure that future Downtown redevelopment is high quality, contributes to ongoing success, and expands options for economic growth.

**Rationale:** With increasing interest and activity in Downtown, redevelopment will occur. The Downtown organization and City will have a strong partnership to work together on redevelopment issues and opportunities.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility
<b>A</b> Take advantage of Downtown organizational networking to identify the best Downtown projects and developers for South Milwaukee's opportunities.	2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>B</b> Link redevelopment to Downtown assets and institutions and city amenities, such as open space and Lake Michigan.	After 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>C</b> Work with the City to promote new development, including residential, that enhances Downtown's mix of uses and reflects market realities and addresses larger issues, such as energy efficiency.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>D</b> Work with the City to promote infill development at suitable locations that complements the Downtown's mix of uses.	Now/Ongoing	» City staff » Downtown organization

## » DOWNTOWN STRATEGY 9:

### IDENTIFY PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, AS THE DOWNTOWN'S VITALITY INCREASES

**Purpose:** To adapt to ongoing increases in resident and visitor traffic.

**Rationale:** Parking is often identified as a downtown issue. Parking management may become an issue with substantial increases in downtown activity. Often, employee and business owner parking near storefronts is the first parking issue encountered by a revitalizing downtown. For the Downtown organization and the City, communicating parking facts—such as promoting parking locations and utilizations—will be important to addressing local concerns.

Action Steps	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b> Identify locations for owner and employee parking as activity increases, and work with business owners to ensure parking near stores and restaurants is available for customers.	After 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>B</b> Identify simple parking solutions that have worked elsewhere, including enforcement, with the City, and implement those solutions.	After 2017	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>C</b> Develop parking strategies, as needed, through a traffic and parking plan.	2019	» City staff » Downtown organization
<b>D</b> Manage any parking issues or needs through redevelopment processes.	2019	» City staff » Downtown organization

# » NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<p><b>A</b> Develop property purchase programs for a) rental properties and b) homeowners that incentivize building rehabilitation and landscape improvements.</p>	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff
<p><b>B</b> Improve the code enforcement process and promote proactive communication (with accompanying resource lists) on potential code violations. Consider hiring summer employees to implement this enhanced process.</p>	Short	» Inspection Department*
<p><b>C</b> Create a “road map” of how to make home improvements in South Milwaukee and provide to inspectors to accompany the home inspection process, so that prospective buyers find ease in purchasing property in South Milwaukee.</p>	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff*
<p><b>D</b> Encourage new sustainable, residential subdivision development and infill in areas contiguous to existing development. Encourage designs that are consistent with the character of the existing neighborhood and where provision of public services can be accommodated in an orderly and efficient manner.</p>	Short	» Plan Commission
<p><b>E</b> Update South Milwaukee’s zoning ordinance and other development-related regulations to reflect the Plan’s goals and objectives.</p>	Short	» Engineering Department*
<p><b>F</b> Create design guidelines for key neighborhoods, districts, and corridors that are attracting re/investment to proactively guide aesthetics.</p>	Short	» Plan Commission
<p><b>G</b> Update the density and setback requirements, primarily for residential and commercial districts in the zoning code.</p>	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff
<p><b>H</b> Refine developer agreements and/or review processes to focus on the usage of high-quality materials and maintenance standards.</p>	Short	» Engineering & Street Departments*

# TRANSPORTATION

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
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## ROADWAYS

<b>A</b> Promote increased connectivity in the character of the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors.	Short-Long	» Engineering & Street Departments*
<b>B</b> Require that new roadways, as part of re/development, connect to the existing grid of the city.	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff*
<b>C</b> Extend Drexel Boulevard for pedestrian access from the west across the railroad tracks to link Drexel Boulevard to 9th Avenue (east of the tracks) and improve connectivity from the east and west sides of the city. Over the longer term, consider the demand and feasibility of extending Drexel Boulevard fully across the railroad tracks.	Long	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Union Pacific Railroad
<b>D</b> Extend Beech Street across Oak Creek Parkway from 16th Street to 17th Street.	Long	» Engineering & Street Departments*
<b>E</b> Extend 13th Avenue north to the Oak Creek Parkway to increase development viability of the property east of 13th Avenue between Rawson Avenue and the Oak Creek Parkway.	Long	» Engineering & Street Departments*
<b>F</b> Increase connectivity between Downtown, Grant Park, Lake Michigan, and the proposed Opportunity Areas in Downtown by extending Milwaukee Avenue to Third Avenue.	Long	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Downtown organization
<b>G</b> Consider an alternative truck route to move truck traffic away from Milwaukee Avenue. (Marquette Avenue is a possibility if the bridge is modified or upgraded for increased clearance.)	Long	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Union Pacific Railroad

## PARKING

<b>H</b> Pursue shared parking arrangements to maximize the usage of public and private parking lots downtown.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Downtown organization*
<b>I</b> Re-evaluate the free 2 hour parking regulations on Milwaukee Avenue following new investment and increased downtown tenancy.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Engineering & Street Departments*

## BICYCLE

<b>J</b> Install bicycle racks throughout downtown South Milwaukee and in other commercial and public areas that would benefit economically from attracting bicyclists.	Short	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Downtown organization*
<b>K</b> Enhance bicycle accommodations, including but not exclusive to bicycle lanes, “sharrows,” and other signage to indicate shared routes for bicyclists and motorists.	Medium	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Downtown Advisory Committee
<b>L</b> Increase connections from the Oak Leaf Trail to local bicycle trails, paths, and preferred routes.	Medium	» Engineering & Street Departments* » Milwaukee County Parks

## ► TRANSPORTATION (continued)

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>PEDESTRIAN</b>		
<b>M</b> Promote awareness of the downtown by installing or enlarging signage to route traffic entering the city.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> </ul>
<b>N</b> Enhance the streetscape to “box” the city’s historic center, bounded by Drexel Boulevard on the south, Fifth Avenue along the east, Milwaukee Avenue on the north and through the downtown, and 15th Avenue along the west. (The land within this area represents some of the oldest developed residential uses in South Milwaukee and may be appropriate for establishing design standards that offer a link to the community’s history.)	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> <li>» Street Department*</li> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> </ul>
<b>O</b> Continue improving and creating new sidewalks, when possible, to maintain and increase connectivity within the community.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engineering &amp; Street Departments*</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSIT</b>		
<b>P</b> Pursue funding for transit hubs in South Milwaukee to create attractive and pedestrian-friendly spaces that highlight South Milwaukee’s transit and other transportation alternative options.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engineering &amp; Street Departments*</li> <li>» Downtown organization</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Q</b> Pursue bus transit expansions, as recommended in the SEWRPC VISION 2050 Transportation System Plan.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Milwaukee County Transit Authority</li> </ul>
<b>FREIGHT</b>		
<b>R</b> Improve freight rail services in South Milwaukee. Freight rail service infrastructure would benefit from the improvements made to accommodate increased commercial use, in addition to improved future regional passenger use.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Union Pacific Railroad</li> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» SEWRPC</li> </ul>
<b>WATER</b>		
<b>S</b> Enhance the South Milwaukee Yacht Club by adding slips as the market allows, which would elevate the local economic benefits of recreation.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Yacht Club</li> </ul>

# HOUSING

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<p><b>A</b> Promote a variety of housing types to ensure housing for the social and economic diversity expected in South Milwaukee.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> <li>» Community Development Authority*</li> <li>» City Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>B</b> Encourage high-quality and higher density housing on key re/development sites with high potential for connectivity and in close proximity to key South Milwaukee assets, such as the lakefront, the park system, and Downtown.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> <li>» Downtown organization</li> </ul>
<p><b>C</b> Promote programs and pursue funding to maintain and rehabilitate existing housing stock.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Community Development Authority*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> </ul>
<p><b>D</b> Review the zoning ordinance and building code for needed changes that will support the types of housing units needed to provide a diverse housing stock that serves the community.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> </ul>
<p><b>E</b> Prepare architectural guidelines to assist with re/development and infill housing decision-making.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> </ul>
<p><b>F</b> Encourage the preservation of affordable housing for low-income households by supporting efforts of private development and organizational groups, or public agencies to provide assistance to temporarily house the homeless, battered spouses, and others in crisis situations.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> <li>» Community Development Authority</li> </ul>
<p><b>G</b> Examine regulations that deter the appearance and modernization of housing stock near Downtown.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Community Development Authority*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> </ul>
<p><b>H</b> Enhance the housing stock near Downtown to strengthen positive perceptions and investments.</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Community Development Authority*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> </ul>
<p><b>I</b> Work toward redevelopment of appropriate brownfields/ former industrial sites into mixed-use developments that include residential housing, especially near the lakefront and parkway to maximize the natural and economic value.</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> </ul>

## ► NATURAL & AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b> Consider applying to become a “Tree City USA.”	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff
<b>B</b> Leverage opportunities to market and advertise South Milwaukee’s natural assets. Install wayfinding signage throughout the community that directs visitors to the lake, Grant Park, and the Oak Creek Parkway.	Short	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Downtown organization*
<b>C</b> Facilitate access to parks from Downtown, in new developments, and in redeveloped areas by increasing connectivity through signage and other wayfinding features on pedestrian walkways, streets and roads as appropriate.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff » Plan Commission » Downtown Advisory Committee » Milwaukee County
<b>D</b> Work with Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District on the Oak Creek watershed planning efforts to provide guide efforts focusing on the dam and the restoration of the Oak Creek Mill Pond or “lagoon.”	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District » Milwaukee County
<b>E</b> Ensure the provision of recreational facilities and opportunities for all city residents in conjunction with and complementary to the County parks system and the South Milwaukee School District.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Plan Commission
<b>F</b> Protect rare and important habitats from the negative impacts of development and redevelopment.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff
<b>G</b> As part of the lagoon restoration planning, incorporate opportunities for fishing, concessions, outdoor equipment rentals (bicycles, ice skates, cross-country skis, snow shoes, watercrafts), benches, and historic placards.	Medium	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Plan Commission » Milwaukee County
<b>H</b> Cooperate with other units of government in maintaining a permanent network of open space throughout the city.	Long	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Milwaukee County » Cities of Oak Creek, Cudahy & St. Francis
<b>I</b> Protect wetlands by cooperating with the state to protect the wetland resources that are of local, regional, and national significance for their aesthetic, ecological, and recreational importance.	Long	» City Community & Economic Development staff
<b>J</b> Continue collaborating on efforts that serve to protect the Lake Michigan shoreline, the Oak Creek Parkway, and the Yacht Club. Recognize that this work may need to extend throughout the Oak Creek watershed area.	Long	» City Community & Economic Development staff* » Plan Commission* » City Council

## ➤ HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Action	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b> Continue to celebrate South Milwaukee’s history and the preservation of historic structures throughout the community. Highlight exemplary rehabilitations to encourage further investment.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Historical Society*</li> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Downtown organization</li> </ul>
<b>B</b> Create design guidelines for historical properties to promote the maintenance and rehabilitation of historical properties throughout the city.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Downtown organization</li> <li>» Community Development Authority</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> Encourage and incentivize the preservation of archeological and historical sites on public and private lands.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> <li>» City Council</li> <li>» Historical Society</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> Consider acquisition of sites that can be included in existing parks and resource areas, should the opportunity arise.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> <li>» City Council</li> </ul>

## ➤ UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<b>A</b> Transition maintenance of lighting from We Energies to City of South Milwaukee. Phase new lighting downtown on Milwaukee Avenue from 5th or 6th Avenues to 14th Avenue and on 10th Avenue from Marquette to Rawson to make new lighting consistent.	Short - Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engineering &amp; Streets Departments*</li> </ul>
<b>B</b> Consider enhancement of the facilities at the beach and the Yacht Club, such as a restaurant, that maintains the Yacht Club for use by its members. Any such work will be done in cooperation and partnership with the Yacht Club and its leadership.	Medium - Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Yacht Club</li> <li>» Investors</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> Maintain partnerships to implement the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and align infrastructure improvements accordingly.	Medium - Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Engineering &amp; Streets Departments*</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> Couple water and sewer investments with aesthetic improvements, like streetscape features, throughout the city.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engineering &amp; Streets Departments*</li> </ul>
<b>E</b> Consider options and impacts of transitioning to Oak Creek water to utilize the City’s lakefront property for re/development.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engineering Department*</li> </ul>
<b>F</b> Per the recommendations in the forthcoming Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan, consider the dechannelization of Oak Creek, and look for opportunities to increase the visibility of the Creek as a community asset. Focus making the Creek a community asset at the western entrance to Downtown between 14th and 15th Avenues.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Engineering &amp; Streets Departments*</li> <li>» MMSD</li> </ul>
<b>G</b> Consider options and strategies with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District to potentially consolidate water treatment services for increased access on the lakefront.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Engineering &amp; Streets Departments*</li> <li>» MMSD*</li> </ul>

# ► ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<p><b>A</b> Aggressively market the city’s built environment, natural environment, proximity to Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, Chicago, and General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA) at places like GMIA.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association*</li> <li>» South Shore Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>B</b> Rebrand the City with a new slogan (or tagline), e.g., SoMKE. Incorporate the rebranding into a new logo, general signage, downtown gateway, and informational signage.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee community*</li> <li>» Downtown Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<p><b>C</b> Bring organizations like FaB Wisconsin and WWBIC into the mix for local restaurants and businesses that could benefit from operations support.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> </ul>
<p><b>D</b> Work with an organization like WWBIC so that any business trainings focus on tailored, place-based branding; that is, WWBIC trains business owners on the “elevator speech” of South Milwaukee’s assets for their business.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> </ul>
<p><b>E</b> Work with the South Shore Chamber and WWBIC to expand the social media training classes that can cater to a broad set of existing businesses in South Milwaukee.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association*</li> </ul>
<p><b>F</b> Sponsor a business plan competition for both existing and new businesses, citywide. Separately incorporate a “dolphin tank” program structure for existing businesses. Partner with a local academic institution to carry out both efforts.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Downtown organization*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association</li> </ul>
<p><b>G</b> Market the business loan opportunities offered by regional agencies like WWBIC. Start by marketing them on the City and SMCBA websites, and expand to print editions in businesses throughout the city.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association</li> </ul>
<p><b>H</b> Plan additional capital improvements to dovetail with the 2016 bond cycle.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> <li>» Downtown Advisory Committee</li> <li>» Community Development Authority</li> <li>» City Council</li> </ul>

# ▶▶ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Actions	Timeline	Role & Level of Responsibility * Denotes lead or shared lead role
<p><b>I</b> Promote CDA and City-owned land on the City website and with consistent, high-quality, on-site signage (preferably with the new logo and brand for the City). Make a map of vacant and available land. Identify underutilized, “occupied” properties that are seemingly vacant.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Community Development Authority*</li> </ul>
<p><b>J</b> Bolster the relationship with the South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association and the South Shore Chamber of Commerce.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association</li> <li>» South Shore Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>K</b> Commission bonuses for brokers that bring experiential commercial businesses into South Milwaukee.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> <li>» City Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>L</b> Market the community to Millennials as a starter community.</p>	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee Community &amp; Business Association</li> <li>» South Shore Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>M</b> Make the planning and economic development position at the City full-time.</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» City Council*</li> </ul>
<p><b>N</b> Revisit the status of existing TIF districts, and establish additional districts, as appropriate.</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission</li> <li>» Downtown organization</li> <li>» Community Development Authority</li> <li>» City Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>O</b> Consider and plan for the future re/development of underutilized, manufacturing-focused, and utility-oriented high-value lakeshore properties.</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City Community &amp; Economic Development staff*</li> <li>» Plan Commission*</li> <li>» City Council*</li> <li>» South Milwaukee community*</li> </ul>

# REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

## POLICIES

- » Continue to recognize the value of intergovernmental cooperation as a means for enhanced service provision and cost efficiency, when the benefits to South Milwaukee are apparent.
- » Provide copies of the South Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan to neighboring communities and to primary overlying jurisdictions, such as Milwaukee County.
- » Seek out new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation when it is appropriate.

South Milwaukee takes pride in its independence and the many elements that set the community apart from its neighbors. This speaks to the self-reliance and initiative of its residents and business community through its history.

At the same time, South Milwaukee understands – perhaps more acutely than others – that it is part of a region. Some residents define their region very broadly, identifying themselves as part of metropolitan Milwaukee while touting the proximity of Chicago. Perhaps their ease in seeing themselves as part of something much larger stems from their ties to Lake Michigan on its east with a shoreline that ignores governmental jurisdictions, or the Oak Creek – which enters the city from elsewhere and winds through it to the Lake, or the highway network and proximity of major airports. Given all of these cues, it is no surprise that South Milwaukee residents see themselves as connected to the region and the world.

In recent times, it is increasingly difficult – and ill-advised – to separate independent implementation from intergovernmental reliance. Many service provision, building use, and cost sharing opportunities may be available. In recognizing these relationships, South Milwaukee should pursue the most effective path as it implements certain projects and programs.

## NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES & OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS

Especially where services, infrastructure, and concerns do not begin or end at South Milwaukee’s boundaries, it is important to work cooperatively with the interested and affected neighboring communities listed below:

- » City of Cudahy
- » City of Milwaukee
- » City of Oak Creek

Because South Milwaukee is bounded to the east by Grant Park and Lake Michigan, issues may dictate including the following agencies and jurisdictions in planning efforts and related discussions:

- » Milwaukee County Parks & Recreation
- » Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- » Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- » Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- » Numerous agencies have jurisdiction over aspects of Lake Michigan and involvement depends on the nature of the activity.

Aspects of the South Milwaukee Plan will benefit from discussions and cooperation with the governments, agencies, and other organizations detailed in the following table. The list is not all-inclusive, but provides a starting point and an understanding of the many entities involved in local governmental decisions and programs. The lists are provided in a manner consistent with the various elements of the South Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan.

## Transportation

Relationship	Government, Agency, or Department
Federal and State Highways	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
County Highways	Milwaukee County Department of Public Works (Highway Division)
Airports	Milwaukee County Department of Public Works (Airport Division)
Regional Roadway Planning	Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Transit Service	Milwaukee County Transit System

## Housing

County Assistance	Milwaukee County Housing Division
State Assistance	Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) & Department of Administration – Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs (DOA)
Federal Assistance	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

## Utilities & Community Facilities

Local School District	South Milwaukee School District
Stormwater Management	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Public Safety - State	Wisconsin State Patrol
Public Safety - County	Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department

## Natural & Cultural Resources

Relationship	Government, Agency, or Department
County Parks	Milwaukee County Parks Department
Lake Michigan, Surface Water	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Shorelands
Groundwater	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Watershed	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District & Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Native Cultures and Archaeological Sites	Potawatomi Nation and Wisconsin State Historical Society
Wisconsin History	Wisconsin State Historical Society
Wetlands, Endangered Species, Sensitive Environmental Locations	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Floodplains	Federal Emergency Management Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## Economic Development

Training	Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, U.S. Small Business Administration
State Community Development Assistance	Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Forward Wisconsin
Regional Assistance	Wisconsin Regional Economic Partnership
County Assistance	Milwaukee County Economic Development Division
Brownfields	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

