

North Main Village Video Transcript

North Main Village,
Milwaukie, Oregon

Jim Bernard:

“I’m Jim Bernard, Mayor of the city of Milwaukie, small business owner and lifetime resident. I sat here watched this community grow on the outside and die on the inside. The North Main Village project was the first project that has happened in our downtown in as long as most of us can remember. It was a project that required a lot of partnership; with Metro, the city of Milwaukie, the community and with the developer. This project has brought people downtown, created new retail development opportunity and has just stimulated all the businesses in downtown.”

Carlotta Collette
Metro Councilor

“Milwaukie is one of those towns that kind of went to sleep and what you hear from a lot of people is that nothing has happened in Milwaukie for 20 years. All of a sudden a lot of new things are happening in Milwaukie. If you look at our riverfront, we have already started to create a riverfront park. McLaughlin Boulevard, where it comes through our city, is now landscaped with beautiful shade trees. North Main Village is a piece of that as we start to redevelop downtown. We have a couple of businesses that are buying the old buildings and are redeveloping those. I think we are heading for a time where we will have a mix of old buildings and new buildings, buildings that are reused where maybe an old bank would be a restaurant with offices. It’s a very exciting time in Milwaukie and North Main Village is really the anchor that set that in motion. It was really the piece of the puzzle that was missing and its so exciting that it is finally here and that people are living in it and it is a thriving community.”

Phil Whitmore”

“I’m Phil Whitmore and I’m manager of Metro’s Transit Oriented Development and Centers Implementation Programs and the Milwaukie North Main Project was our first Centers project. So a project like this where you haven’t had a mixed use project ever, where you haven’t had new housing in 30 or 40 years, where there has been an out-migration of existing businesses, you don’t suddenly get a darling project like this that is mixed-use and higher density, housing and retail without a very strong effort by all the partners and if you didn’t have the partnership you wouldn’t have this project.”

Brian Newman

Former Metro and Milwaukie Councilor:

“I’m standing in front of North Main Village here in Milwaukie Oregon. What used to be here was an old Safeway site. It was a two-acre site with a falling down building that closed in the mid 80’s and a surface parking lot for several hundred vehicles. In the late 90’s this site was purchased by the city of Milwaukie with support from the State of

Oregon through a low interest loan. So at that time the city decided through its downtown planning process that was adopted in 2000 that this was a perfect site, an opportunity site for a redevelopment project to bring more people to live downtown, but to also have more retail in downtown. The problem was, at that time, the market in downtown was very weak so there was a real concern that any developer would be interested in investing in downtown Milwaukie...”

Jim Bernard:

“...at the time there were a couple of options that many people didn’t realize. That lot was not owned by the city of Milwaukie, the city had a lease/buy agreement with Safeway so the proposals prior to the city’s purchase were for a coffin warehouse and a taxidermy museum...”

Brian Newman:

“...and for a lot of reasons it was considered that wasn’t the best use for downtown Milwaukie although it was somewhat symbolic of where downtown was at the time, people thought that it was kind of dead and there was a real interest in bringing life downtown.

So this project from a regional perspective is in the right place for two reasons. One, its in a designated center and Metro is working with local governments to concentrate more growth in centers in order to protect farmland and forest land around the region but also to protect our single family neighborhoods. So we’ve identified about 36 centers around the region like our old historic suburban downtowns where we want to have that activity. Where we can make them hubs, civically, culturally and commercially for the surrounding neighborhoods. The second reason is also key, this is a transit oriented development project and we intend, over time, to connect downtown Milwaukie to Portland with light rail and if all goes well we will should have light rail under construction by 2010 connecting Portland and Milwaukie.”

Tom Kemper,

KemperCo, Developer of North Main Village:

“Why Milwaukie? Proximity to Portland, its 10 minutes away. Its right on the river and light rail is coming in 5 to 10 years and the bones of that little downtown offer an incredible opportunity. The project is split into two pieces, there is the market element with for-sale housing and retail and then there is the affordable housing component, which is made up of 64 housing units. The affordable housing transaction was extremely complicated involving seven layers of financing, including tax credit equity, bonds from the state, weatherization funds from the state, there is a CIF loan that the city used to acquire the property, that we assumed, that was from the state. Metro has a bunch of money in it, the city has money in it and I carried back a deferred developer note on the transaction.”

Brian Newman:

“Now Metro participated in several different ways. The first way, through a transportation grant we funded about \$450,000 worth of streetscape improvements along

Main Street and Harrison. The second way we participated was directly with the developer in a Transit Oriented Development grant. I think our total grant was \$580,000, most of that, about \$550,000 went to the actual development project to help reduce the cost so the project would pencil out. About \$20,000 to \$30,000 went to the rain garden, which was a demonstration project, in the center of the project to hopefully pioneer some new techniques for storm water treatment.”

Jeff Myhre

Architect of North Main Village:

“I really like to come up with designs that create interest, create discovery, and create contrast. That was the basis for the design concept of North Main, that every single building, all of the buildings that are there, are a different esthetic exterior design and even though the guts of the buildings are all very similar, the exteriors intentionally look like they were built over a series of years. The idea is that people don’t feel like they live in a ‘project’ and that is very important if we are going to create a sense of place, if we are going to add value in terms of quality of life and increase livability, we have to focus on those kinds of things.”

Carlotta Collette:

“What I love best about this project, North Main Village, is that when people first started moving in. We watched this from vacant lot through construction, through painting and all the detailing and finally one day I was driving by and I saw the moving van pull up and I pulled around the corner and parked and ran out and introduced myself. As it turns out the first people that moved in have become active in the community, people who want to live near the river, near downtown, down by the library. People are making this a whole new neighborhood, a new community and are bringing their values and sense of what a community is to our city. It is a terrific project.”

Jim Bernard:

“The city of Milwaukie is close to downtown Portland, we have great transit opportunities, and now that we have people living here those transit opportunities have expanded. Our partners at Trimet and metro, thanks to them light rail is in our future, again light rail will spur development and provide opportunities for people in Portland to come to Milwaukie for jobs and people in Milwaukie to go to Portland State and OMSI and downtown Portland so we are thrilled about the future of Milwaukie and so are the citizens.”