



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE LISC

**LISC**  
 Green Development Center  
**CASE STUDY**

Silver City Townhomes

# SILVER CITY TOWNHOMES

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

*Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc and Wisconsin Redevelopment, LLC partnered to turn a vacant lot into 20 affordable workforce housing units in the south side of Milwaukee. Silver City Townhomes will provide rent-to-own workforce housing for workers earning between 50-60% the county median income in this historic and rapidly growing neighborhood. The development consists of five buildings with four multi-story energy efficient townhomes in each building and features many sustainable construction materials and a prominent green roof.*

**COMMUNITY DEV. CORP.**

*Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc. in partnership with Wisconsin Redevelopment, LLC.*

**NUMBER OF UNITS**

*19 affordable units and 1 manager unit*

**UNIT TYPE**

*3- and 4-bedroom Rent-to-Own townhomes*

**CONSTRUCTION**

*New Construction*

**TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE**

*42,000*

**TARGET OCCUPANT**

*Low Income at 50% - 60% County Median Income*

**COMPLETION DATE**

*November 2010*

**OVERALL DEVELOPMENT COST**

*\$5.2 million*

**GREEN CONSULTANT**

*Quorum Architects, Inc.*

**GREEN STANDARD**

*Wisconsin Green Built Homes*

## GREEN FEATURES

GREEN BUILDING FOCUS

**Social and Environmental Goals**

Silver City is a model of energy efficient & low impact design. Aside from sustainable design, it also meets important housing needs and links with other neighborhood resources.

**Sustainable & Efficient Materials & Appliances**

The development incorporates low VOC cabinetry, paints, woodwork and carpeting. The apartments also feature energy efficient appliances, furniture, and HVAC systems.

**Green Roof & Storm Water Management**

Silver City Townhomes features a green roof and bioretention swales for storm water management and water reuse. These are featured prominently and visibly, and are used both for functionality and as teaching tools regarding the city's over-taxed sewage system.

**Economic & Community Development**

Silver City Townhomes provide rent-to-own workforce housing in this rapidly growing neighborhood, ensuring long-term economic diversity and sustainability. The developers also worked closely with the community to ensure that neighborhood amenities such as basketball courts remained public.

## SUSTAINABLE & EFFICIENT MATERIALS & APPLIANCES



PHOTO CREDIT: Milwaukee LISC

*Energy efficient kitchen appliances and low VOC cabinetry are key green features in the townhomes*



PHOTO CREDIT: Milwaukee LISC

Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc., Inc and Wisconsin Redevelopment, LLC identified the Silver City neighborhood using community planning documents such as the Near South Side Plan, the Silver City Visioning and Strategic Planning Report, and the Near South Side Market study.

The market study revealed a need for workforce housing in the rapidly growing area. The developers selected an underutilized city-owned parking lot in the Silver City neighborhood, adjacent to the Arlington Heights Park and recreation trails. Building on this site helps to promote **infill development** in the south side neighborhood of Milwaukee.

The development features a **green roof** for water conservation and energy efficiency, detailed on the following page. All of the units include **low VOC** carpeting, paint, woodwork and cabinetry to ensure healthy indoor air quality.

The units are also equipped with **Energy Star** appliances including:

microwaves, air-forced furnaces, water heaters, and air conditioning units, and low-emissivity windows, all of which help to lower the residents' utility costs. The property also has high-efficiency interior fluorescent light and LED exterior lighting.

The on-site community room features furniture made from recycled materials, solar lights on the community plaza, and patio pavers made from recycled rubber.

The site also promotes **high connectivity** with other neighborhood resources and provides the appropriate infrastructure to encourage walking and bicycling to these amenities, such as **bike racks**.

*The project combines sustainable planning with energy efficient appliances and recycled materials.*

***The developers worked with neighbors to improve community sports facilities such as the basketball and tennis courts with resources leveraged to finance Silver City Townhomes.***

### SPORTS FACILITIES

## Public and Open Space

The Silver City Townhomes were built on a site with existing basketball and tennis courts. Community members insisted that these amenities remain open to the public and won an easement for the public use of these courts.



PHOTO CREDIT: LBWN

*An easement secures the public right to use basketball and tennis courts on site*

## GREEN ROOF AND STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

The development team initially faced some challenges about building in an area with a distressed stormwater management system. However, with the help of a **Green Roof Grant from MMSD**, the development team built a green roof to collect and reduce storm water runoff and provide enhanced energy efficiency measures for the residents resulting in lower energy costs.

The roof is visible from the nearby viaduct, and serves as a teaching tool about the importance of **low impact development** practices in a city with overtaxed sewage infrastructure and heavy rainfall.

Additional storm water management features include swales, storm water retention pipes, and native plantings in landscaped areas, recycling and conserving



PHOTO CREDIT: Wisconsin Redevelopment, LLC

*Green Roof Preparation*

water. The SilverCity Green Roofs can hold up to **6,500 gallons** of rain water.

The green roof is visible to people walking or riding across the 35th Street viaduct. In addition the location is 2 blocks away from the proposed new Urban Ecology Center on 37th and Pierce. This linkage will allow visitors to the center the unique opportunity to see green roof technology.

Other immediate neighborhood linkages will be the reopening of the "Valley Passage" a pedestrian tunnel also near 37th and Pierce. The passage will connect the development to the Menomonee Valley containing jobs, recreation and other sustainable developments.

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Neighbors identified the Silver City Townhomes site as one that should be addressed to prevent the graffiti tags delinquent activities that were taking place under the nearby 35th Street bridge. Creating a **safer community** with 'more eyes on the street' would help optimize the use of other local resources, like Menomonee River, recreational trails, and many other amenities.

As a redevelopment of a tax-exempt vacant site, Silver City Townhomes provides new resources and vitality to an area that might otherwise be described as "blighted."

The Silver City Townhomes help to meet **strategic housing needs** that are established by neighborhood planning documents. This includes the priority to "Develop the new housing required by neighborhood population growth, in places where it will have the optimal effect on community development, i.e., on properties within or adjacent to retail centers." The



PHOTO CREDIT: Wisconsin Redevelopment, LLC

*Rendering of Completed Silver City Townhomes*

development is located close to recreational activities and retail areas including the new Urban Ecology center and the Silver City Main Street's restaurants and businesses. It is also adjacent to Arlington Heights Park, which is home to summer music festivals and activities. Thus, Silver Cities Townhomes is in the middle of the

action, helping to promote compact development and economic diversity in Milwaukee's south side.

Importantly, Silver City Townhomes is intended to provide **workforce housing**, ensuring that people who work in the neighborhood can still afford to live there as the community expands.

**DEVELOPMENT COST**

\$5,600,000

**AVERAGE COST PER UNIT**

\$260,000

**INCREMENTAL GREEN COST**

10% of construction

**GREEN FEATURE COST**

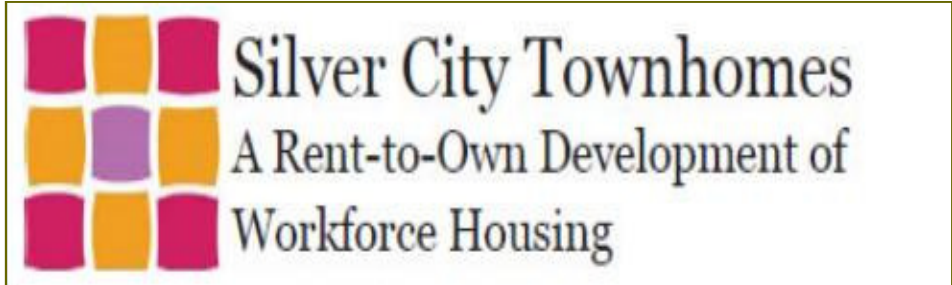
The Green Roof cost an \$327,228, which was partially supported by MMSD

**FINANCING SOURCES**

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association (WHEDA) leveraged tax credits ; Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Green Roof Grant, State Farm, and the LISC Green Development Center and National Equity Fund

**FINANCING**

The LISC Green Development Center contributed a \$40,000 construction grant as part of its *Healthy and Efficient Neighborhood Homes Partnership* with the Home Depot Foundation. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association allocated \$3.4 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits in addition to \$1.3 million leveraged by WHEDA in federal Exchange and Recovery Act funds for Silver City Townhomes. The federal Exchange program allowed WHEDA to exchange previously allocated Low Income Housing Tax Credits to cash for equity investment. State Farm will purchase the tax credits providing equity for the Silver City Townhomes project. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District provided a grant for the cost of the green roofs. The financing structure allows for the completion of the project with low debt and debt servicing costs.



**LESSONS LEARNED**

The development team experienced some challenges obtaining equity for the project because the recession had weakened the market for LIHTC, especially for developments as small as Silver City Townhomes. Luckily, State Farm had recently entered the Tax Credit market and sought to expand into new areas of Milwaukee, including the Silver City neighborhood. Had it not been for State Farm's LIHTC support, the project would not have been able to obtain the necessary equity to secure other financing and the project

could not have been completed.

The developers also faced some pushback about the location of the project, which is close to an overpass. Some felt that it would be difficult to reach full occupancy because of its location near the overpass, but it also benefited by its proximity to recreational trails and many other amenities. The team agreed to increase setbacks to allow for municipal maintenance on the overpass. The buildings were fully-leased and occupied months in advance of project completion.



PHOTO CREDIT: TEAM Management

Rendering of Building 1 Front and Rear Facades

- **LAYTON BOULEVARD WEST NEIGHBORS, INC., Co-Developer**  
<http://www.lbwn.org/>

- **WISCONSIN REDEVELOPMENT, LLC, Co-Developer**  
<http://www.wisconsinredevelopment.com/>
- **QUORUM ARCHITECTS, INC., Architects**  
[www.quorumarchitects.com](http://www.quorumarchitects.com)

**About the LISC Green Development Center**



The Green Development Center (GDC) was established in 2007 to support LISC in fully integrating sustainability principles into the development of low-income neighborhoods. From green affordable housing and charter schools to transit-oriented development and green jobs, the GDC provides technical, educational and financial support to make comprehensive sustainability an integral component

of community development. Webcasts and workshops are offered, and a consistently updated research library facilitates recommendations to projects across the country. Working under the strategic goals of LISC's Building Sustainable Communities vision, the GDC also connects projects to funding opportunities through its green grants programs and Green Loan Fund.

Learn more : [www.lisc.org/gdc](http://www.lisc.org/gdc) or [www.Facebook.com/LISCGreenDevelopmentCenter](http://www.Facebook.com/LISCGreenDevelopmentCenter)