

The Economic State of Milwaukee's Inner City: 2006
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1.0 Area Description & General Purpose

The focus of this study was Milwaukee's "Inner City" and "Northwest Side", which incorporates the segment of the Northeast Side Area Plan west of Interstate 43. The study addresses conditions within a series of zip codes (53204, 53205, 53206, 53208, 53210, 53212, 53216, 53218, 53223, 53224, 53225, and 53233). The general purpose of this study was to highlight the economic conditions of Milwaukee's "Inner City" and identify income, employment and business development trends.

2.0 Economic Trends: Inner City and Northwest Side

Using US Census Bureau and CED data, the report identified the following trends:

"Inner City" Trends

- Since 1999, real income and the number of business establishments have risen slightly.
- Since 1994, the number of jobs has fallen by less than one percent.
- Income per taxpayer remains less than half the level of Metropolitan Milwaukee as a whole.
- Economic improvements have been limited to those neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown and can be attributed to substantial gentrification.

"Northwest Side" Trends

- Since 1994, there has been significant economic decline (in terms of job growth, income, and business activity), suggesting a displacement of economic distress from traditional inner city neighborhoods.

3.0 Policy Implications

The report concludes that there is no *singular* approach to remedying the migration of economic distress into the "Northwest Side" or the economic decline of the City of Milwaukee (in comparison to its suburban counterparts) as a whole. Instead, the study identifies eight suggestions for inner city economic renewal policies in Milwaukee:

- Milwaukee needs a comprehensive inner city redevelopment and anti-poverty strategy.
- Metro Milwaukee should embrace regional equity strategies.
- Corporate Milwaukee needs to step up to the plate for the inner city.
- The City of Milwaukee should rethink some of its economic development strategies, particularly investments in tourism.
- Restructuring the Milwaukee Department of City Development will be essential to implementing an inner city revitalization strategy.
- Gentrification is not a dirty word – it is also an indication of improvement for some neighborhoods.
- A community benefit agreement should be part of every major redevelopment deal in Milwaukee.
- Milwaukee needs a "big bang" to stimulate inner city revitalization.