



CITY OF MILWAUKEE Comprehensive Plan

Fond du Lac and North Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan

Appendix F: Main Street Milwaukee Program



MAIN STREET MILWAUKEE PROGRAM

Department of City Development & LISC Partnership

The Main Street Milwaukee Program is a collaborative effort between the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development (DCD) and Milwaukee's Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to revitalize Milwaukee's older, traditional neighborhood business districts. Milwaukee has taken a proven national model and crafted a unique program that will help build sustainable, walkable, thriving commercial districts as anchors to our city's residential neighborhoods.

The program is based on the "Main Street Four Point Approach"™ developed in 1980 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street 4-point approach is a systematic, comprehensive approach to commercial district revitalization that successfully combines historic preservation and economic development in local revitalization initiatives. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's resources and conditions with all initiatives stemming from local issues and concerns. The Main Street model has been adopted by organizations in more than 1,700 communities throughout the United States and has generated nearly 70,000 building rehabilitations and 174,000 jobs over the past 20 years. Generally, the program has focused on smaller towns in rural America, but in recent years the program has been increasingly applied to commercial strips in large urban centers such as Boston, Washington DC, and Baltimore.

The main component of the Main Street Four Point Approach™ is the creation of 4 separate committees made up of volunteers from the community to concentrate their efforts on the four elements of the Main Street approach. The four committees are as follows:

- **Organization:** Successful commercial districts must establish consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various stakeholders in the commercial district. Designated districts will create a structure that provides effective, ongoing management and advocacy of the commercial district. Diverse groups from the public and private sectors must work together to create and maintain a successful program
- **Design:** Every neighborhood has inherent visual opportunities: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays and promotional materials. The Design Committee of designated districts use these elements and specific programs and resources to help improve the physical appearance and cohesiveness of their neighborhood business districts.
- **Marketing and Promotional Activities:** Successful urban retail centers provide events, entertainment, marketing materials and more to help attract customers. Those types of programs, which seek to create a positive image of the commercial district in order to rekindle neighborhood pride, are a central aspect of the Main Street Approach. These activities improve retail sales and create a positive public image of the commercial district in order to attract investors, developers and new businesses.
- **Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening and diversifying the commercial district's economic base is accomplished by retaining and expanding existing businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix and by converting unused or underutilized space into productive property. In addition, the program works to strengthen existing businesses by helping them to update their business practices, market their goods and services more effectively, and become more competitive in a changing global economic environment.

In Milwaukee, DCD and LISC will be the partners responsible for implementing the Main Street Milwaukee Program (MSMP). The program will help nonprofit community development corporations (CDCs) and other established neighborhood-based organizations transform neighborhood business districts into productive centers of economic activity by strategically channeling financial resources and providing quality technical assistance that is relevant to Main Street practitioners.

MSMP will provide financial and technical assistance to designated organizations to help them organize stakeholders from the neighborhood, improve the appearance of the street and its storefronts, attract and manage

public infrastructure improvements, generate new business development, and identify sources of capital for private investment and development within their communities. Designated organizations will act as catalysts of economic development in ways that build on their neighborhoods' assets – i.e. the talents and energies of local residents, local property and business owners, and the physical, social and cultural character of a neighborhood.

DCD, using funds provided by CBGA, will coordinate the program, oversee the management of the designated districts and expedite the delivery of city services and programs to projects located within the designated districts. LISC, using resources from various private sector funders, will provide specialized consultant services, training and mentoring experiences from experts in Milwaukee and other Main Street cities to designated districts in Milwaukee.

The major components of the Main Street Milwaukee program are as follows:

- Designate areas through a competitive process – each area interested in becoming a Main Street must submit an application for designation. An independent body, the Main Street Milwaukee Partners Board, made up of elected officials, Mayoral appointees, funders, small business and community development representatives, will review all applications, provide scoring and make decisions for participation in the program. The selection criteria consist of:
 1. the district's compatibility with the Main Street program;
 2. organizational capacity; and
 3. commitment to following the Main Street Four-Point Approach.
- Build capacity of designated community groups by providing trainings and workshops. These trainings and workshops would build a foundation of sustainability by teaching the necessary tools and techniques to the community and main street manager to conduct commercial district revitalization.
- Provide an array of free consulting services – such as architectural services, urban planning services, and small business development.
- Insure multi-year funding to designated community groups contingent on performance and accountability. By the 6th year of participation in the program, the district should have a fundraising mechanism in place to continue their efforts in commercial district revitalization and management of district.
- Require designated areas to follow the Main Street 4-point approach and hire a full-time staff person, the Main Street Manager, to manage the four Main Street committees and their individual annual work plans.
- Use Federal Block Grant money to leverage corporate and philanthropic support. The City will allocate block grant funds and LISC will raise private sector funds in a one to one match.

DCD and LISC envision the Main Street Milwaukee Program to be a multi-year program with four districts designated in the summer of 2004 and 1-2 districts designated in each subsequent year. Designated districts must have a non-profit organization leading their Main Street program. The nonprofit will be responsible for hiring and housing the full-time Main Street manager and coordinating all program activities. Once selected, districts will have a Main Street Milwaukee designation for at least six years. To retain this designation, districts will be required to develop annual work plans with concrete goals and will be evaluated on their revitalization activities.

Each designated district will be required to provide regular progress reports, including: dollar value of reinvestment, net growth in new businesses, net growth in jobs, number of improved façade and streetscapes, number of volunteers and volunteer hours in the Main Street committees and projects, rental rates, retail sales rates, and crime rates. In addition, each local program will be regularly evaluated to determine progress in achieving goals, project completion, efficient program administration, broad community involvement, and other key benchmarks.

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