Walker Square Strategic Action Plan

A Part of the Near South Side Area Plan

CITY OF MILWAUKEE
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

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City of Milwaukee

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City of Milwaukee

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COMMON COUNCIL RESOLUTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CALL TO ACTION:

The Walker Square neighborhood finds itself at a geographic and economic crossroads. To its east is a portion of the larger Walker's Point neighborhood that is seeing high levels of investment, population growth, new housing construction and conversions, and a rising profile as a dining, entertainment and arts destination within the region. To the north is the Menomonee Valley, an area that has been transformed over the past two decades from an environmentally and economically degraded area to an economic engine providing jobs for thousands of Milwaukee residents and acres of new trails and parkland, with continued job growth expected for years to come. At the western edge of Walker Square, Cesar E. Chavez Drive serves as a commercial hub for Milwaukee's Latino population and separates Walker Square from the traditional residential areas of Clarke Square and the Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods further west. These neighborhoods are home to a variety of community-based organizations and other partners that are engaged in successful efforts to attract new homeowners and increase the quality of life for existing residents.

Walker Square has its own assets, including a sturdy housing stock, active residents, engaged civic and non-profit partners, and its namesake Walker Square Park that serves as the central gathering place for the community.

The activity occurring in the neighborhoods surrounding Walker Square has brought significant attention to those areas from the City of Milwaukee and additional governmental entities, the development community, area philanthropic foundations, and others. The Walker Square Neighborhood Association (WSNA) has asked the City of Milwaukee to work with the WSNA, residents, area business owners, and other stakeholders to develop this Walker Square Strategic Action Plan to create a road map of strategies aimed at improving quality of life and attracting additional resources to Walker Square, ensuring that current residents benefit from all of the investment in Walker Square and the surrounding neighborhoods, and preserving the character of Walker Square as a diverse, mixed-income community.

PLANNING GOALS:

Walker Square's challenges, opportunities, and the public input received throughout the planning process raise a number of questions that this Action Plan attempts to address by recommending specific actions. The questions and recommended actions are based on the goals (**in bold below**) that serve as the foundation for this plan:

- How can city government and other stakeholders best support ongoing efforts to **strengthen Cesar E. Chavez Drive's position as a shopping destination that caters to the Latino community**?
- What is the long-term vision for National Avenue and how can that vision **strike the appropriate balance between the diverse set of needs of the industrial, residential, commercial, automobile and pedestrian users of National Avenue**?
- What steps can be taken to **encourage investment in the housing stock in Walker Square**?
- How can residents, City government, the Milwaukee Police Department, and area community-based organizations best collaborate to **address concerns related to crime, the perception of crime, and problem properties in Walker Square**?
- Are there improvements that can be made to Walker Square Park that will help **solidify Walker Square Park's place as the "front yard" of the neighborhood and make it an even more attractive place for neighbors and visitors**?

PLAN FOCUS AREAS:

Based on the planning goals and public input received during the process, the action items recommended by the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan fall into three areas of focus, which are each represented by a chapter within the plan:

Thriving Commercial Corridors (Chapter 3) suggests actions that will strengthen the Cesar E. Chavez Drive business district and bolster the role of National Avenue as the transition area between the industrial areas to the north and the residential neighborhood to the south. **Living in Walker Square (Chapter 4)** recommends

actions to increase residents' access to resources to maintain and improve the housing stock within Walker Square, strengthen partnerships with area community-based organizations, and address neighborhood concerns regarding nuisance properties.

Improving the Public Realm (Chapter 5) offers strategies to solidify Walker Square Park's role as a showcase gathering place for the neighborhood, make National Avenue more attractive for all users, and make strategic improvements to streets and bicycle connections in the area.

KEY ACTIONS:

The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan identifies key actions for each of the plan focus areas. These actions were developed with significant public input and are listed to the right. The individual chapters provide additional detail about why these actions are important and how to make them a reality. The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan also outlines additional supporting actions within each of the plan focus areas.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

The goal of the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan is to provide a blueprint for the City of Milwaukee and neighborhood stakeholders to drive positive change in Walker Square and attract additional investment to the neighborhood. Implementing the actions recommended in the Action Plan will require the coordinated engagement and sustained commitment of stakeholders spanning government, the private sector, community-based organizations, and residents.

The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan identifies specific entities that must take the lead if individual actions are to be successfully implemented and suggests necessary partnerships and possible funding sources to make these recommendations a reality.

With its strong existing assets and the ongoing investment in surrounding neighborhoods, Walker Square is well positioned to see continued improvements in its commercial corridors, housing stock, and public spaces. The key actions outlined in the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan are designed to ensure these improvements are guided by the vision that residents and business owners have for the future of their community and to position Walker Square to thrive for generations to follow.

THRIVING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Key Action #1: Support the Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District Farm Project

Key Action #2: Encourage and support efforts to bring a Business Improvement District to National Avenue

Key Action #3: Encourage an appropriate, context sensitive mix of uses on National Avenue

Key Action #4: Work with Milwaukee Police Department - District 2 to deploy targeted safety strategies along Greenfield Avenue

Key Action #5: Support FaB Wisconsin efforts to locate a Center of Excellence within the FaB focus area, preferably on National Avenue

WALKER SQUARE

Key Action #1: Increase the availability and use of resources for new homeowners to purchase homes in Walker Square and existing homeowners to make repairs to their homes

Key Action #2: Continue to leverage the strength of non-profit partners working in Walker Square

Key Action #3: Identify and engage in targeted collaborations to address pressing public safety concerns

Key Action #4: Continue to reinforce and build the Walker Square neighborhood's identity and "brand"

IMPROVING THE PUBLIC REALM

Key Action #1: Invest in Walker Square Park

Key Action #2: Transform West National Avenue into a complete street

Key Action #3: Transform West Mineral and West Walker Streets between South 9th and South 11th Streets into pedestrian friendly, tree-lined boulevards

Key Action #4: Develop a network of local street bikeways that prioritize and optimize safe and efficient bike travel

SUMARIO EJECUTIVO

LLAMADO A LA ACCIÓN:

El barrio de Walker Square se encuentra en una encrucijada geográfica y económica. Hacia el este hay una porción grande del barrio de Walker's Point que está viendo niveles de inversión altos, crecimiento de población, construcción de casa nuevas y conversiones, y un crecimiento de perfil como un lugar en donde comer, de entretenimiento y de artes en la región. Hacia el norte está Menomonee Valley, un área que ha sido transformada en las dos últimas décadas de un área degradada económica y ambientalmente a un motor económico que provee empleo a miles de residentes de Milwaukee y acres de nuevos senderos y parques, con continuo crecimiento en empleos en años futuros. Hacia el borde oeste de Walker Square, Cesar E. Chavez Drive sirve como un centro comercial para la población latina de Milwaukee y separa a Walker Square de las áreas residenciales tradicionales de Clarke Square y los barrios de Layton Boulevard West más al oeste. Estos barrios son el hogar de una variedad de organizaciones de las comunidades y otros socios que están empeñados en esfuerzos exitosos para atraer nuevos dueños de casas y aumentar la calidad de vida de los residentes actuales.

Walker Square tiene sus propios activos, incluyendo un fuerte inventario de casas, residentes activos, socios comprometidos, cívicos y sin fines de lucro, y su homónimo Walker Square Park que es sinónimo de centro de reunión para la comunidad.

La actividad que está ocurriendo en los barrios que rodean a Walker Square ha atraído una atención significativa de parte de la Ciudad de Milwaukee y de otras entidades del gobierno, la comunidad de desarrollo, las fundaciones filantrópicas del área, y otros. Walker Square Neighborhood Association (WSNA) ha solicitado a la Ciudad de Milwaukee trabajar con el WSNA, los residentes, los dueños de negocios del área, y otros interesados en el desarrollo de este Plan de Acción de Walker Square para crear una hoja de ruta de estrategias apuntadas a mejorar la calidad de vida, y a atraer recursos adicionales a Walker Square, asegurando que los residentes actuales se beneficien de todas las inversiones en Walker Square y los barrios de los alrededores, preservando el carácter de Walker Square como una comunidad diversa de diferentes ingresos.

METAS PLANEADAS:

Los desafíos, las oportunidades y el aporte público de Walker Square recibido a través del proceso de planeamiento crean un número de preguntas que este Plan de Acción trata de responder recomendando acciones específicas. Las preguntas y las acciones recomendadas están basadas en las metas (**en negrita abajo**) que sirven como el fundamento de este plan:

- ¿Cómo pueden el gobierno de la ciudad y otros interesados dar el mejor apoyo a los esfuerzos en curso para **fortalecer la posición del Cesar E. Chavez Drive como un floreciente destino de compras que satisfaga a la comunidad latina de Milwaukee**?

- ¿Cuál es la visión a largo plazo para National Avenue y cómo puede esta visión **lograr el balance apropiado entre las diversas necesidades impuestas para los usuarios industriales, residenciales, comerciales, y de automóviles y peatones de National Avenue**?

- ¿Qué pasos se pueden tomar **para alentar las inversiones en el inventario de casas en Walker Square**?

- ¿Cómo pueden los residentes, el gobierno de la ciudad, el Departamento de Policía de Milwaukee y las organizaciones basadas en la comunidad del área dar su mejor cooperación **para enfrentar problemas concernientes con el crimen, la percepción del crimen, y las propiedades problemáticas de Walker Square**?

- ¿Hay mejoramientos que se pueden hacer en **Walker Square Park que ayuden a solidificar a que Walker Square Park sea como "el patio del frente" del barrio y que pueda ser un lugar aún más atractivo para que los vecinos y los visitantes lo disfruten**?

ÁREAS DE ENFOQUE DEL PLAN:

Basándose en las metas del planeamiento y el aporte público recibido durante el proceso, los puntos de acción recomendados por el Plan de Acción de Walker Square se desarrollan en tres áreas de enfoque y cada una se representa en un capítulo dentro del plan:

Corredores Comerciales Florecientes (capítulo 3) sugieren medidas que fortalecerán el distrito de negocios de Cesar E. Chávez Drive y reforzarán el papel de National Avenue como el área de transición entre las áreas industriales al norte y el barrio residencial al sur.

Viviendo en Walker Square (capítulo 4) recomienda acciones para aumentar el acceso de los residentes a mantener y mejorar el inventario de casas dentro de Walker Square, fortalecer la colaboración con las organizaciones basadas la comunidad del área, y tratar las preocupaciones del barrio con relaciones a propiedades problemáticas.

Diseño Mejorado del Ámbito Público (capítulo 5) ofrece estrategias para solidificar el papel de Walker Square Park como un punto de reunión de exhibición del barrio, haciendo National Avenue más atractiva para todos sus usuarios, y hacer mejoras estratégicas en las calles y las conexiones de bicicleta en el área.

ACCIONES CLAVE:

El Plan de Acción de Walker Square identifica acciones clave para cada una de las áreas del plan de enfoque. Estas acciones se desarrollaron con el aporte público significativo y aparecen en la lista a continuación. Los capítulos individuales proveen detalles adicionales sobre por qué estas acciones son importantes y cómo hacer de ellas una realidad. El Plan de Acción de Walker Square también delinea acciones de apoyo adicional dentro de cada una de las áreas de enfoque del plan.

CÓMO HACER QUE SUCEDA:

La meta del Plan de Acción de Walker Square es proveer un plan para la Ciudad de Milwaukee y los interesados en el barrio en lograr un cambio positivo en Walker Square y atraer inversión adicional al barrio. El implemento de las acciones recomendadas en el Plan de Acción requerirá el compromiso coordinado y el esfuerzo de las personas en el gobierno, el sector privado, las organizaciones de la comunidad y los residentes.

El Plan de Acción de Walker Square identifica específicamente las entidades que deben tomar el liderazgo si las acciones individuales van hacer implementadas con éxito y sugiere alianzas necesarias y posibles fuentes de financiamiento para hacer estas recomendaciones una realidad.

Con sus fuertes activos existentes y las inversiones continuas en los barrios circundantes, Walker Square está bien posicionada para lograr mejoras continuas en los corredores comerciales, inventarios de casas, y espacios públicos. Las acciones claves delineadas en el Plan de Acción de Walker Square están diseñadas para asegurar que estas mejoras estén guiadas por la visión que los residentes y dueños de negocios tengan para el futuro de su comunidad y posicionar Walker Square a que florezca para las generaciones futuras.

CORREDORES COMERCIALES FLORECIENTES

Acción Clave #1: Apoyar el Proyecto de Mejoramiento de Negocios del Proyecto de Granja Cesar E. Chavez

Acción Clave #2: Alentar y apoyar los esfuerzos para traer un Business Improvement District a National Avenue

Acción Clave #3: Alentar la mezcla de usos apropiados, de contexto sensitivo en el National Avenue

Acción Clave #4: Trabajar con el Departamento de Policía de Milwaukee - Distrito 2 para desplegar estrategias de seguridad enfocadas a lo largo de Greenfield Avenue

Acción Clave #5: Apoyar los esfuerzos de FaB Wisconsin para situar un Center of Excellence dentro del área de enfoque de FaB, preferiblemente en National Avenue

EN WALKER SQUARE

Acción Clave #1: Aumentar la disponibilidad y los usos de recursos para los dueños de casa nuevos para comprar casas en Walker Square y para los dueños de casas existentes hacer reparaciones en sus hogares

Acción Clave #2: Continuar influyendo el apoyo de los socios sin fines de lucro que trabajan en Walker Square

Acción Clave #3: Identificar e involucrarse en colaboraciones enfocadas para discutir las preocupaciones de seguridad pública apremiantes

Acción Clave #4: Continuar reforzando y construyendo la identidad y la "marca" del barrio de Walker Square

MEJORAR EL ÁMBITO PÚBLICO

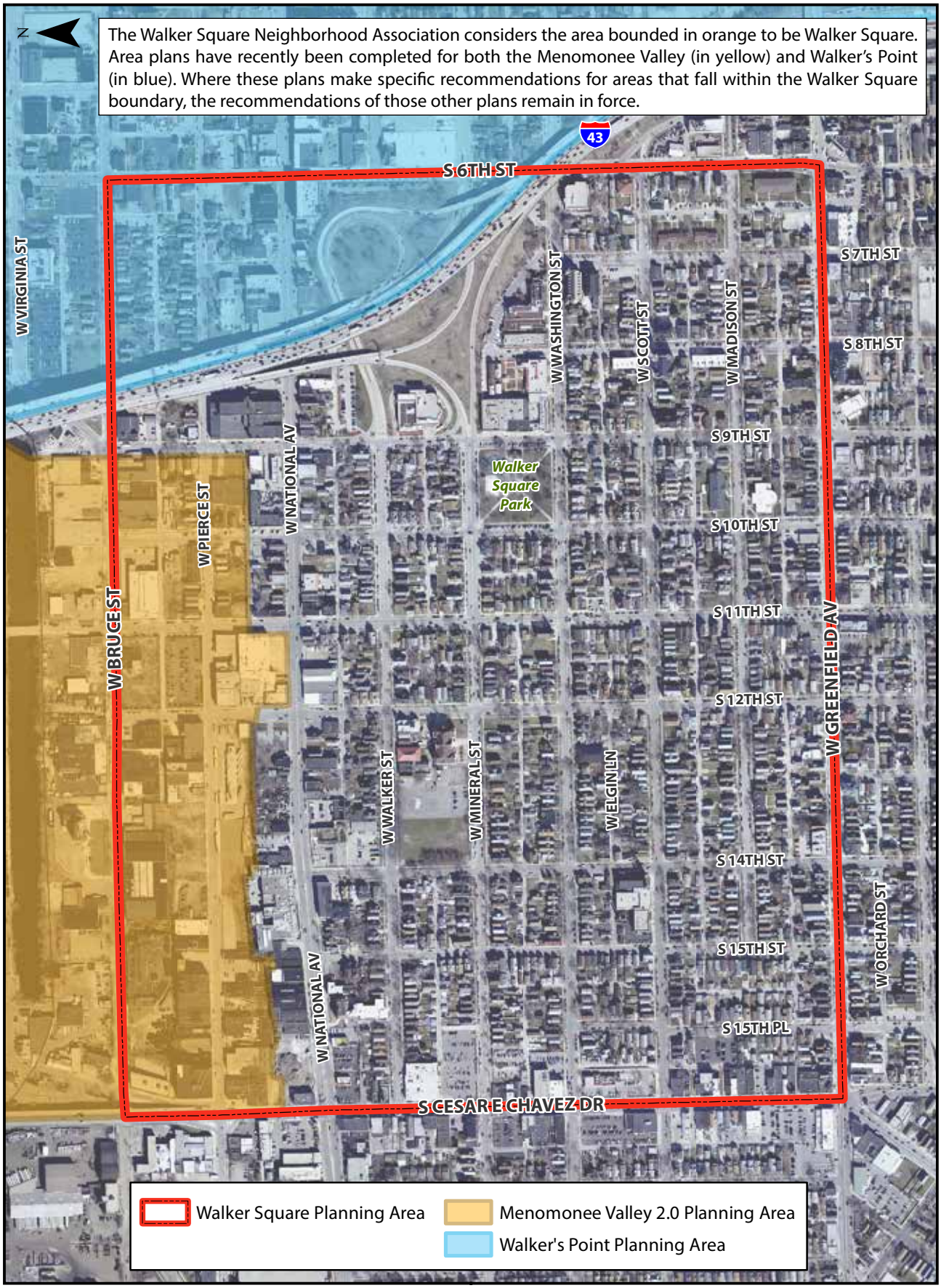
Acción Clave #1: Invertir en Walker Square Park

Acción Clave #2: Transformar West National Avenue en una calle completa

Acción Clave #3: Transformar las calles West Mineral y West Walker entre las calles 9na Sur y la 11va Sur en bulevares bordeados de árboles amistosos a los peatones

Acción Clave #4: Desarrollar una red de carriles de bicicletas que le dé prioridad y optimice viajar en bicicleta como algo seguro y eficiente.

Map 1: Walker Square Planning Area and Neighboring Planning Efforts



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Milwaukee is often described as a "city of neighborhoods," marked by unique enclaves of distinctive housing types, commercial districts, and public gathering spaces. In many ways, Walker Square is a quintessential Milwaukee neighborhood. It shares a number of characteristics found across many of Milwaukee's strongest communities. These include a sturdy housing stock that has stood the test of time, a park that serves as the central meeting place and backbone of the neighborhood's identity, a bustling shopping district where neighbors can meet a wide variety of their shopping needs locally, and an engaged group of residents and community-based organizations committed to the success of the neighborhood.

There are also a number of characteristics that position Walker Square uniquely among Milwaukee neighborhoods. Walker Square is located in Milwaukee's densely populated Near South Side: its roughly 50 blocks are home to more than 8,000 residents. Residents of a wide variety of races and ethnicities live shoulder-to-shoulder in this predominantly Latino community. While the heart of the neighborhood is residential in character, Walker Square sits between the vibrant Cesar E. Chavez Drive commercial corridor to the west, the industrial Menomonee Valley to the north, Historic Mitchell Street to the South, and the rapidly changing Walker's Point neighborhood to the east. Common in other parts of the country and the world, Walker Square Park provides one of the few examples in the City of Milwaukee of a traditional neighborhood-defining public square, a feature that provides the neighborhood with both its name and its core identity.

Milwaukee County Parks sign for Walker Square Park. (Credit: John Karpinsky)

1.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Walker Square's unique characteristics come with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Its commercial corridors have experienced varying levels of success: Cesar E. Chavez Drive has a strong concentration of neighborhood-serving businesses, but could benefit from continued retail growth; along National Avenue, City government and area businesses must continue to explore ways to transition more seamlessly between the industrial area to the north and the residential area to the south while supporting an evolving mix of uses; and Greenfield Avenue suffers from real and perceived safety issues that pose significant challenges to future investment.

The housing market in Walker Square has still not fully recovered from the recession, yet residents are hopeful that the neighborhood will attract new homebuyers and that market trends will make it worthwhile for existing homeowners to make repairs and upgrades to their homes. Walker Square Park provides a clear physical center to the community, but neighborhood identity in Walker Square remains open to debate, as the neighborhood is not as firmly branded with a distinct identity as some other districts—something resident leaders hope to see change, while still retaining Walker Square's historic place within the larger Walker's Point neighborhood. Neighbors are also concerned that crime and the perception of crime impact the livability of Walker Square.

At the same time, a considerable number of initiatives and developments are underway that will bring added investment to the neighborhood over the coming years. Stakeholders are collaborating to support the continued growth of the Cesar E. Chavez Drive corridor through the Farm Project (a multi-year effort to support art, culture and small businesses in the district) and other efforts. The recent opening of the Milwaukee Area Technical College Education Center at Walker Square breathes new life into a key building on National Avenue and provides in-demand job training opportunities for area residents. The ongoing development of the Menomonee Valley, especially in the burgeoning food and beverage industry cluster, will continue to have positive impacts on Walker Square.

Area youth celebrate Dia de los Muertos in Walker Square Park.
(Credit: John Karpinsky)

Continued development pressures from the Walker's Point neigh-borhood, evidenced by the conversion of the former Esperanza Unida building at 611 West National Avenue, and ongoing investment along South 5th Street, will also provide new opportunities for Walker Square.

1.3 Planning Goals

The various challenges and opportunities presented in Section 1.2, as well as public input received during the planning process, raise a number of questions that this Action Plan attempts to address by recommending specific actions. These questions are based on the goals (**in bold below**) that serve as the foundation for this plan:

How can city government and other stakeholders best support ongoing efforts to **strengthen Cesar E. Chavez Drive's position as a thriving destination that caters to the Milwaukee Latino community?**

What is the long-term vision for National Avenue and how can that vision s**trike the appropriate balance between the diverse set of needs of the industrial, residential, commercial, automobile and pedestrian users of National Avenue?**

What steps can be taken to **encourage investment in the area's housing stock?**

How can residents, city government, the Milwaukee Police Department, and area community-based organizations best collaborate to **address concerns related to crime, the perception of crime, and problem properties in Walker Square?**

Are there improvements that can be made to Walker Square Park that will help **solidify Walker Square Park's place as the "front yard" of the neighborhood and make it an even more attractive place for neighbors and visitors to enjoy?**

The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan makes recommendations that address these and other critical questions by suggesting actions that city government, area residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders can take to help neighbors realize their vision for Walker Square. These recommendations are divided into three areas of focus:

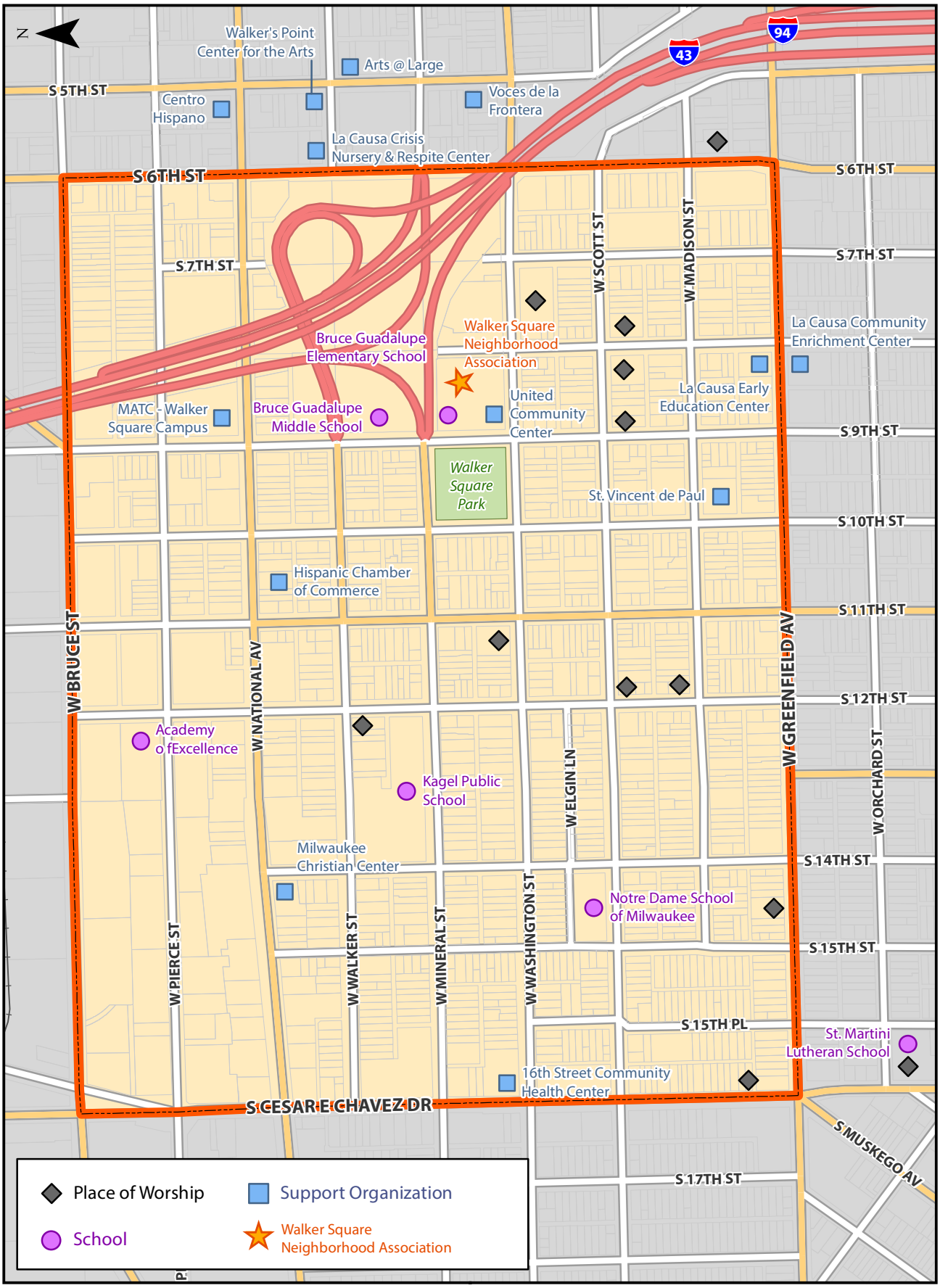
- Thriving Commercial Corridors (Chapter 3)
- Living in Walker Square (Chapter 4)
- Improving the Public Realm (Chapter 5)

No one entity is directly responsible for carrying out all of the recommendations of the plan. Rather, implementing the recommendations of this plan will take the coordinated effort of the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, the Walker Square Neighborhood Association, area businesses, residents, and community groups. Some recommendations contained in the plan can be achieved rather quickly, while others will take multiple years. Chapter 6, Implementation: How to Make It Happen, will address this in greater detail.

Ultimately, the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan provides a road map that will help residents and other stakeholders in the neighborhood to build upon Walker Square's unique and enviable position within our city of neighborhoods, making it an even more attractive place to live, work, shop, and enjoy its public spaces.

A local institution, El Rey, on Cesar E. Chavez Drive, provides a local source of fresh and prepared foods (DCD / Planning)

Figure 2.1: Community Assets in and around Walker Square



CHAPTER 2
WALKER SQUARE OVERVIEW

2.1 Summary & History

Walker Square is one of the City of Milwaukee's oldest neighborhoods. Originally home to Native Americans, in 1835 George H. Walker established the city of Walker's Point, of which Walker Square was a part. The area was primarily home to Polish, German and Ukrainian immigrants in the early 20th Century. More recently, the neighborhood has experienced a second wave of immigration, this time by Mexican workers in the 1960s and 1970s, and various other Latino cultures. Today, Walker Square is one of Milwaukee's most diverse neighborhoods, populated by residents hailing from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central and South America, and Asia, as well as white and African-American residents. The remaining sections of this chapter describe Walker Square in more detail.

2.2 Demographic Information

Based on 2015 projections, the population of the Walker Square neighborhood is 8,334, down 4.8% from 2010 but up 2.3% from 2000 figures. Even with its population loss since 2010, it remains one of the densest neighborhoods in the city, at more than 18,000 persons per square mile, compared to a city average of 6,149. More than 71% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino*, 47.4% identify as white, 14.1% African American, and 2% Asian. Figure 2.2 shows the racial and ethnic trends of the Walker Square neighborhood.

The Walker Square neighborhood has a higher percentage of school-aged children than other neighborhoods in Milwaukee. Nearly 30% of the population of Walker Square is under 18 years of age. It also has a high percentage of working age residents: more than 62% of neighborhood residents are between 18 and 65 years old. These figures underscore the importance of providing a safe and nurturing neighborhood for children to live and learn, and of supporting the existing commercial and manufacturing businesses along Cesar E. Chavez Drive, National Avenue, and the Menomonee Valley that provide jobs for the area's workforce. Figure 2.3 shows the age distribution for both Walker Square and the City of Milwaukee.

Figure 2.2: Race & Ethnicity in Walker Square, City

RACE & ETHNICITY	2000	2010	2015	CITY
White*	44.0%	48.7%	47.4%	44.8%
Black or African American*	10.4%	14.5%	14.1%	40.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	0.8%
Asian alone	2.6%	1.9%	2.0%	3.5%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	<1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race*	35.1%	29.9%	31.6%	7.5%
Two or more races*	6.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	72.2%	68.7%	71.1%	17.3%

** The U.S. Census Bureau defines "Hispanic or Latino" as an ethnicity, not a race category, which means that individuals can identify as both a race and as Hispanic or Latino. So, for example, in 2015, 71.1% of individuals in Walker Square identified as both Hispanic or Latino and a race category.*

Families comprise 57.6% of households within Walker Square, and of those, 67% have children under 18 years of age. More than a third of family households within the neighborhood are composed of a single-mother with children; the city figure stands at 16.6 percent. The average household size is 2.7, only slightly higher than the city average of 2.5, and average family size within the neighborhood is also comparable to the citywide value.

Educational attainment in Walker Square lags behind city averages: 41.8% of area residents have not completed high school, compared to 18.8% citywide. Additionally, 4.1% of residents in Walker Square have earned an associate's degree, and 8.4% have a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree; the same figures for the city are 6.5% and 22.1%, respectively. Fully 72.1% of Walker Square residents have a high school diploma or less, underscoring the need to target workforce development programs to area residents and preserve manufacturing jobs in the neighborhood. Figure 2.4 shows educational attainment figures for Walker Square.

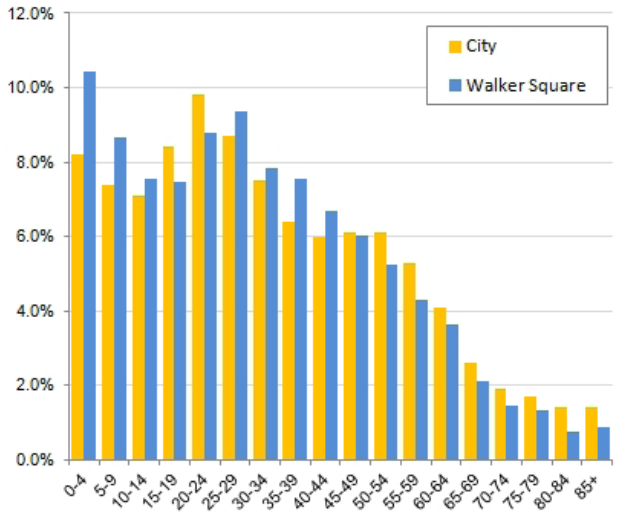
In economic terms, Walker Square residents take home less than city residents as a whole: the per capita income for the Walker Square neighborhood stands at $12,827 in 2013; for the city it was $19,229. Median household income for the neighborhood was $24,834 for the same period, also considerably less than the citywide figure of $35,467. Accordingly, the poverty rate is nearly 18% higher than the city rate. Within the neighborhood, nearly 64% of households with children under the age of 18 fall below the poverty level.

Walker Square has a slightly lower workforce participation rate and a higher unemployment rate than the city as a whole: of the working age population in Walker Square, 63.4% was counted as being in the labor force, and 16.9% was unemployed as of 2014. Figure 2.5 shows unemployment in Walker Square and the City of Milwaukee over time.

2.3 Analysis of Existing Conditions

The Walker Square neighborhood is characterized predominantly by single-family and duplex housing stock, with a more diverse mix of commercial, retail, mixed-use, and industrial uses along its borders. Walker Square has a high concentration of duplexes, which comprise 38.7% of the neighborhood's housing units. This contributes to the area's high population density, and presents unique

Figure 2.3: Age Distribution in Walker Square, City



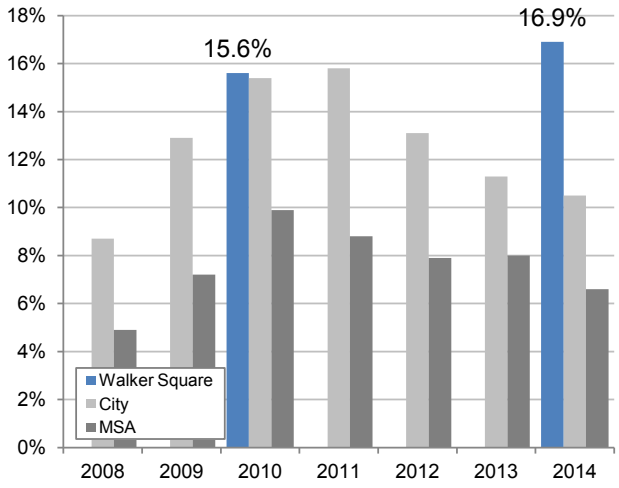
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-year estimates

Figure 2.4: Educational Attainment in Walker Square

ATTAINMENT	VALUE	PCT.	CITY
Population 25 years and over	7,078	57.1%	59.2%
Less than 9th grade	1,475	20.8%	7.0%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,488	21.0%	11.8%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	2,143	30.3%	30.7%
Some college, no degree	1,083	15.3%	21.8%
Associate's degree	293	4.1%	6.5%
Bachelor's degree	459	6.5%	14.5%
Graduate or professional degree	137	1.9%	7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-year estimates

Figure 2.5: Unemployment in Walker Square, City



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-year estimates

challenges to housing strategies that target owner occupants. Walker Square posts a 47.5% owner occupancy rate, which is markedly lower than the citywide rate of 66.5 percent. Both of these characteristics and a more detailed housing market analysis is discussed further in Section 2.4.1.

Unlike other areas of the city that have experienced significant disinvestment tied to foreclosures, Walker Square has very few foreclosed properties or vacant lots. As of October 2015, the neighborhood had eight bank foreclosed and 24 City-owned properties. The 24 City-owned properties included five residential and two non-residential foreclosed properties, and 17 vacant lots. However, more than 11% of residential properties within the neighborhood are tax delinquent, which is higher than the 6.7% residential tax delinquency rate across the city as a whole.

More than 13.8% of the land area in Walker Square is being utilized for commercial or retail purposes, and an additional 8.4% is dedicated to manufacturing and other industrial uses. These land uses are primarily concentrated along two corridors within the neighborhood: Cesar E. Chavez Drive to the west and National Avenue to the north. Additional commercial uses are scattered along Greenfield Avenue to the south, and at a few intersections within the neighborhood. Commercial and retail uses within the neighborhood are predominantly service-oriented, with more than half being restaurants, groceries, or other food-related establishments. Maintaining and growing retail and employment opportunities in Walker Square is essential and is addressed in Chapter 3: Supporting Thriving Commercial Corridors.

Walker Square Park serves as the epicenter of the neighborhood, and a common meeting space for neighborhood residents. The park also provides the main relief to the urban fabric: it is by far the largest tract of open space within the neighborhood. Walker Square Park serves as play space for students at the nearby elementary and middle schools operated by the United Community Center, offers residents and visitors a place for relaxation and reflection, and provides a space for events and programming, such as the Walker Square Farmer's Market during the summer or Milwaukee's first Ciclovía in August 2015,

An example of the housing stock in Walker Square (DCD / Planning)

Figure 2.6: Current Land Use in Walker Square

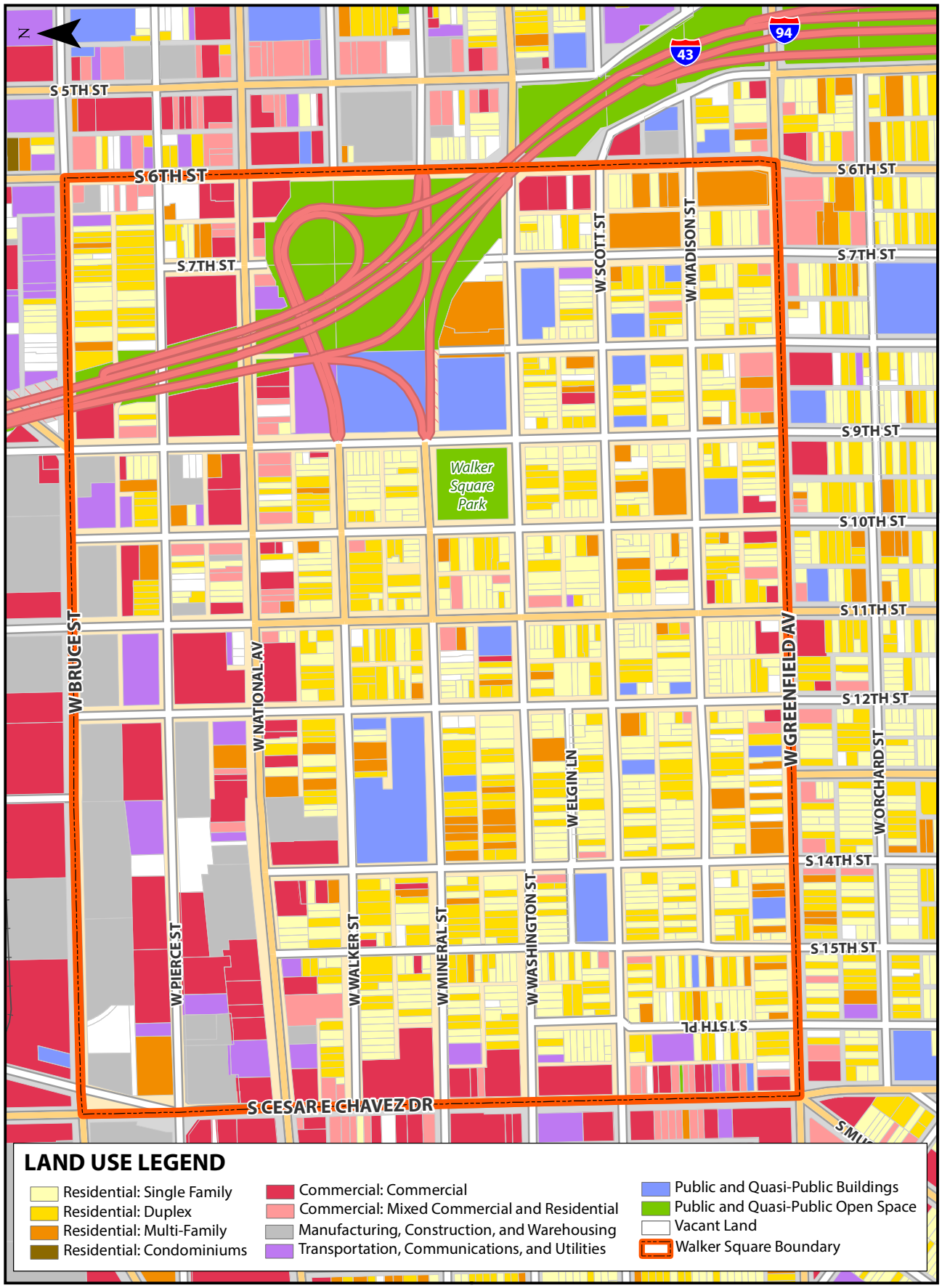
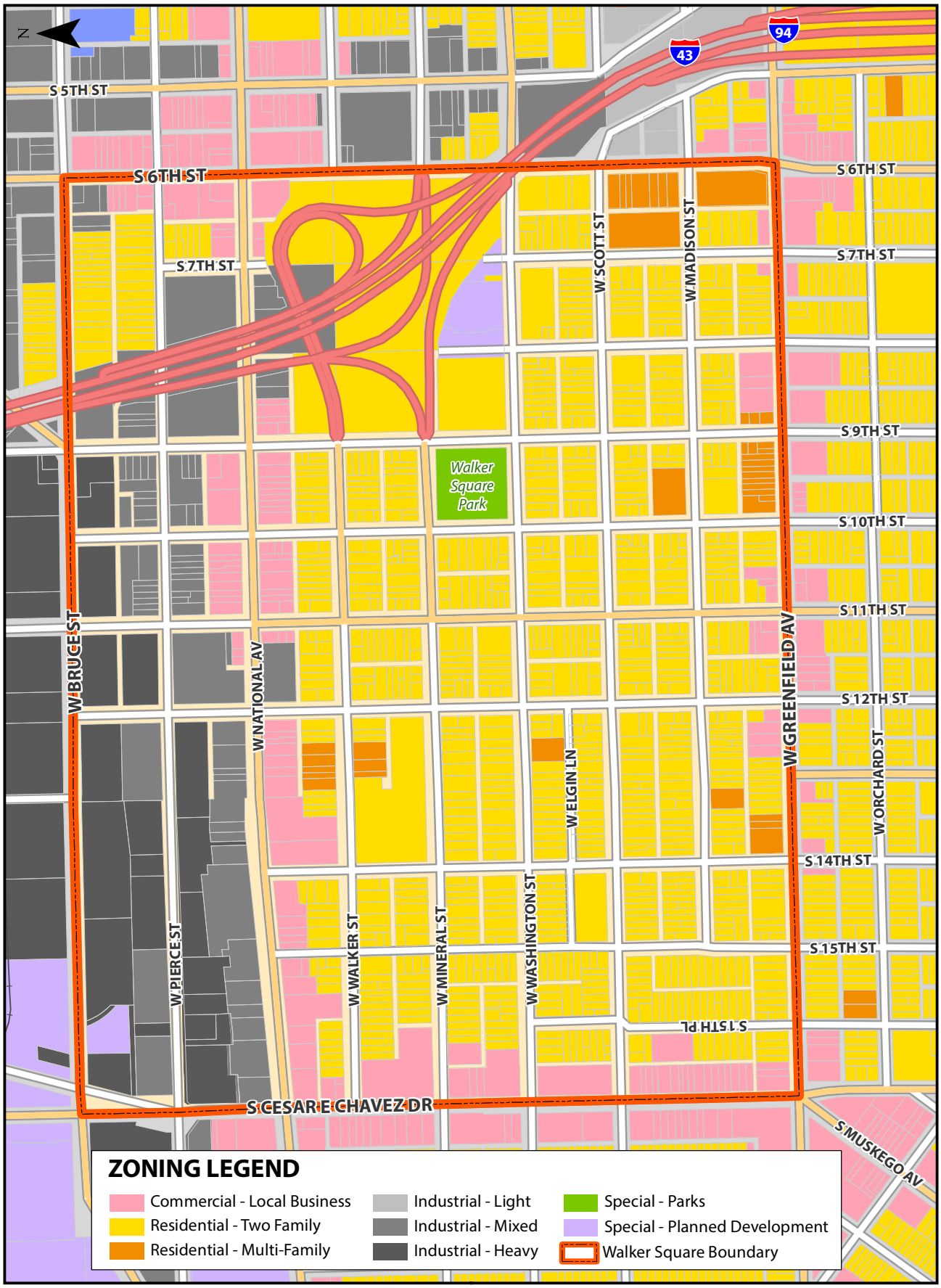


Figure 2.7: Existing Zoning in Walker Square



an "open streets" event where neighborhood streets are closed for an afternoon to allow for safe enjoyment by cyclists and pedestrians. Walker Square's streets are generally tree-lined and pleasant, but more can be done to improve on the neighborhood's infrastructure and physical amenities. Strategies aimed at these improvements are discussed in Chapter 5: Improving the Public Realm.

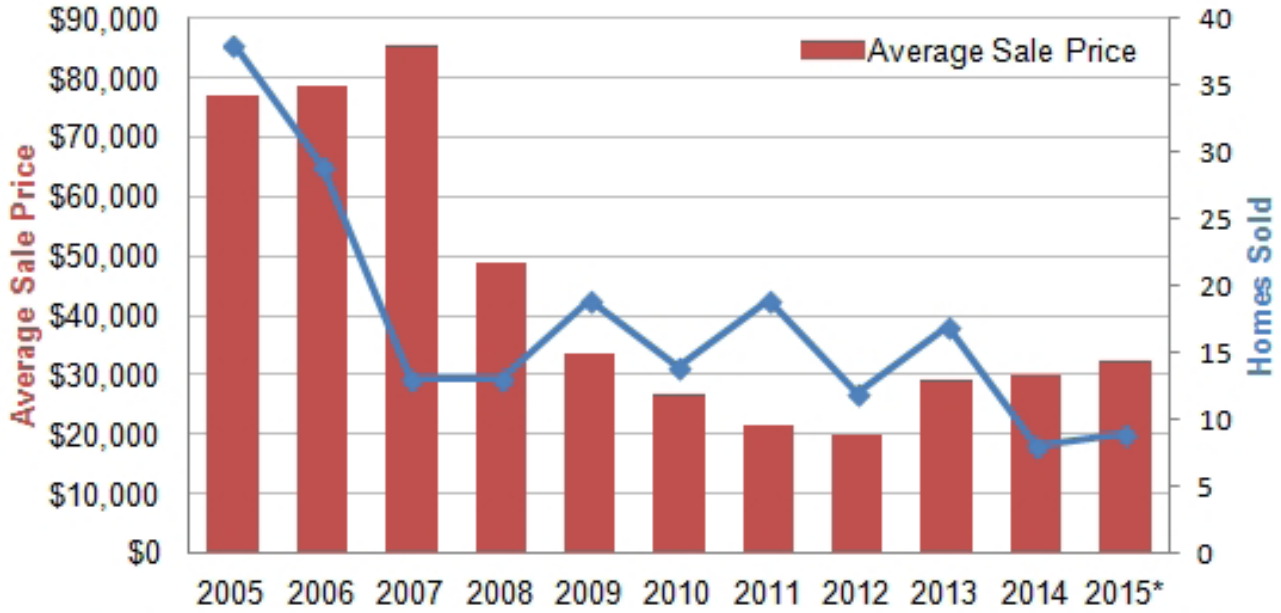
2.3.1 Housing Market Trends

The economic downturn of 2008 and its associated decrease in housing prices have had significant impacts on Walker Square's housing market. Figure 2.8 shows the number of single family and duplex homes sold each year between 2005 and 2015 along with the average sale price. The average sale price peaked at $85,000 in 2007 before falling to just under $20,000 in 2012. While prices have rebounded in the last two years, the current average sale price of $32,000 represents a 62% decline from the peak.

Further highlighting the changing dynamics in the neighborhood housing market are the ways buyers are financing their home purchases. In 2005 and 2006, more than 90% of single family home buyers in Walker Square utilized a bank loan to purchase their home; however, since the beginning of 2013, nearly 88% of single-family home sales have been cash sales not involving bank financing. While this can partially be attributed to lower prices, a high percentage of cash sales can also signify housing markets in which (1) investors, as opposed to owner occupants, are the predominant buyers; (2) homes may need significant rehabilitation prior to being habitable; or (3) buyers may have a difficult time qualifying for traditional mortgage financing. City records indicate that only one third of homes sold in Walker Square during the previous two years were purchased by owner occupants. Figure 2.9 shows owner occupancy over time in the Walker Square neighborhood.

While affordable prices and a strong housing stock are assets for the Walker Square neighborhood, the trends described above can also present a number of challenges for existing homeowners hoping to preserve their homes and for attracting new homeowners

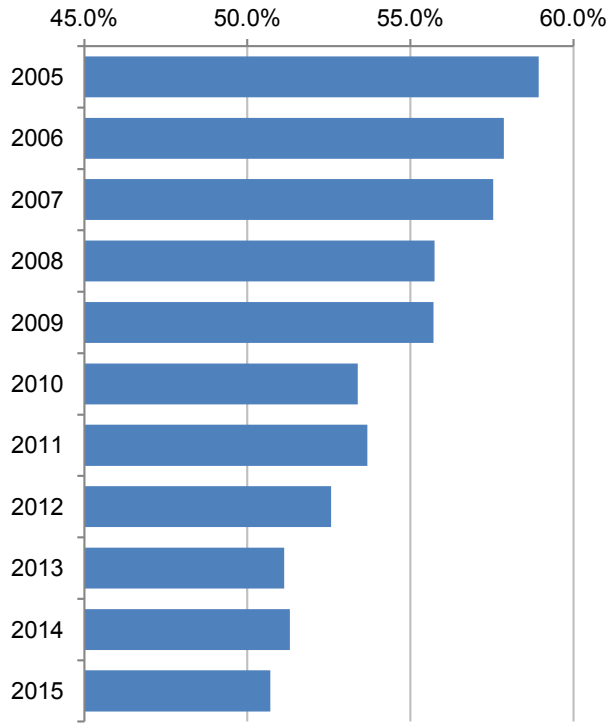
Figure 2.8: Home Sales in Walker Square, 2005 - 2015



Source: Multiple Listing Service

*2015 data through September

Figure 2.9: Owner Occupancy, 2005 - 2015



Source: City of Milwaukee Master Property File, 2005 - 2015, single family and duplex properties only

to Walker Square. Recommendations for capitalizing on these assets and addressing these challenges can be found in Chapter 4: Living in Walker Square.

2.4 Planning Context and Past Plans

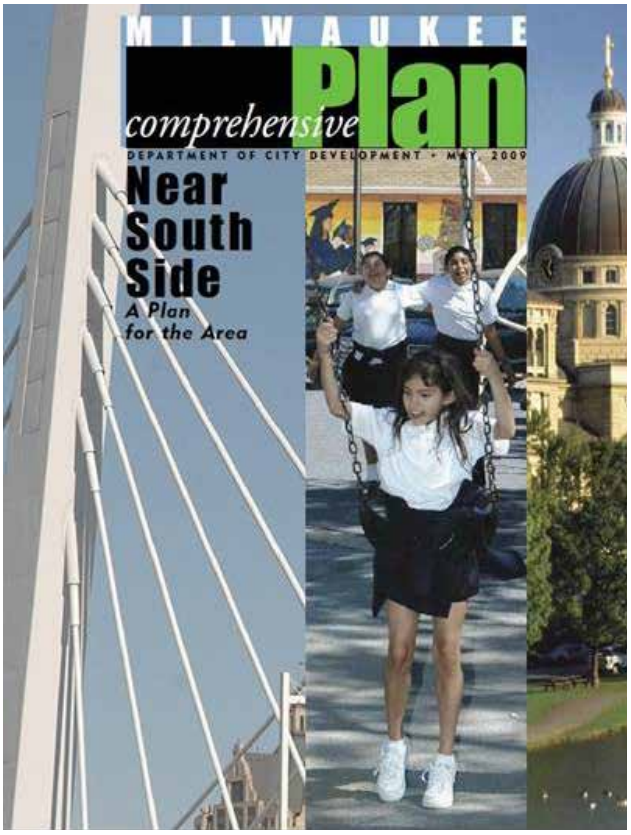
The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan is primarily focused on identifying specific actions that City government and its partners can take to improve the Walker Square neighborhood, but it will also become a part of the larger citywide Comprehensive Plan upon its adoption by the City of Milwaukee Common Council.

The City of Milwaukee's Comprehensive Plan was developed to comply with Wisconsin Statute 66.1001, which provides a framework for developing and adopting comprehensive plans. Importantly, the law requires that once a plan is adopted, all actions taken by a city relating to official mapping, subdivision regulations, and zoning activities must be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

There are a number of past plans that have helped to inform the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan and are relevant to the recommendations offered within this plan.

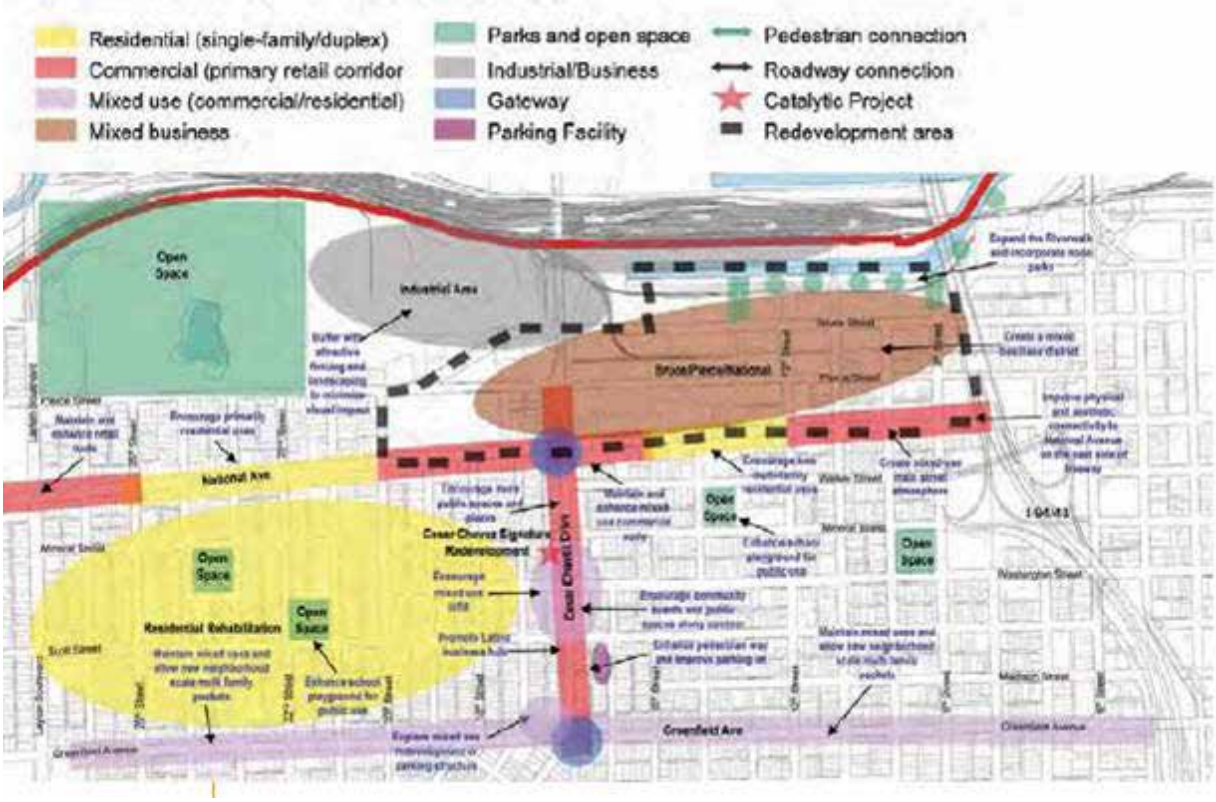
2.4.1 Near South Side Plan

The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan builds on the Near South Side Area Plan, which was adopted by the City of Milwaukee Common Council as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan in May 2009, after a two-year planning process with significant public involvement. The Near South Side Plan remains in force for Walker Square and the larger Near South Side Plan Area. However, where the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan identifies areas of the larger Area Plan that can be improved, updated, or refined, the Action Plan will make recommendations regarding those specific changes.



The Near South Side Plan (DCD / Planning)

Figure 2.10: Cesar Chavez Drive District Map from Near South Side Plan



The Near South Side plan includes the Walker Square neighborhood within the larger "Cesar Chavez Drive District" and provides a graphic representation of recommendations for the neighborhood, reproduced in Figure 2.10.

Key recommendations from the Near South Side Area Plan that remain ongoing and are further refined within this Walker Square Strategic Action Plan include promoting Cesar Chavez E. Drive as a Latino business hub with an increased focus on community events and public spaces, transitioning National Avenue in the eastern part of the neighborhood to a more mixed-use environment and improving the appearance and function of National Avenue as a connecting street throughout the neighborhood.

2.4.2 Walker's Point Strategic Action Plan

Over the six years following the adoption of the Near South Side Plan, the Walker's Point neighborhood, directly to the east of Walker Square, has experienced significant change. As a result of this rapid change and evolving development pressures, the City of Milwaukee worked with the Walker's Point Association and other stakeholders to develop the Walker's Point Action Plan, completed and incorporated into the Near South Side Plan in June 2015.

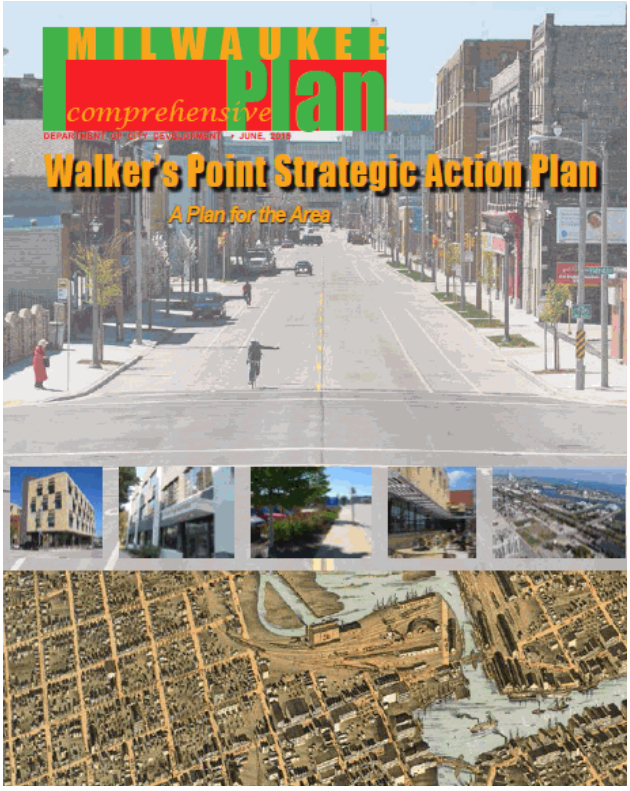
Most relevant to Walker Square, the Walker's Point Strategic Action Plan called for continued development of South 5th and 6th Streets as a "Creative Corridor"—an arts, culture, and entertainment district that both appeals to local residents and draws visitors to the area. The ongoing development interest in this part of Walker's Point, including the upcoming reconstruction of South 5th Street, will bring continued residential and commercial growth to this area on the eastern edge of the Walker Square neighborhood. New development and substantial rehabilitation of existing buildings have continued to march south and west through Walker's Point, gradually approaching Walker Square. Identifying ways in which the

neighborhood can capture this momentum while retaining its distinct identity is an overarching theme of this plan.

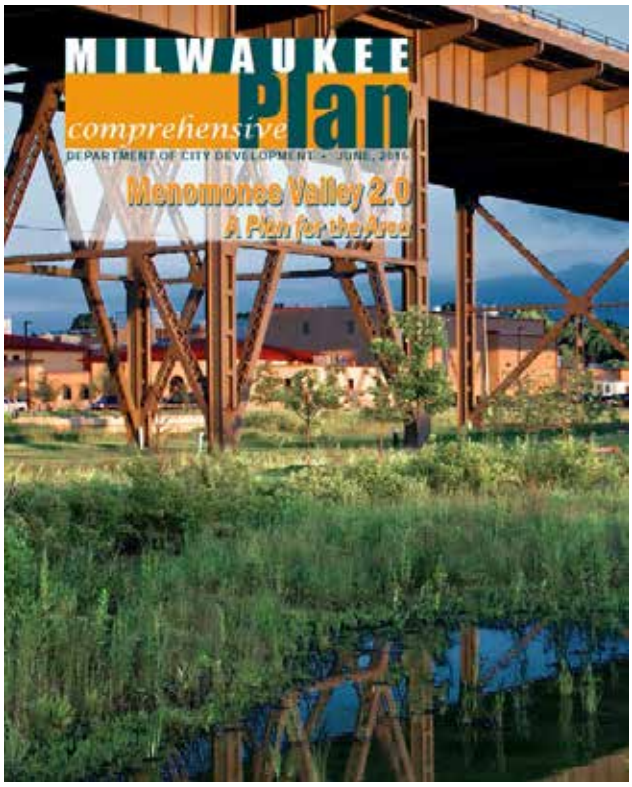
2.4.3 Menomonee Valley Plan 2.0

An updated plan for the next phase of development in the Menomonee Valley was also finalized during 2015. The plan calls for a variety of investments in infrastructure and other initiatives in the Menomonee Valley, an area directly north of Walker Square, which could potentially result in over 1,000 new jobs. The plan includes two recommendations that will have a direct impact on the Walker Square neighborhood over the coming years.

First, the plan calls for positioning the eastern end of the Menomonee Valley, generally east of 16th Street, as a Food and Beverage (FaB) cluster. Food and beverage manufacturing has been identified as an industry cluster poised for regional growth and there are a number of vacant or underutilized parcels in the



The Walker's Point Strategic Action Plan was completed in June 2015. (DCD / Planning)



The Menomonee Valley Plan 2.0, which updated the original 1998 plan, was completed in June 2015. (DCD / Planning)

Menomonee Valley that could be redeveloped over time to both strengthen the cluster in the region and provide new job opportunities to local residents. The recent opening of the Milwaukee Area Technical College Education Center at Walker Square and the work of FaB Wisconsin to locate a Food and Beverage Center of Excellence in the area around the Menomonee Valley and Walker Square will provide valuable job training opportunities to Walker Square residents, giving them the opportunity to take advantage of future jobs in the food and beverage industry.

The updated Menomonee Valley plan also calls for the City to preserve Pierce and Bruce Streets as an industrial district and avoid land use conflicts that would hinder the continued operation of industrial businesses in this area directly north of the Walker Square neighborhood. With Pierce and Bruce Street remaining an industrial district, National Avenue will continue to serve as the general boundary between the industrial area to the

The Menomonee Valley Plan 2.0 makes recommendations for areas that abut Walker Square directly to the north. (LaDallman Architects)

north and the residents to the south. Managing this transition while accommodating those diverse uses and encouraging continued development along National Avenue itself is a focus of this Walker Square Strategic Action Plan.

2.4.4 Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District Operating Plan and Market Study

One focus of the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan is recommending steps that can be taken to continue to improve the vibrancy of the Cesar E. Chavez Drive commercial corridor. The lead partner in these efforts is the Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District (BID). A BID is an entity created by commercial property owners within a defined geographic boundary whereby property owners agree to pay an annual assessment in addition to their property taxes. This assessment is then used to fund BID-directed activities such as marketing, street beautification and clean-up, and other services. The assessments are collected by the City of Milwaukee each year as part of regular property tax collection. BID operating plans and BID board members require the approval of the City of Milwaukee Common Council.

The Cesar E. Chavez BID #38 has existed for seven years and is organized to improve public safety, address image and perceptions of the street, coordinate public space improvements such as streetscaping and public art, increase the capacity of local businesses, and promote the district overall. The BID's 2015 Operating Plan supports the above goals by funding public art, landscaping, and holiday decorations as well as paying for cleaning services, security cameras, and staffing costs that allow for coordination and business recruitment.

A market study for the corridor, prepared by Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) Metro Edge in 2011, informs the BID strategy and activities, and recommended that the BID prioritize coordinating events that bring people to the corridor, building the Chavez Drive brand, seeking additional resources to support the BID's efforts, and proactively

marketing vacancies to tenants who meet the retail demand on the street for businesses serving the Latino community.

2.5 Public Participation Process

Public participation has been key to developing the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan. Throughout the process, a number of public meetings and phone and in-person interviews have helped inform priorities and refine recommendations. Figure 2.1 (page 4) shows the location of some of the neighborhood assets and organizations that were involved in the Walker Square planning process.

Much of the public participation has been done in coordination with the Walker Square Neighborhood Association, who served as a planning partner in the development of this Action Plan. The following stakeholders were engaged during the process:

- Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District
- City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works
- Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office Community Prosecution Unit
- El Rey
- Esperanza Unida
- FaB Wisconsin
- Garden-Fresh Foods
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- La Causa, Inc.
- Milwaukee Area Technical College
- Milwaukee Christian Center
- Milwaukee County Parks Department
- Milwaukee Police Department, District 2
- Sixteenth Street Community Health Center
- Southside Organizing Committee
- United Community Center
- Walker's Point Association
- Walker Square Neighborhood Association
- Wisconsin Bike Fed
- Area residents, neighborhood groups, and business owners

The Walker Square Neighborhood Association was an essential partner in the development of this plan.

Initial meeting with stakeholders, February 3, 2015 (DCD / Planning)

Bike and pedestrian meeting, May 19, 2015 (DCD / Planning)

Official kick-off meeting, March 19, 2015 (DCD / Planning)

Advertising posters in the windows of El Rey on Cesar E. Chavez Drive.
(Credit: DCD / Planning)

CHAPTER 3
THRIVING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Walker Square is bounded on the west by the vibrant retail district of Cesar E. Chavez Drive and on the north by a budding retail node and a historic manufacturing district along National Avenue. Both of these corridors serve as strong assets to the Walker Square community by providing local places to shop for goods and services, enjoy a hearty meal, run into friends and neighbors, and earn a salary. Greenfield Avenue borders the neighborhood to the south and serves as a gateway to the neighborhood, though retail is not a primary focus. Supporting efforts to maintain and grow these corridors is essential to a strong and healthy Walker Square. Actions outlined in this chapter are designed with these goals in mind.

KEY ACTION #1
SUPPORT THE CESAR E. CHAVEZ DRIVE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FARM PROJECT

WHAT IS IT?

The Farm Project is a three-year initiative developed by the Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District (BID) to support arts, culture and small businesses along Cesar E. Chavez Drive between National and Greenfield Avenues. It calls for a series of place-based initiatives aimed at creating cultural programming; opportunities for public art; a sense of safety and vitality; and a strong identity for the Cesar E. Chavez Drive commercial district. The City will help to support Farm Project efforts where appropriate, particularly in the areas of site-specific redevelopment, such as the potential redevelopment of the Dental Associates site located at 1135 S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive, efforts to bring a major, mixed-use development to the street, and the reuse of the former Indio's Place property at 915 S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive, and through the provision of pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and public parking.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Cesar E. Chavez Drive is a prime example of a vibrant and functioning neighborhood business district, which provides local residents a place to shop and eat and keeps dollars spent at these businesses circulating within the community.
- Supporting the Farm Project and other catalytic projects along the corridor will help to ensure that Chavez Drive will remain a strong commercial district for Walker Square residents as well as a Latino cultural hub that will draw visitors from the across the city and region.
- A strong and healthy Cesar E. Chavez Drive has the potential to provide positive spillover effects: attracting additional investment, consumers and residents to the neighborhood.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The Cesar E. Chavez BID, along with the City of Milwaukee and partners such as Journey House and the Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative, should continue to explore opportunities to bring a large scale, mixed-use development to Chavez Drive that fulfills the vision of direct stakeholders and the larger community and creates a strong anchor along the corridor (see the feature below for more information on this specific item).

- Stakeholders and residents along Cesar Chavez E. Drive have expressed concerns over parking along the corridor. The City of Milwaukee will work with appropriate stakeholders to conduct a parking inventory to determine current parking conditions and needs.

- The City of Milwaukee will work with the Cesar E. Chavez BID to reactivate underutilized open space along the corridor and explore ways to enhance these as public amenities. The planned statue of Cesar Chavez at the plaza in front of El Rey is a successful example of this that is already underway. Potential future projects could include the pedestrian access at 1224 S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive, or reactivation of the former Indio's Place site at 911 S. Cesar E. Chavez Drive.

- The City of Milwaukee, the Cesar E. Chavez BID, business owners, and other stakeholders of Cesar E. Chavez Drive should work together to support the development of the corridor into a thriving Latino cultural zone, by supporting Latino-owned businesses, the provision of culturally significant public art, and exploring ways to identify and brand Cesar E. Chavez Drive as a vibrant Latino district including the business attraction and retention strategies laid out in Action #6 below.

- If Chavez Drive business owners determine that current BID assessments do not provide sufficient resources to achieve their goals for the corridor, consider re-examining the BID assessment formula.

Catalytic Mixed-Use Development on Cesar E. Chavez Drive

The 2009 Near South Side Plan called for a catalytic, mixed-use development along Cesar E. Chavez Drive that included retail on the first floor and housing on the upper stories. A large group of community stakeholders have been working to advance this vision during the past year. The work of that group and the input received during the Walker Square planning process indicates that encouraging this type of development remains a high priority for the neighborhood. As the vision continues to be refined, project elements that have been identified as being especially desired are housing that is affordable across a range of incomes and first floor retail uses that complement the other uses on the corridor, such as a coffee shop and a "public market" style facility that could be home to a variety of Latino and other entrepreneurs.

The Near South Side Plan identified the intersections of Cesar E. Chavez Drive and either Mineral Street or Greenfield Avenue as potential locations for mixed-use development. Recent discussions have also suggested that the Dental Associates site may be an ideal location for a future mixed-use development.

Regardless of where along the corridor this type of development occurs, it remains an integral part of the overall strategy for Cesar E. Chavez Drive and the neighborhood as a whole, and should be carried out in accordance with the goals and urban design recommendations included in both this plan and the Near South Side Plan.

The Farm Project aims to seed arts, culture, and small business growth along Cesar E. Chavez Drive
(Source: Cesar E Chavez BID)

A walkway on Cesar E. Chavez Drive for which pedestrian-friendly improvements are being considered.
(Source: DCD / Planning)

An artist's rendering of a potential mixed-use development along Cesar E. Chavez Drive.
(Source: DCD / Planning)

Cesar E. Chavez Drive is a vibrant commercial corridor serving Walker Square another other nearby neighborhoods.
(Source: DCD / Planning)

KEY ACTION #2
ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EFFORTS TO BRING A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT TO NATIONAL AVENUE

WHAT IS IT?

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are a vital resource for thriving commercial corridors throughout the City of Milwaukee. BIDs provide a way for businesses along a commercial corridor to coalesce around a common vision and goals, and offer a mechanism for raising the funds required to implement the strategies that will achieve these goals. Cesar Chavez Drive already benefits from having an active BID, but National Avenue is not currently covered by a BID and could benefit greatly from the resources and support that a BID would provide. The City of Milwaukee's Commercial Corridor team will work with businesses, property owners and other stakeholders along National Avenue to gauge interest in BID expansion and other actions that could increase the breadth of BID coverage and programming within Walker Square.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Businesses and stakeholders along National Avenue have expressed concerns about safety, accessbility, and curb appeal along the corridor as well as shared their ideas for the future vision of the street. A business improvement district along National Avenue would provide a framework for addressing these challenges and helping businesses implement strategies to achieve their goals for the future of the corridor.

- A business improvement district could leverage greater resources for its members and members could exert greater influence on the direction of National Avenue in the future. Other BIDs in operation in the city, including BIDs that operate in primarily industrial areas, have implemented a wide variety of initiatives to improve the appearance of their districts and fund safety and security upgrades.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The City of Milwaukee Commercial Corridor team will work with all stakeholders along National Avenue to provide education on the process and benefits of establishing a BID.

- If businesses along National Avenue form a consensus that the formation of a BID would benefit the area, the City will work with National Avenue property owners and other stakeholders to help formally create a BID or expand an existing BID to include this area.

National Avenue supports a mix of uses but could benefit from a unified vision and physical improvements. (Source: DCD / Planning)

KEY ACTION #3
ENCOURAGE AN APPROPRIATE, CONTEXT-SENSITIVE MIX OF USES ON NATIONAL AVENUE

WHAT IS IT?

The portion of National Avenue within the Walker Square neighborhood has a unique mix of commercial, residential and industrial uses that present unique challenges to and opportunities for the current conditions and future visions for the corridor. Both the eastern and western extents of the corridor are experiencing greater retail investment, and the Near South Area Plan recommended increased residential development along the corridor. At the same time, manufacturing and industrial uses are still vital to the corridor's health and to the nearby workforce and the City is committed to retaining industrial businesses on this southern edge of the Menomonee Valley. Determining where along the corridor to encourage new residential and retail uses and where to support and preserve existing industrial uses will be critical to achieving a thriving and healthy National Avenue corridor.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- National Avenue acts as a transition zone between manufacturing and industrial uses in the Menomonee Valley to the north, and the residential neighborhoods of Walker Square to the south. Successfully managing this balance is critically important to supporting these diverse users as well as businesses on National Avenue itself.
- Manufacturing and industrial uses along (and directly north) of National Avenue provide well-paying, proximate jobs to neighborhood residents.
- Continued development pressures from Walker's Point to the east will require a comprehensive strategy for appropriately directing new development along National Avenue.
- Appropriately directed and context-sensitive development along National Avenue will create a vibrant and successful mixed-use corridor that will strengthen the Walker Square neighborhood.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Any future BID on National Avenue should implement an aggressive business retention strategy to preserve existing manufacturing jobs
- The City of Milwaukee will use its available tools as appropriate to direct residential and institutional development to blocks that will not negatively impact manufacturing.
- National Avenue stakeholders and the City of Milwaukee should work with interested buyers to develop the former Esperanza Unida building at 14th and National in a way that supports an appropriate mix of uses along National Avenue (see inset on page 22).
- The City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services will engage in regular "sweeps" of National Avenue to address outstanding code violations.
- If a BID is created that includes National Avenue, it should engage in activities that beautify the corridor and increase safety and security.
- Support Key Action #2 from Chapter 5: Improving the Public Realm: Transform West National Avenue into a Complete Street.
- The City of Milwaukee will ensure that any rezoning preserves neighboring industrial land uses and directs future residential and commercial development to appropriate areas.

Major National Avenue Properties Susceptible to Change

The former Esperanza Unida site, located at 1329 W. National Avenue, offers a prime location for a future catalytic development that could benefit the corridor. Ideas for the site have ranged from residential development, to neighborhood retail, to a vocational training center, or a combination of several of these. Although there are a number of barriers to the site's redevelopment, the City of Milwaukee remains committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that it is developed in a way that supports the needs and vision of the corridor.

A facility that includes a job training component would align with many of the goals of the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan, and would replace those services that have been available traditionally at this location, which remain a need in the community. A mixed-use or residential development would also support the goals of the plan. An auto-oriented, stand-alone retail use that would potentially conflict with the transitional nature of this corridor should be discouraged. Any retail on this site should be designed to fit within the urban context, with active uses at the street edge.

El Rey's facility at 710 W. National Avenue has also been marketed for sale during the planning process and is likely to be redeveloped in the coming years. The design and condition of the building is not conducive to efficient warehousing or other industrial operations and the building will likely be demolished for redevelopment.

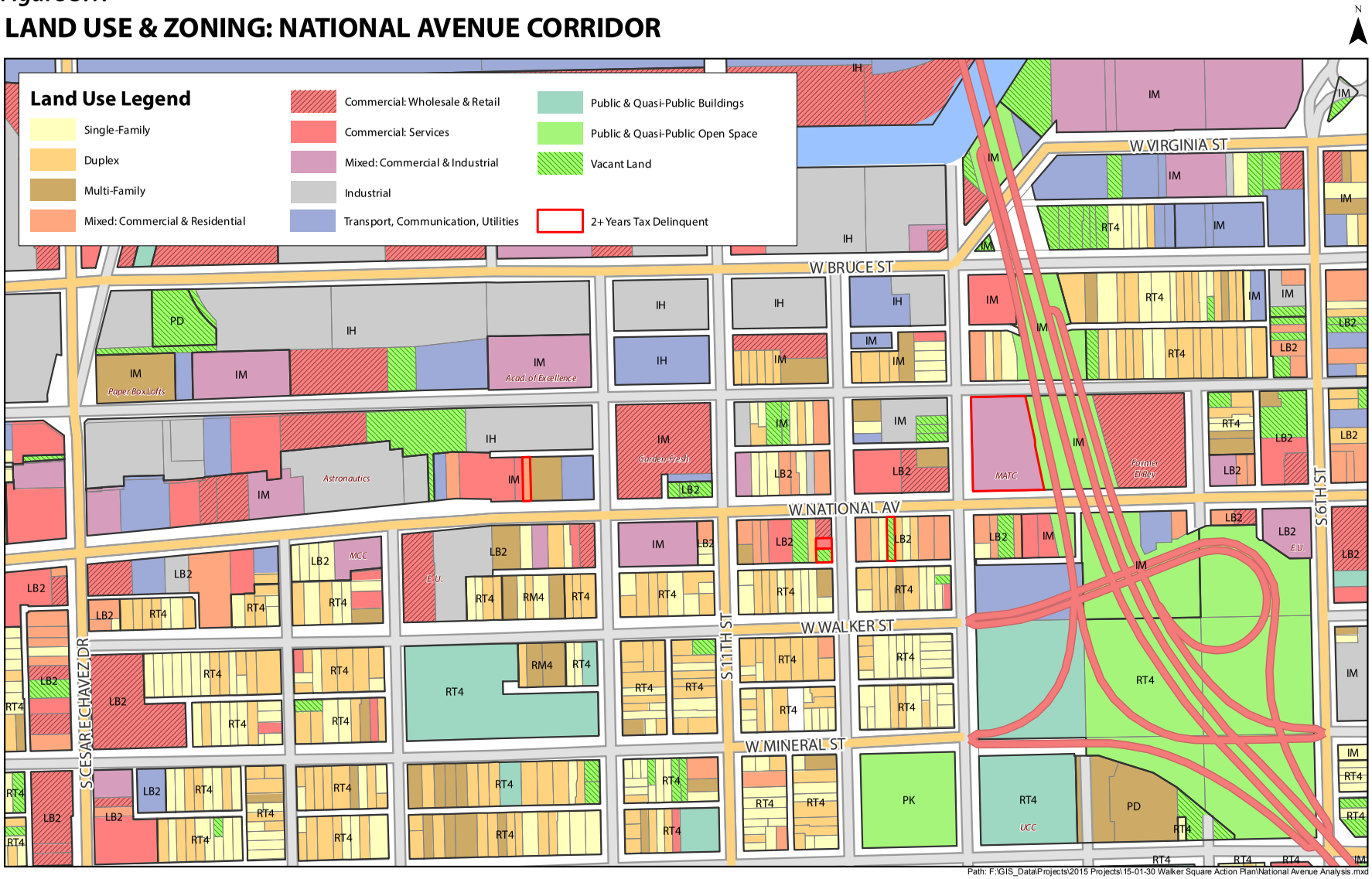
Future redevelopment of the site should incorporate the recommendations for this portion of National Avenue included in both the Near South Side Plan and the Walker's Point Action Plan. This includes promoting mixed use development, preferably with retail, entertainment, or cultural uses on the first floor and residential uses on upper floors. New housing at this site should strive to maintain or increase the socioeconomic diversity of the area. The design at the street level should encourage foot traffic and visually reconnect to the portion of National Avenue to the west of the freeway. If new parking lots will be constructed, shared parking should be promoted.

The former Esperanza Unida building at 14th and National. (Source: Google Streetview)

The former Almacenes El Rey at 7th and National has been marketed for sale and is ripe for redevelopment. (Source: Google Streetview)

Figure 3.1:

LAND USE & ZONING: NATIONAL AVENUE CORRIDOR



KEY ACTION #4
WORK WITH MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT 2 TO DEPLOY TARGETED SAFETY STRATEGIES ALONG WEST GREENFIELD AVENUE

WHAT IS IT?

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders identified a number of real and perceived safety concerns along Greenfield Avenue, but organization and engagement among stakeholders on the corridor is low, which limits the potential effectiveness of CPTED-style* strategies that rely upon strong community involvement and small, site-specific interventions. In the Metcalfe Park neighborhood, Milwaukee Police Department District 3 embarked on an intensive, 21-day approach to crime prevention, employing high visibility drug and gun sweeps, Community Prosecution Unit action on nuisance properties, "recovery" policing, CPTED* work groups, and capacity building. While community stakeholders, residents and District 2 representatives will need to develop an action plan tailored to their specific concerns and capacity, District 3's success in Metcalfe Park is a good example of the type of targeting that could provide real benefits on Greenfield Avenue.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Real crime along the corridor creates an unsafe environment for residents, families and children, and may encourage those who can move out of the neighborhood to do so; real and perceived crime discourages nonresidents to visit the corridor or patronize businesses along the corridor.
- Until crime issues are addressed along Greenfield Avenue, other investments and attempts at neighborhood improvement may prove unsuccessful.
- Residents must be able to feel safe and secure in the neighborhood in which they live.

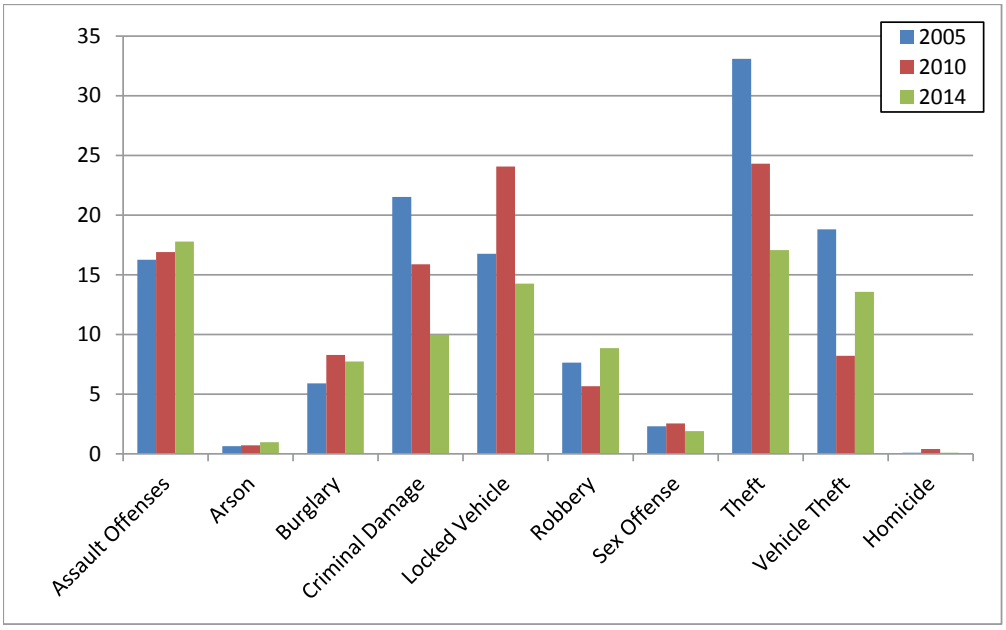
HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The Walker Square Neighborhood Association (WSNA), Southside Organizing Committee (SOC), residents and other stakeholders should work with MPD District 2 to identify opportunities to address safety concerns along Greenfield Avenue that do not require same level of CPTED engagement.
- MPD District 2 has committed to identifying targeted interventions tailored to the specific challenges along Greenfield Avenue, including addressing the solicitation of prostitution and nuisance behavior. These strategies may not require the same level of intensity as the neighborhood sweeps District 3 conducted in Metcalfe Park. SOC and the Benedict Center are also working together on a partnership aimed at offering a diversion project to address street prostitution.
- WSNA, SOC and MPD District 2 should work together to build neighborhood capacity along Greenfield Avenue with the goal of increasing community engagement in safety efforts along the corridor and make it possible to undertake CPTED strategies.

*** What is CPTED?**

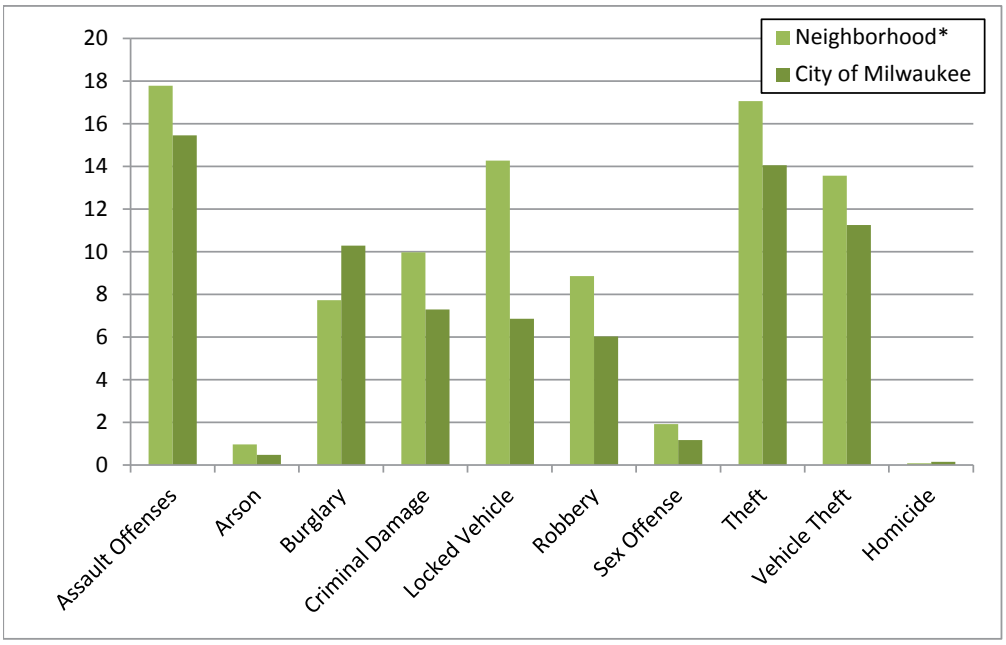
CPTED stands for Community Policing Through Environmental Design, and involves a multi-disciplinary approach to crime prevention through changes to the physical environment. CPTED strategies encompass a wide range of physical and organizational strategies, including things as small-scale as lighting and sidewalk conditions, and as broad as neighborhood capacity building that promote more "eyes on the street."

Figure 3.2: Crimes Per 1,000 Residents by Type, Walker Square



Neighborhood identified as Census tracts 157, 164, 165, 1865
Milwaukee COMPASS, 2005, 2010, 2014

Figure 3.3: Crimes Per 1,000 Residents by Type, Walker Square & Citywide, 2014



** Neighborhood identified as Census tracts 157, 164, 165, 1865*
Milwaukee COMPASS, 2005, 2010, 2014

Greenfield Avenue suffers from real and perceived safety issues, which pose challenges to future investment, development and walkability. (Source: DCD / Planning)

Increased code compliance efforts along Greenfield Avenue may produce real benefits for curb appeal and safety perceptions. (Source: DCD / Planning)

Greenfield Avenue lacks the physical infrastructure and mix of uses that would make it friendly to pedestrians. (Source: DCD / Planning)

KEY ACTION #5
SUPPORT FaB WISCONSIN'S EFFORTS TO LOCATE A FOOD AND BEVERAGE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE WITHIN THE FaB FOCUS AREA, PREFERABLY ON NATIONAL AVENUE

WHAT IS IT?

FaB Wisconsin, the cluster organization supporting the food and beverage industry in Wisconsin, is looking for a site to locate its Food & Beverage Center of Excellence. Specifically, FaB Wisconsin is looking for office and production space where it will offer instructional programs, production and co-packing facilities, and technical assistance to local food and beverage businesses. Walker Square, along with the nearby Menomonee Valley and Walker's Point neighborhoods has a strong concentration of food and beverage businesses, and would be an ideal location for a FaB Center of Excellence. The City of Milwaukee and local stakeholders will work closely with FaB Wisconsin to help locate its facility in or near the Walker Square neighborhood.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- The neighborhoods around Walker Square have a high concentration of food and beverage businesses, and these businesses employ local residents. Supporting the efforts of FaB Wisconsin will help to maintain and grow jobs in the area.
- Data show that 72.1% of residents of Walker Square have a high school diploma or less; 18.5% are unemployed. These demographic characteristics make training and educational opportunities essential for helping residents obtain and keep jobs.
- A Food & Beverage Center of Excellence in or near Walker Square would provide an opportunity for residents to obtain the skills and connections needed for employment in this important and growing industry cluster.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The City of Milwaukee will work with FaB Wisconsin to determine their specific site-related needs and help identify appropriate locations for a FaB Center of Excellence in FaB Wisconsin's focus area with particular emphasis on potential sites in and around Walker Square and the National Avenue corridor.

GROWING PROSPERITY IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Key Action #5 supports *Growing Prosperity*, the City of Milwaukee's economic development strategy, which identifies a number of action items that support the region's asset industry clusters. In particular, Action Item 4.2.2 establishes a goal of creating a food and beverage district or corridor within the City of Milwaukee.

Walker's Point, Menomonee Valley, and Walker Square have a high concentration of food and beverage businesses, including manufacturers, processors and distributors, as well as restaurants, cafes, groceries and other food and beverage retail establishments. Additionally, the MATC Education Center at Walker Square provides workforce training for local businesses, which could include food and beverage.

FaB Wisconsin, the food and beverage cluster organization, has done valuable work in organizing and representing food and beverage interests, and they are actively looking for a location to site a Food and Beverage Center of Excellence in the City of Milwaukee. City government and local stakeholders should work closely with FaB Wisconsin to identify an appropriate site for this Center, which would satisfy both Key Action #5 of this chapter, as well as Action Item 4.2.2 of *Growing Prosperity*.

Figure 3.3:

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ASSET MAPPING

MENOMONEE VALLEY | WALKER'S POINT | WALKER SQUARE

Prepared by the Department of City Development Planning Division, 18 June 2015
Source: City of Milwaukee Information & Technology Management Division; Milwaukee License Division

0 1,250 2,500 Feet

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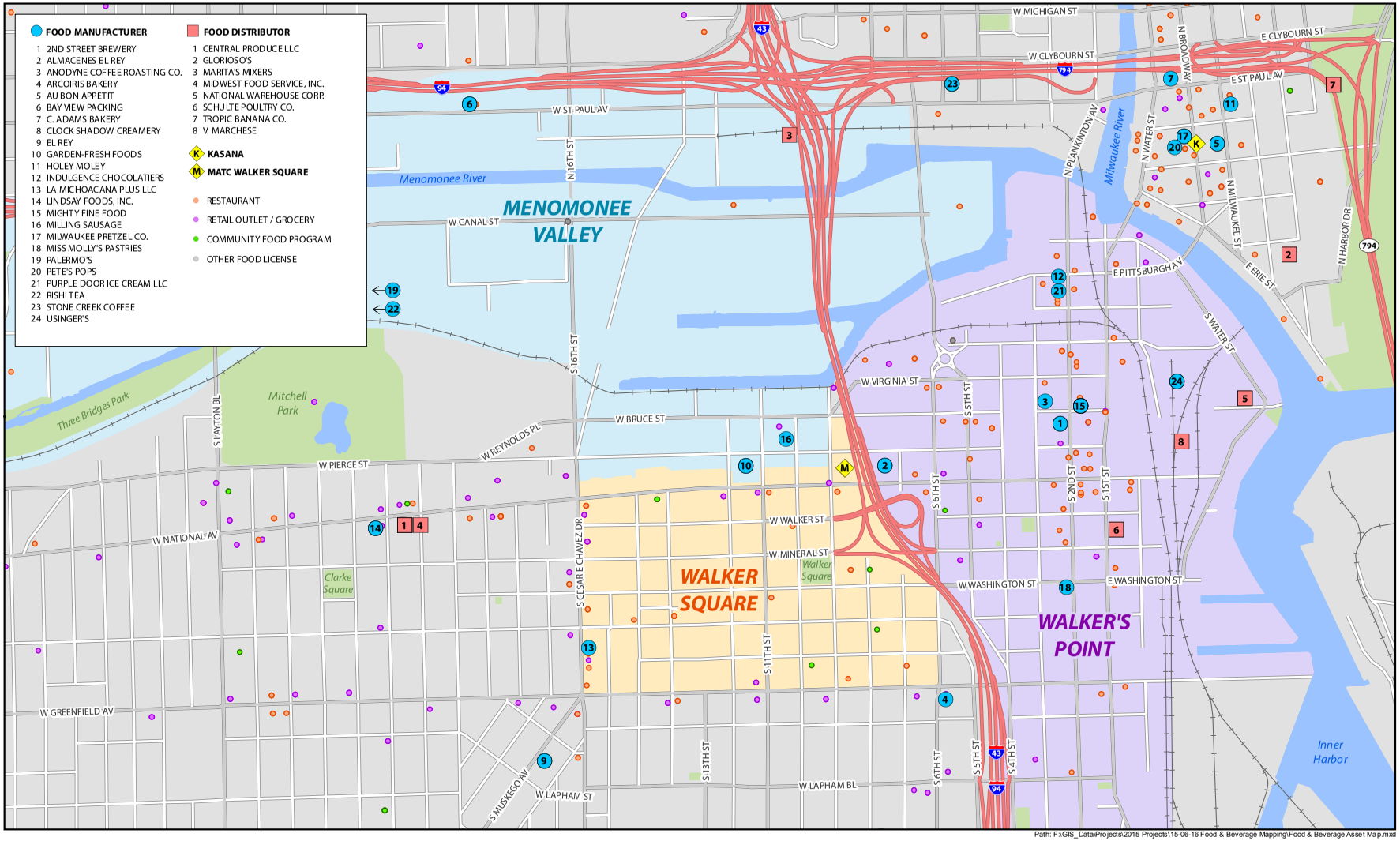


Path: F:\GIS_Data\Projects\2015 Projects\15-06-16 Food & Beverage Mapping\Food & Beverage Asset Map.mxd

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action #6: Attract and retain a diverse tenant mix along Cesar Chavez Drive

Commercial districts that offer a wide range of retail, service and entertainment options tend to thrive and attract more customers and visitors. Chavez Drive already has a strong mix of tenants and anchor institutions, but actions should be taken to retain the current mix, encourage even greater diversity and ensure Chavez Drive continues to function as a successful retail center for years to come.

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the existing Clarke Square Commercial Market Assessment that may be appropriate for Chavez Drive. As the retail market continues to evolve, the BID should consider conducting an updated market assessment for Chavez Drive.
- Cesar E. Chavez BID staff and leadership should continue to take an active role in assessing the needs of existing tenants and market the area to businesses interested in locating in the area.
- Redevelop the Dental Associates site in a way that improves the retail tenant mix of the corridor.
- The Department of City Development's Commercial Corridors Team will continue to aggressively market the availability of City business assistance grants to help new businesses locate on Cesar E. Chavez Drive. Businesses should also be made aware of the various loan programs available through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin.

Action #7: Aggressively implement STRONG Neighborhoods strategies along Greenfield Avenue

Greenfield Avenue has a number of vacant lots and other "problem" properties, and actions should be explored that can address these properties directly. The City of Milwaukee's Strong Neighborhoods Plan identifies a number of strategies aimed at mitigating blight and revitalizing neighborhoods by activating vacant spaces.

- Vacant lots along the corridor should be reactivated and reused in ways that benefit the community as a whole (e.g., community gardens, pocket parks or landscaped spaces).
- Vacant and blighted structures should be inspected and fast-tracked for demolition or nuisance abatement as appropriate.
- Identify community-supported interim uses for the vacant lot at 12th Street and Greenfield Avenue. The City of Milwaukee's Vacant Lot Handbook offers examples of successful interim strategies.

Action #8: Continue to work closely with La Causa, Inc., to help identify uses for their sites on Greenfield Avenue that best fit the vision of the corridor

La Causa, Inc., which currently owns and operates five program sites in the Walker's Point area, has a long history of serving the metro area and the city's Near South Side. La Causa, Inc., is actively looking to consolidate around 200 employees from its West Allis facility, administrative offices, and Community Enrichment Center at 8th and Greenfield into a central location, preferably in the Walker's Point or Walker Square areas. Such a move may allow for the sale of the buildings it owns at 8th and Greenfield. All efforts should be made to ensure that, if facilities are sold or reprogrammed, such actions support the goals of this plan and the revitalization of West Greenfield Avenue.

Dia de los Muertos celebration in Walker Square Park.
(Credit: John Karpinsky)

CHAPTER 4
LIVING IN WALKER SQUARE

Walker Square is a neighborhood rich with character and history. It is well situated close to downtown Milwaukee and the tremendous cultural groups, amenities, and natural resources available throughout Milwaukee's south side. Walker Square residents are proud to call the neighborhood home, value its older housing stock, and would like to see the neighborhood improve while maintaining its unique identity. The actions recommended in this chapter are designed with those goals in mind and attempt to make "Living in Walker Square" as enjoyable as possible for current Walker Square residents as well as the generations to follow.

KEY ACTION #1
INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF RESOURCES FOR NEW HOMEOWNERS TO PURCHASE HOMES IN WALKER SQUARE AND EXISTING HOMEOWNERS TO MAKE REPAIRS

WHAT IS IT?

During the planning process, residents identified two distinct barriers to improving housing conditions in Walker Square. One was a lack of resources to assist with both the purchase and rehabilitation of homes in the neighborhood, and another was a lack of knowledge within the neighborhood about those programs that do exist currently. There are a number of steps that Walker Square stakeholders can take to address this issue and improve housing conditions.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Walker Square home sales and values have not recovered from housing market crash of 2008. Investment in the rehabilitation of existing properties and attracting new buyers to the neighborhood are critical to reversing these declines and helping homeowners preserve their wealth and equity.
- While residents identified maintaining a strong base of owner-occupied homes as a priority, the majority of current home purchases are made by investors paying cash.
- A variety of resources exist to promote the purchase and rehabilitation of homes in Walker Square, including programs available for residents who files taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number or ITIN. However, a review of program data and discussions with residents indicate that Walker Square residents are not taking advantage of these programs they may be eligible to use.
- Stakeholders identified maintaining the character of Walker Square, retaining existing residents, and avoiding displacement as priorities throughout the planning process. Providing existing residents with access to resources to maintain their homes and helping renters transition to homeownership while homes are affordable are among the most effective ways to achieve this goal.

- The Walker Square Neighborhood Association should work with the Southside Organizing Committee (SOC) to apply for a City of Milwaukee Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN) designation for Walker Square during the fall of 2016. TIN designation would make available City of Milwaukee HOME Rehabilitation and Rental Rehabilitation program funding to the neighborhood for a three year period.

- All Walker Square neighbors and stakeholders should encourage area renters and other interested homebuyers to enroll in United Community Center (UCC) homebuyer counseling and partner more closely with the UCC counseling program to highlight homeownership opportunities within Walker Square.

- Devote one Walker Square Neighborhood Association (WSNA) meeting per year to providing information to residents about existing housing rehabilitation programs. City staff, non-profits, and lending partners should be invited to this meeting to present information on their programs to neighborhood residents.

- Neighborhood leaders, community organizations working in Walker Square, and housing program representatives should aggressively market the STRONG Homes Loan Program and other currently available housing rehab programs, including the Milwaukee Christian Center NIP program and private lending programs that are available for residents who file taxes using an ITIN.

- Walker Square should explore a membership in Take Root Milwaukee to better link potential area homeowners to counseling and lending products and help in marketing the Walker Square neighborhood to city residents who do not live in the neighborhood.

- The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin will work with national and local lending partners to expand the local availability of traditional mortgage products for homebuyers and homeowners who utilize an ITIN. This could include the creation of formalized partnerships between the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin and lenders to offer new products tailored to this market.

Examples of housing stock within the Walker Square neighborhood. (Source: DCD / Planning)

Community-Based Organizations Working in Walker Square

The list below is by no means exhaustive. However, it is meant to provide a starting point of organizations already working with the WSNA who are poised to assist in the implementation of the following recommendation, along with areas of potential partnership.

- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin – local business support, workforce development
- Milwaukee Christian Center – housing rehabilitation (NIP) and new construction, youth development
- Safe and Sound – community safety initiatives, community organizing.
- Southside Organizing Committee – community organizing, outreach, resident group leadership development, safety initiatives (including a CPU unit), and housing resources connection
- United Community Center – housing counseling, youth programming, Walker Square Park improvements
- Others include: La Causa, Centro Hispano, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Journey House, Wisconsin Bike Fed, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center.

KEY ACTION #2
CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE THE STRENGTH OF NON-PROFIT PARTNERS WORKING IN WALKER SQUARE

WHAT IS IT?

A strong cadre of established community based organizations with extensive capacity in neighborhood development call the Walker Square neighborhood home. Additional agencies, while not physically located in Walker Square, have demonstrated a long-term commitment to working in the neighborhood. The WSNA serves as a strong central organizing body bringing together Walker Square residents working to improve their neighborhood. As an all-volunteer organization, WSNA has limited capacity when compared to other neighborhood-based groups that may have full-time staff which may limit its ability to take on larger projects or raise funds. The WSNA and its partners should continue to strategically collaborate to utilize the strengths of the various groups working in Walker Square to support the mission of the neighborhood.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- As an all-volunteer organization, the WSNA needs to rely on strong partnerships to achieve its community development goals.
- Non-profits administering programs need resident leadership and engagement to maximize their reach and program effectiveness within specific neighborhoods.
- Providing a structured, goals-based approach to neighborhood/organization partnerships will help identify realistic goals, increase the productivity of monthly WSNA meetings, reduce "volunteer burnout," and provide a framework for residents to meaningfully engage in the work of area community based organizations.
- While much workforce development programing is not neighborhood specific, the physical location and availability of job training at the MATC Education Center at Walker Square, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Milwaukee Christian Center provide Walker Square with unique opportunities to connect residents to these programs.

The United Community Center operates a school and provides other services to neighborhood residents. (Source: DCD / Planning)

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The Walker Square Neighborhood Association should work with the appropriate individuals at the organizations working in Walker Square to establish realistic goals and meaningful partnerships to help advance the priorities of the WSNA and its residents. Given limited budgets and already high workloads of area non-profits, the intent of this recommendation is not to develop new programming; rather, it suggests establishing a more ongoing dialogue about how Walker Square and its residents can best take advantage of, and plug into, existing programs and resources.

- After yearly goals are set, monthly WSNA meetings could be used as opportunities to check in on progress, celebrate successes, and troubleshoot areas of concern. For example, as opposed to a general goal of improving housing in Walker Square, the WSNA and Milwaukee Christian Center could establish a goal that a certain number of families per year complete and submit applications for the MCC NIP program in 2016. Or the WSNA and the UCC could establish goals related to Walker Square Park improvements. Time should be set aside at each monthly meeting to track and discuss these specific goals with agency representatives.

- Partnerships should be evaluated to make sure they align with WSNA and organizational priorities and have realistic goals that take into account available financial resources and volunteer and staff capacity.

- Over time, as new funding opportunities emerge, the WSNA can use strengthened partnerships with existing area non-profits to help them apply for funding opportunities that may result in new place-based programming or investment in the Walker Square neighborhood.

- Agencies providing job training in Walker Square should make sure that those community-based organizations engaging in more direct community outreach and organizing are fully aware of the workforce development services available in the neighborhood and are working to refer residents to the appropriate agencies.

The Milwaukee Christian Center provides housing rehabilitation and youth development. (Source: Milwaukee Christian Center)

The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin has a significant presence on National Avenue in Walker Square. (Source: Google Maps)

KEY ACTION #3
IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE IN TARGETED COLLABORATIONS TO ADDRESS PRESSING PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS IN WALKER SQUARE

WHAT IS IT?

Walker Square residents continually cited neighborhood safety and crime (both real and perceived) as among the most pressing concerns impacting neighborhood quality of life. While addressing many of the root causes of neighborhood crime is beyond the scope of this neighborhood action planning process, there are a number of concrete steps that other neighborhoods have taken in conjunction with police and other partners to combat specific types of criminal activity and improve neighborhood safety. Generally, these strategies have worked to empower residents to organize around specific issues or areas and work toward specific measurable outcomes. Walker Square should evaluate which public safety concern has the best potential to engage a wide group of residents and work with Police District 2 staff, Safe and Sound, the local Community Prosecution Unit, and the community organizers working in the area to identify a pilot project to carry out during 2016. If successful, this effort may grow the number of neighbors working on neighborhood issues and lead to subsequent projects.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- In general, crime rates in Walker Square are relatively close to those for the City of Milwaukee as a whole, with Walker Square slightly above the city averages in a number of categories. Rates of locked vehicle entry in Walker Square significantly exceed the City as a whole. Figure 3.2 (on page 25) shows crime statistics for Walker Square.

- A targeted safety initiative can have the multiple benefits of increasing resident engagement around crime and safety issues, providing residents the tools to impact safety within their own neighborhood, and addressing some of the localized conditions impacting crime while acknowledging the reality that overall crime rates across the city are a function of the larger economic and criminal justice context.

Area stakeholders walk Greenfield Avenue with the Milwaukee Police Department. (Source: DCD / Planning)

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- This recommendation is in some ways an element of Key Action #2 described above. The WSNA, SOC, Safe and Sound, MPD District 2, and the Community Prosecution Unit should work together to identify a pilot project for 2016 that could engage neighbors and address pressing safety concerns. Progress should be tracked at monthly WSNA meetings. If successful, this could serve as a model for future WSNA safety initiatives. Based on resident input during the planning process and the types of projects that have been successful in other neighborhoods, here are potential projects for consideration in 2016:

    - Improving porch lighting on targeted blocks (especially those surrounding Walker Square Park) or carrying out an alley lighting campaign in targeted alleys.

    - A "corner store improvement" project to mitigate some of the crime, loitering and litter that residents believe may be caused by the operation of select small retail stores in the neighborhood.

    - Conducting a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit to identify areas of the neighborhood where alterations to fencing, lighting, landscaping, and other public space elements may lead to a reduction in crime and then working with property owners to implement the recommendations.

    - Supporting other safety enhancement projects by determining the most appropriate places to install new security cameras.

    - A coordinated effort to identify and increase code violation and nuisance enforcement on resident-identified "problem properties."

    - Working with police and SOC to support efforts to reduce solicitation of prostitution, public intoxication, and other nuisance activity on Greenfield Avenue.

- These resident led efforts should be carried out in conjunction with increased MPD efforts to address criminal activity on Greenfield Avenue. Activity occurring on Greenfield Avenue was cited by stakeholders throughout the planning process as the biggest perceived crime and safety issue in Walker Square.

- WSNA representatives should work with the local alderperson's office to schedule neighborhood walks at a minimum of once per year with representatives from MPD, DNS, and DPW and other appropriate stakeholders to continue to identify and collaborate on solutions for potential "hot spot" areas and properties.

KEY ACTION #4
CONTINUE TO REINFORCE AND BUILD THE WALKER SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD'S IDENTITY AND BRAND

WHAT IS IT?

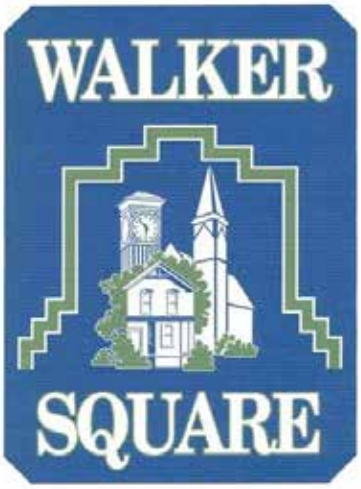
The Walker Square Neighborhood Association is actively working to strengthen its neighborhood identity and brand. Walker Square Neighborhood Association leaders believe that this will help the neighborhood differentiate itself within the larger and changing Walker's Point Neighborhood, strengthen resident engagement and better compete for resources to assist with neighborhood development initiatives. Walker Square should continue these efforts to reinforce the positive assets of the neighborhood and the central place that Walker Square Park has in shaping the neighborhood identity. The WSNA cherishes the neighborhood's multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-income identity and is working to reinforce those characteristics as it works to brand Walker Square as part of the larger Walker's Point area. These efforts need not come at the expense of the neighborhood's historic place within Walker's Point, which both residents and businesses continue to value

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Current and potential homeowners make decisions about where to move and whether to invest in their properties based on perceptions of neighborhood strength and stability.
- Walker's Point is perceived as a "hot" and dynamic real estate market. Walker Square residents and businesses would like to capitalize on this while retaining Walker Square's own unique identity as a mixed-income, primarily residential, family-friendly neighborhood.
- Planning neighborhood events, addressing public safety concerns, and discussing neighborhood issues requires an engaged resident network and active leadership. Walker Square has its own unique assets, challenges, goals, and activities distinct from the larger Walker's Point neighborhood and a thriving Walker Square Neighborhood Association is critical to advance the goals of Walker Square residents.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Continue efforts to expand neighborhood identity signage (including potential gateway signage on Greenfield Avenue and freeway exits, and neighborhood light pole signs).
- Build on the success of the Walker Square Farmer's Market and the annual Trick-or-Treat event by hosting additional neighborhood-wide events in Walker Square Park that attract residents and visitors.
- Maintain and grow Walker Square's social media and internet marketing and branding already occurring through the group's website and social media page.
- Employ elements of Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative strategy, including working with real estate agents, lenders, and others to market the neighborhood, encourage investment in the housing stock and build neighborhood connectivity.



SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action #5: Preserve the traditional character of the Walker Square neighborhood while targeting new, mixed-income, residential development at strategic locations along Walker Square's main arterials

The Paperbox Lofts at W. Pierce Street and S. 16th Street. (Source: DCD / Planning)

Walker Square residents treasure the traditional neighborhood character and housing stock found in their neighborhood. This character should be preserved while still allowing for the development of new, multi-family residential housing at appropriate locations. New residential construction or conversions to residential uses are most appropriate along National Avenue, Chavez Drive, and Greenfield Avenue. A number of specific locations where multi-family development should be targeted are identified in the Thriving Commercial Corridors chapter of this plan. Whenever possible, new development should include units affordable to a wide range of incomes to maintain the socioeconomic diversity that Walker Square residents wish to preserve. On the residential streets off of the main arterials, steps should be taken to continue to reinforce the traditional character of the neighborhood. Many of the other specific actions in this chapter and throughout the plan were crafted with this goal in mind.

Action #6: Utilize code enforcement and other strategies to address problem properties in Walker Square

In addition to crime and safety, the sometimes related issue of nuisance properties was cited by residents as a factor impacting neighborhood quality of life. Neighborhood stakeholders should continue to work with the Department of Neighborhood Services, the Milwaukee Police Department and other partners to proactively address nuisance properties through efforts including:

- The WSNA should encourage neighbors to support each other in reporting and following up on chronic building code violations and nuisance properties. This could be an initial pilot initiative as recommended in Key Action #3 above and incorporated as a regular agenda item at WSNA meetings.

- Scheduling periodic walkthroughs of the neighborhood with the local alderman, DNS, MPD and other partners.

- Evaluating the expansion of the Residential Rental Inspection Program to Walker Square.

- Marketing the availability of the Rental Rehabilitation Program to assist investment property owners making needed repairs if Walker Square is designated as a Targeted Investment Neighborhood.

Milwaukee County Parks sign for Walker Square Park.
(Credit: John Karpinsky)

CHAPTER 5
IMPROVING THE PUBLIC REALM

The public realm includes all places in Walker Square that are accessible to the general public. The sidewalks, streets, playgrounds, and plazas in the Walker Square neighborhood constitute a shared environment where people experience the neighborhood and each other every day. Public input during the planning process indicated that Walker Square's walkability and the anchor of Walker Square Park are among its biggest assets. However, stakeholders also identified a number of barriers to enjoying the public spaces and streets to their maximum potential. In order to create and maintain a neighborhood that people want to live, work, and play in, it is essential to create and maintain a quality public realm.

The Walker Square neighborhood is advantaged with a dense grid of walkable streets, landmark buildings, and an active and inviting public square. However, over time the neighborhood has endured several changes to the physical environment that have not always led to an enhanced quality of life for the community. By the 1960s, the streetcar tracks had been removed from National Avenue and high capacity arterial streets were routed through the neighborhood, regardless of context, in order to maximize traffic flow. The most significant change occurred immediately to the east of Walker Square Park where over 20 acres of historic neighborhoods between West National Avenue, West Washington Street, South 6th Street, and South 9th Street were demolished for the construction of an interchange for Interstate 43/94.

The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan identifies a number of strategies aimed at improving the public realm and physical infrastructure in the neighborhood. Three of the key actions recommended in this section involve changing public streets over time to better accommodate the economic, environmental, and social functions of the public realm. The other key action involves continued investment in Walker Square Park itself as a central focus of the neighborhood.

Walker Square before and after the construction of Interstate 43/94 and the National Avenue interchange. (Source: Milwaukee County)

KEY ACTION #1
INVEST IN WALKER SQUARE PARK

WHAT IS IT?

Walker Square Park was dedicated to the public in 1836 by George Walker, one of the founders of Milwaukee. It was one of the original three public parks in the city, and is now part of the Milwaukee County Park System. The two-acre green space occupies an entire city block between South 9th Street, South 10th Street, West Mineral Street, and West Washington Street. The park has seen a few significant improvements in the recent past including the installation of an upgraded playground in 2012. However, due to the current financial constraints of the Milwaukee County Park System, the park has experienced deferred maintenance and uncertainty about how continued maintenance and improvements will be funded.

Walker Square Park is considered by many to be the "heart of the neighborhood," and is one of the few green spaces on the near south side. It is important that Milwaukee County and other stakeholders continue to add incremental, community-driven improvements. Physical improvements to the park may include additional trees, lighting and seating. Other ideas include adding a picnic shelter, planting flower gardens along the perimeter of the park, enhancing the plaza at the center of the park and adding a Bublr bike-share station. In the short term, the most pressing concerns are maintenance and security. The pavilion on the east side of the park is in need of repair and will need significant renovations in the near future. Walker Square residents consistently expressed interest in seeing the pavilion rehabilitated.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- Walker Square Park is highly utilized. The two-acre park serves as the primary public space for over 8,000 nearby residents. Small lot sizes of homes in Walker Square make the park in effect the front and back yard for many Walker Square families, as well as its central gathering place.
- Community meetings identified the importance of the "paseo culture" in the neighborhood, or the act of taking a leisurely evening stroll ending at the plaza and people watching. This further reinforces the park's important function as a community gathering space.
- The Walker Square neighborhood is highly identified with and draws its identity from Walker Square Park and the quality of the park sets the tone for the larger neighborhood and improves property values and the quality of life for Walker Square residents.

The Walker Square Farmer's Market brings residents and visitors to the park during the summer months (Source: Walker Square Neighborhood Association)

Walker Square residents, students of Bruce Guadalupe School, and visitors alike enjoy Walker Square Park (Source: Walker Square Neighborhood Assoc.)

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The Walker Square Neighborhood Association, in coordination with Milwaukee County Parks, should develop a list of specific priorities for Walker Square Park, using the images in this Action Plan that were created based on public input as a starting point for discussions. As part of the process, the association could engage members of the local design community to ensure that the best principles of urban park design are incorporated into the process.

- Milwaukee County and community stakeholders, including United Community Center whose programs are heavy users of the park, should continue to look for additional sources of revenue to supplement the County's limited parks budget. This may include revenue from special events, active fund raising and philanthropy, and could also include working with The Park People and/or exploring a "Friends of Walker Square Park" model for neighbors to volunteer in the park.

- The Milwaukee County Parks Department must ensure that physical changes to the park are done in coordination with area residents, the Walker Square Neighborhood Association, and with the highest level of community input possible.

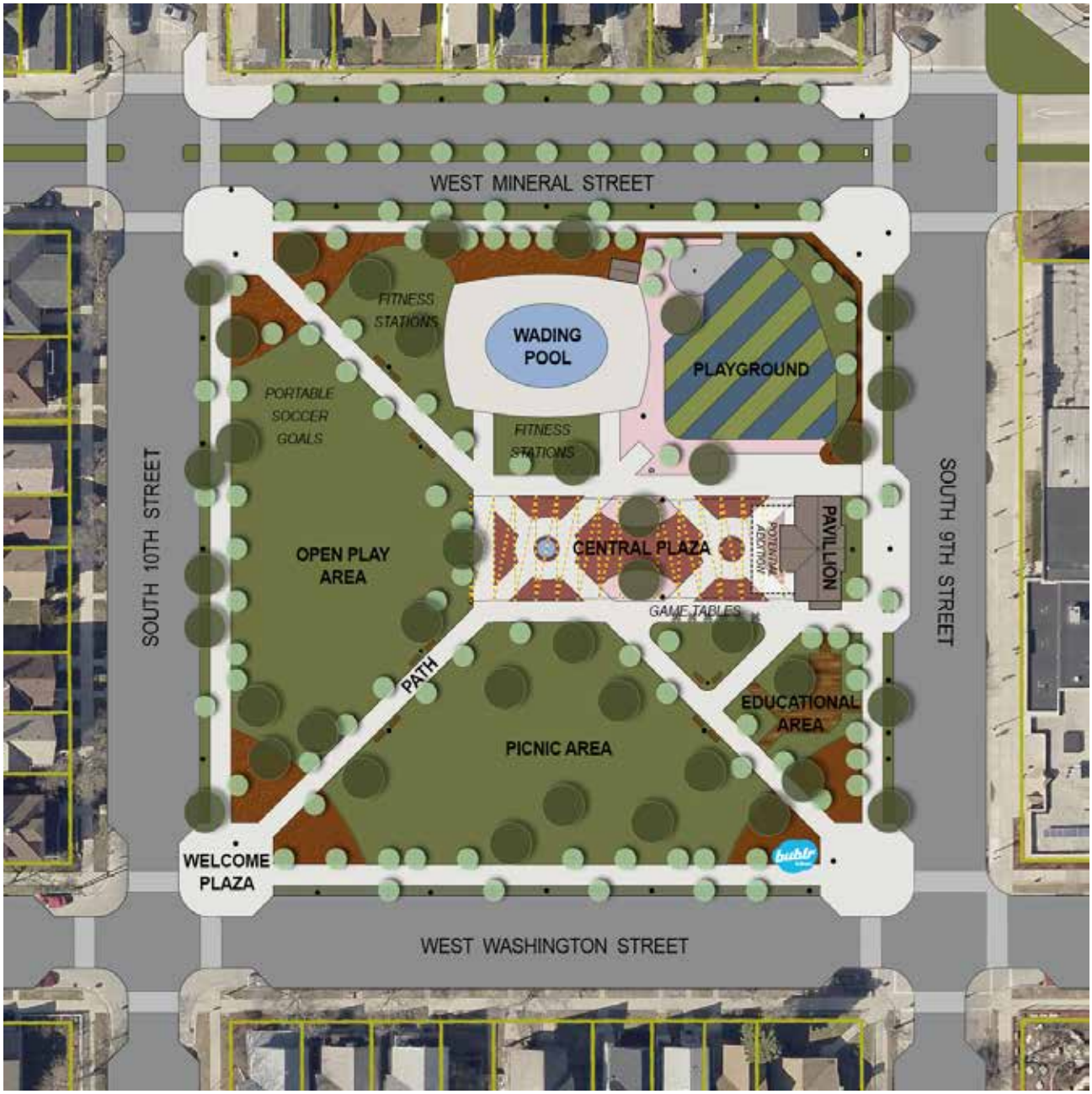
- The Walker Square Neighborhood Association and other community groups should continue to organize special events in the park to encourage community gatherings and foster a sense of pride in the park and surrounding neighborhood.

- The Milwaukee County Parks Department should consider the high number of users per acre in the park, as well as the park's cultural significance in the community, when allocating funds for park system maintenance and improvements. The County and neighborhood stakeholders should work incrementally to implement the priority projects identified by the WSNA on behalf of area residents.

- The City should consider a streetscape project for all city streets surrounding the park. This project could include green infrastructure, closely spaced trees on both sides of the sidewalk, additional decorative lighting, street furniture, specialty paving, and pedestrian improvements within the public right-of-way.

A VISION FOR WALKER SQUARE PARK

Figure 5.1: Concept Design for Walker Square Park



Existing tree to be maintained and replaced as needed

Potential planting location for future tree

Investing in Walker Square Park is a critical element of the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan. The image above represents a long term vision for the park developed based on resident and other stakeholder input throughout the planning process. The Walker Square Strategic Action Plan does not suggest that all of the improvements reflected in this diagram be installed immediately. Rather, these concepts should be a guide as Milwaukee County, the WSNA, UCC, and other neighborhood stakeholders identify and incrementally implement park improvements. Some of these recommendations will likely require outside fundraising and planning for maintenance.

A VISION FOR WALKER SQUARE PARK

PLAYGROUND AND WADING POOL

1. Maintain the existing playground and wading pool in good working condition and upgrade as needed.
2. Ensure that there are play opportunities for children of all ages.
3. Add additional seating nearby for parents to supervise their children and interact with each other.
4. Create a deliberate path and install a more durable material in the areas between the playground, the pool, and the plaza.
5. Use trees and other landscaping elements to better define the spaces and to screen the playground area from the busy traffic on South 9th Street and West Mineral Street.
6. When the wading pool warrants replacement or significant renovation, consider replacing the pool with a unique interactive water feature that responds to its context within the park and neighborhood.
7. Engage the community in the design of any future replacement playground or water feature.

PAVILION

1. Restore the existing pavilion and modernize the restrooms.
2. Enclose the stairwell on the south of the building in an attractive manner and use the basement for storage only.
3. Ensure that exterior lights on the building are maintained, and install additional floodlights to prevent graffiti.
4. Keep the common room available for event staging and encourage other uses of the space including seasonal vending by local businesses.
5. Explore possible changes to the pavilion such as adding an open air addition on the west or opening the center of the pavilion as covered exterior space between the two restrooms, creating an outdoor sitting area with a fireplace and a threshold to the plaza.
6. Direct additional programing to the spaces immediately south of the pavilion, possibly for public art or an educational gathering space with cultural significance. Other suggestions include a wellness station, or coffee/concession kiosk.

GREEN SPACE

1. Maintain the southwestern half of the park as passive green space.
2. The western quarter should remain open as flexible play space with trees and pedestrian features around the perimeter of the space only. Portable soccer goals, yard games, and other amenities should be made available as appropriate.
3. The southern quarter of the park should serve as a picnic area. This area could have permanent grilling stations and be filled with a variety of picnic tables. The southern quarter of the park could also be the location of a small new open air picnic shelter or signature "Kiosko" with cultural significance to the neighborhood.

CENTRAL PLAZA

1. Ensure that the central area of the plaza is kept open and functions effectively for a wide variety of public gatherings including the farmers market, festivals, concerts, performances, political speeches and other events. Reserve an area west of the existing pavilion as the place for a temporary stage when needed. Maximize the number and variety of events taking place in the park.
2. Fill the center of the plaza with movable chairs and tables when there is not a special event. Consider partnering with a private vendor such as Café El Sol to provide food and beverage service in the park at appropriate times and to shepherd the tables and chairs.
3. When reconstructing paved areas of the park, maintain the formal geometry of the central plaza and the variation of paving patterns. Use high quality paving materials such as brick pavers over common materials such as asphalt when possible.
4. Plant trees, install light fixtures, place benches, and add other permanent or semi-permanent amenities along the perimeter of the space in an orderly fashion to define the edges of the plaza.
5. Consider installing string lights above the main plaza to add visual interest and help define the space. This might be accomplished by hanging the lights from cables attached to the existing pavilion and harp lights around the square.
6. Consider installing a single sculptural element in the center of the park to terminate the vista from the three corner paths. This could be a piece of public art, a statue, a fountain or a seasonal installation such as a holiday tree. The existing monument memorializing the creation of the park could be relocated here and incorporated into a larger installation.

PATHS, EDGES AND ENTRANCES

1. Plant trees, install light fixtures, place benches and add pedestrian amenities in locations that define the paths and spaces of the park and reinforce the park's formal geometry.
2. Utilize high-quality paving materials when reconstructing the paved areas of the park whenever possible.
3. Use trees and other plantings to shield active park spaces from high traffic roadways, and complement existing perimeter fencing with trees, shrubs, and other plantings.
4. Ensure that the pedestrian environment along the streets surrounding the park is of the highest quality. Streets should have wide sidewalks lined on both sides with closely spaced trees, harp lights, and other pedestrian amenities.
5. Construct curb bump-outs and enhanced crosswalks at all four intersections surrounding the park.
6. Utilize the bump outs, sidewalks, and paths to create small gateway plazas, "Placitas", at the four corners of the park. The bump out areas may be an extension of the gateway plazas, or function as storm water management facilities. These small plazas may contain bike parking, signage, benches, recycling bins, and other pedestrian amenities.
7. Welcome plazas should be framed by "welcome gardens" at the corners of the park with the potential for a large amount of flowers or other plantings that with help to beautify the park without eliminating functional play space.

KEY ACTION #2
TRANSFORM WEST NATIONAL AVENUE INTO A COMPLETE STREET

WHAT IS IT?

A "complete street" is one that is safe and comfortable for all users. This includes automobiles, bicyclists, transit riders, pedestrians, and others who may occupy the public space. A critical factor in the comfort of users on an urban street is the quality of the public realm. The current design of the public realm along West National Avenue offers users an experience that can be hostile to pedestrians, uncomfortable for transit riders, dangerous for bicyclists, and detrimental to small businesses. A "complete street" design approach could take all of these users into account and make National Avenue a more successful public place while supporting the diverse mix of uses already on the street. This action complements Thriving Commercial Corridors Key Action #3 to encourage a diverse mix of uses on National Avenue.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- As a major transportation corridor, West National Avenue is the "face of the neighborhood" and many people traveling along the street will form their opinions about the neighborhood in general based on its appearance.
- The sidewalk along National Avenue is narrow, poorly maintained, and unaccommodating to pedestrian uses like bus stops, benches and plantings, and this condition is further exacerbated by a lack of street trees.
- The speed of automobile traffic on National Avenue detracts from the quality of the public realm and makes the street unsafe for people to cross. During the planning process, residents frequently cited pedestrian safety as a reason why National Avenue is uninviting.
- The lack of bicycle lanes forces bicycles to mix with high-speed traffic creating dangerous conditions for cyclists and motorists alike.
- The poor quality of the public realm along West National Avenue is a deterrent to urban development in the area, as people increasingly choose to live, work, and shop in vibrant and attractive areas with successful public space.

Example of a pedestrian and bike-friendly street design in Brooklyn, NY. (Source: New York City Department of Transportation)

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- City government should engage the community to develop scenarios for the future of West National Avenue. The project limits should extend east to South 1st Street and incorporate the recommendations of the Walker's Point Action Plan (specifically recommendation 5.1.7.1) to transform National Avenue into a street that better accommodates all uses.

- While full reconstruction of the curbs to add sidewalk space for pedestrians and street trees may be several years in the future, immediate steps could be taken by the Department of Public Works (DPW) to re-stripe traffic lane markings. A common technique for streets of this width is to replace the four-lane pattern with a three-lane pattern, and add bicycle lanes. A two-lane pattern could also be chosen, incorporating turn lanes at major intersections and providing wider or protected bike or transit lanes.

- DPW and DCD should coordinate on a traffic study during 2016 to review the impacts of these re-striping alternatives and proceed with a re-striping if appropriate.

- Many of the scenarios that add elements such as bicycle lanes or street trees will require removing a lane of automobile traffic. City government must work with individual property owners to resolve any issues that this may cause.

- In the longer term, the City and State should work to develop a project that would rebuild W. National Avenue to a typical 50-feet wide street east of S. 12th Street. West of 12th Street the right-of-way is 15-feet wider and allows for more alternatives, including a central median which could create a boulevard all the way to the western city limits.

Example of the existing National Avenue configuration and a potential three-lane configuration with bike lanes. (Source: DCD / Planning)

KEY ACTION #3
TRANSFORM W. MINERAL STREET AND W. WALKER STREET BETWEEN S. 9TH STREET AND S. 11TH STREET INTO PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY, TREE-LINED BOULEVARDS

WHAT IS IT?

As part of the construction of Interstate 43/94 in the late 1960s, two blocks of West Mineral Street and two blocks of West Walker Street between South 9th Street and South 11th Street were widened in order to accommodate anticipated traffic from the new freeway. In order to build the wider streets, the trees were removed and the entire right-of-way was paved over. The resulting street sections are 60-feet wide curb-to-curb, enough for six lanes of traffic. The widened street segments never saw traffic volumes high enough to warrant their width, and currently consist of one 20-foot driving lane and 10-foot parking lane in each direction. One 12-foot driving lane and one 8-foot parking lane in each direction is more than adequate to handle the moderate amount of traffic on these two street segments.

Modifications to these two street segments have the potential to return 20 feet of the street width (12,000 square feet per block) from paved space to green space without having a detrimental impact on traffic flow. This added green infrastructure could take the form of generous tree lawns on both sides and a central boulevard down the middle of the street. Signage or public art could be added near South 9th Street to support neighborhood identity and serve as a gateway feature. Additional green elements such as bioswales to manage storm water and pervious paving materials could also be incorporated, adding to the environmental benefits and aesthetic quality of the streets.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- The excessive road width creates an unfriendly and unwelcoming environment at the gateway to the neighborhood. The current condition is inconsistent with the goals of Walker Square residents, who desire that these internal neighborhood streets be traditional, residential, highly walkable, tree lined streets. A new tree-lined boulevard, potentially with neighborhood signage, would create a more pleasant environment for residents and signal to drivers that they are entering a special place.
- Replacing pavement with green infrastructure will reduce the amount of storm water sent into the combined sewer and reestablish the tree canopy north of Walker Square Park.
- The current street design promotes speeding and is dangerous for pedestrians to cross, many of whom are children on their way to or from the park or nearby school. Narrowing the roadway, shortening the length of crosswalks, and adding street trees will change the scale of the physical environment, causing drivers to slow down and be more alert.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- The City and its community partners should incorporate this strategic green infrastructure and pedestrian improvement project into their vision for the neighborhood, and work to move the project forward.
- Along with any capital funds that can be made available, DPW and DCD should explore a variety of other funding sources including transportation, healthcare, and environmental related grants from federal, state, and local programs to support the project.

Figure 5.2: Concept Boulevard Treatment for West Mineral Street

Source: DCD / Planning

KEY ACTION #4
DEVELOP A NETWORK OF LOCAL STREET BIKEWAYS THAT PRIORITIZE AND OPTIMIZE SAFE AND EFFICIENT BIKE TRAVEL

WHAT IS IT?

A local street bikeway, also known as a "bike boulevard," is a designated preferred bicycle route designed to prioritize bicycles and provide the most comfortable experience to the greatest number of riders. Local street bikeways follow local streets rather than major arterials. While major arterial streets need to become safer for bicyclists, most riders will still feel more comfortable using nearby local streets. The City is currently working to identify appropriate streets to implement this model. The dense street grid in Walker Square provides many opportunities to designate preferred bicycle routes on local streets that carry little automobile traffic. Incremental improvements over time can make these routes safe and efficient places for riders of all abilities. Local street bikeways developed in Walker Square could be expanded into a connected citywide network of bikeways. West Washington Street has been identified as a prime candidate to serve as one of the initial local street bikeways in the City.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

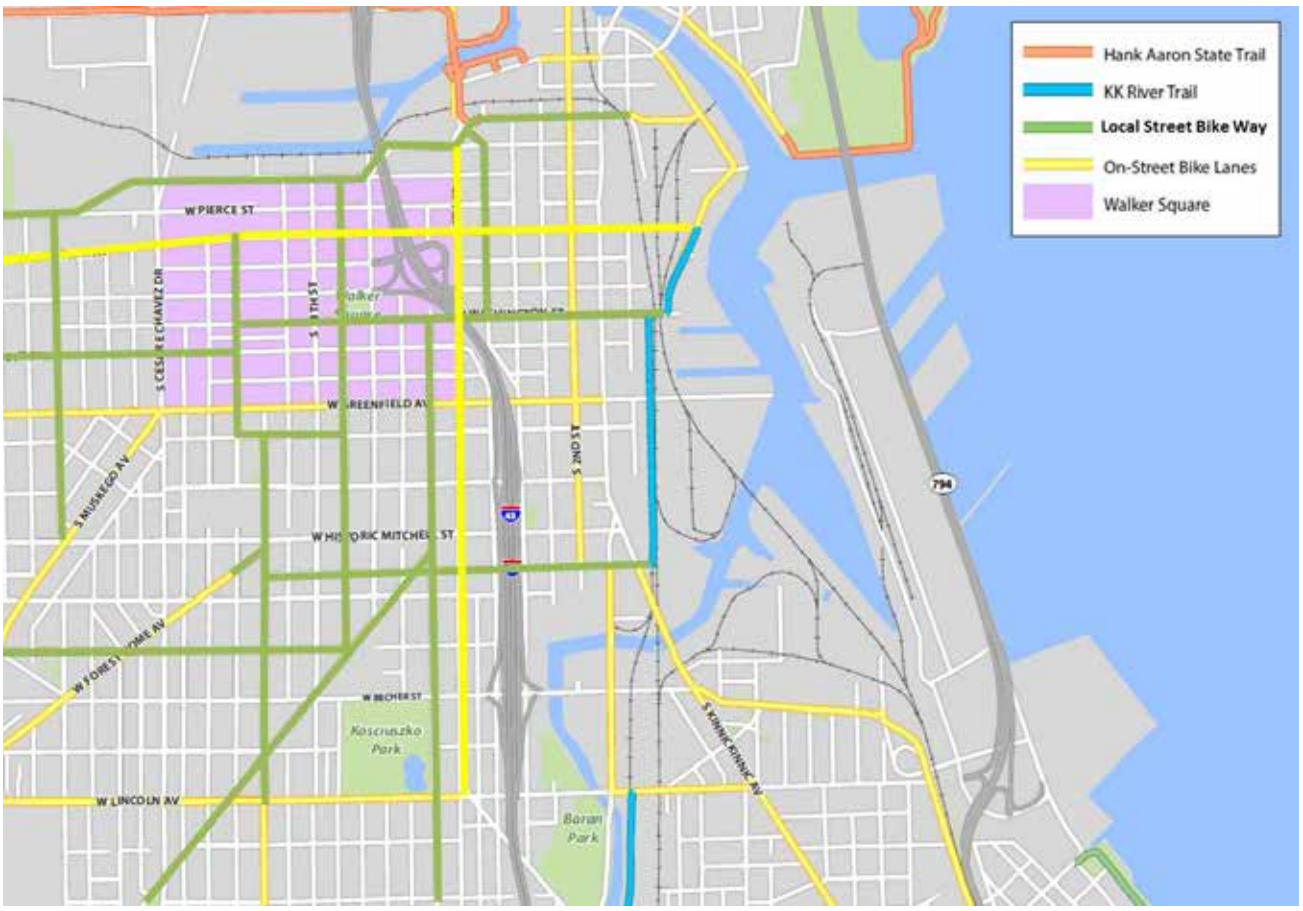
- Bicycle travel is a clean, cost-effective, and healthy transportation alternative to automobiles, as well as a popular form of recreation. Local street bikeways provide opportunities for safe and efficient bicycle travel for riders of all abilities.
- Public amenities such as local street bikeways enhance the quality of life in a neighborhood.
- Resident input during the planning process identified creating safer alternatives for bicyclists, along Washington Street in particular, as a neighborhood priority.

An example of a successful bike boulevard in Portland, Ore. (Source: bikewalk Lincoln Park)

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- DCD and DPW should continue to work with community stakeholders to develop preferred routes through the larger neighborhood that can be integrated into the citywide bicycle plan. Washington Street has been identified as a critical component of this network and should be considered as a "pilot" project.
- DPW should install signage and road markings that identify the preferred routes and signify that they are prioritized for bicycles.
- The proposed Bublr bike share station should be installed along or near Washington Street in Walker Square Park.
- Official bike maps should be updated to reflect the preferred bike routes and marketing efforts should be conducted to promote the bikeways and inform the public.
- Continued incremental improvements along the local street bikeways should be implemented to optimize bicycle travel, minimize automobile conflict points, as well as ensuring Walker Square is well connected to the city wide network.

Figure 5.3: Existing and Possible Future Bike Routes on the Near South Side



Source: City of Milwaukee Department of City Development; Department of Public Works

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action #5: Increase the tree canopy throughout the neighborhood

There are many environmental, economic, and social benefits to urban trees. As a dense neighborhood with few local green spaces, Walker Square could benefit greatly from additional green elements. DPW plants and maintains street trees throughout the neighborhood and has been successful in establishing street trees in the vast majority of planting locations available in the public right of way in Walker Square. Where possible, DPW should create additional planting sites in the public right-of-way to bolster the strong existing tree canopy in the neighborhood. DPW should also work to promote an increase in the number of trees on public lands controlled by other levels of government such as the Milwaukee County Parks System, and the State-controlled open space around the freeway. WSNA representatives should include DPW Forestry staff on neighborhood walks to identify additional viable planting locations in the public right of way. Additionally, programs could be created to assist private property owners to plant and maintain trees.

Action #6: Improve the experience for transit users in Walker Square

The Walker Square neighborhood works well for transit due to its central location and relatively high density. The neighborhood is served by several important bus lines including along Cesar E. Chavez Drive, South 6th Street, South 11th Street, West Greenfield Avenue, and West National Avenue. The Blue Line along West National Avenue is an express line that was introduced in 2012 and has some of the highest ridership numbers in the city. In order to encourage transit use, it is important to make the transit experience as enjoyable as possible. Comfort and appearance of bus stops is major factor in the overall transit experience and the City, Milwaukee County, and other stakeholders should make sure that these waiting areas are designed as comfortable public spaces and an integral element of the streetscape. This is especially true for the highly used Blue Line stops on National Avenue at South 6th Street, South 11th Street, and Cesar E. Chavez Drive. These Blue Line stops could function as future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations.

Riders wait at a bus stop at the northeast corner of 11th and National. (Source: Google Maps)

Action #7: Improve Pedestrian Crossings on Greenfield Avenue

Only one controlled intersection exists along Greenfield Avenue for 10 blocks between 6th and 16th Streets, limiting accessibility to businesses along the corridor and making it very difficult for pedestrians to cross the street safely. Additionally, a number of children living in the Walker Square neighborhood north of Greenfield Avenue attend the St. Martini Lutheran School south of Greenfield and struggle to cross in lieu of enforceable crosswalks. Curb bump-outs, warning signals, or traffic control devices along West Greenfield Avenue at South 8th Street and South 14th Street, would make the street easier to cross for pedestrians and create a safer environment for neighborhood residents. These improvements may be coordinated with north-south local street bikeways as described in Key Action #3 of this chapter.

- DPW should conduct a study of pedestrian infrastructure along the length of Greenfield Avenue between 6th and 16th Streets to identify areas for improvement.
- Pedestrian bump-outs and traffic calming devices should be installed at intersections of Greenfield Avenue and 8th and 14th Streets to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians.

Action #8: Consider converting South 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Streets to two-way traffic

Two-way streets are easier to navigate than one-way streets. Converting existing one-way streets in the neighborhood to two-way streets will slow traffic, eliminate wrong-way drivers, and improve safety for bicyclists. Parallel parking on both sides of the street rather than angle parking on one side will accommodate roughly the same number of on-street parking spaces and eliminate the costs of line painting. This recommendation should be evaluated further as the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan is implemented.

Action #9: Improve the pedestrian experience under the elevated freeway along West National Avenue and West Washington Street

The Walker Square neighborhood is separated from the portion of Walker's Point to the east by the North-South Freeway (Interstate 43/94). West National Avenue and West Washington Street are key connections under the freeway between the two areas. In order to encourage foot traffic between Walker Square and Walker's Point, DPW should explore improvements to the underpass areas to make these connections as inviting as possible. Elements such as creative lighting, public art, and a unified streetscape will give these streets more human scale, improve the environment for pedestrians, and shorten the perceived distance between the two areas.

Action #10: Consider future alternatives to the freeway ramps at Interstate-43/94 Exit 311

As mentioned previously, the construction of freeway ramps between West National Avenue, West Washington Street, South 6th Street and South 9th Street removed more than 20 acres of traditional urban fabric and disconnected the traditional street grid, creating a nine-block void in the heart of the Near South Side. Future reconstruction plans for this interchange must prioritize a smaller footprint and reestablishment of the traditional street grid. While a long-term goal, this action has the potential to significantly improve the public realm in the neighborhood and reclaim valuable land for community uses and future investment.

W MADISON ST
W BEECHER ST

CHAPTER 6
IMPLEMENTATION:
HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

If the goal of the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan is to provide a blueprint for the City of Milwaukee and neighborhood stakeholders to drive positive change in Walker Square and attract additional investment into the neighborhood, then the drafting of this plan must be seen as only a starting point. Each of the preceding three chapters identified a series of actions that will help achieve the goals of the plan and outlined a series of steps required to make them happen. This chapter attempts to summarize those actions and more clearly define the parties responsible, the resources required, and the general time frame associated with the recommendations.

Walker Square is well positioned to see through the implementation of the actions recommended in this Action Plan. The combination of committed public sector partners across multiple levels of government, an engaged group of neighbors, and the skill and experience found within the community-based organizations working in Walker Square provide the ingredients required for the sustained work needed for plan implementation.

The ongoing momentum occurring in creating new jobs in the Menomonee Valley and the continuing redevelopment of Walker's Point will continue to bring new attention and interest to Walker Square and make it as important as ever that the vision of Walker Square residents be central in shaping the future development of this neighborhood. The actions called for in the Walker Square Strategic Action Plan attempt to balance all of these interests and chart a path that maintains the unique identity of the Walker Square neighborhood while positioning it to thrive for generations to follow.

A note on "Implementation Time Frames":

Recommendations labeled as "Short Term" can begin immediately. Those labeled as "Medium Term" are more likely to require additional planning, funding, or market shifts and may more likely occur in the next two to five years. Finally, those recommendations labeled as "Long Term" are more ambitious in nature and can more reasonably be expected to be completed in a five to ten-plus year time horizon. "On-going" projects are those that may take many years to complete but consist of multiple phases or components, some of which should be acted upon immediately with the understanding that full completion is also dictated by outside factors, typically funding availability, public facility replacement schedules, and supply and demand.

The following organizations or entities are referred to by abbreviations in the chart below:

CPU: Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office Community Prosecution Unit

CSNI: Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative

DCD: City of Milwaukee Department of City Development

DOT: State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation

DNS: City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services

DPW: City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works

HCCW: Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin

MCC: Milwaukee Christian Center

MPD: Milwaukee Police Department

SOC: Southside Organizing Committee

UCC: United Community Center

WSNA: Walker Square Neighborhood Association

Stakeholders discuss draft recommendations at MATC Education Center at Walker Square on October 19, 2015. (Source: Office of Alderman José Pérez)

Thriving Commercial Corridors				
Action	**Lead Implementer**	**Supporting Entities**	**Funding Sources**	**Implementation Time Frame**
Key Action #1: Support the Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District Farm Project	Chavez BID	DCD, CSNI, Journey House, Newaukee, Chavez Drive buisness owners	BID, DCD buisness assistance programs, grants	On-going
Key Action #2: Encourage and support efforts to bring a BID to National Avenue	National Avenue buisness owners	DCD, HCCW, Chavez BID	N/A	Short term
Key Action #3: Encourage an appropriate, context sensitive mix of uses on National Avenue	DCD	National Avenue buisness owners, DPW, DNS	Potential BID funds	On-going
Key Action #4: Work with MPD District 2 to deploy targeted safety strategies along Greenfield Avenue	MPD	Safe and Sound, CPU, WSNA	N/A	Short term
Key Action #5: Support FaB Wisconsin efforts to locate a Center of Excellence within the FaB focus area, preferably on National Avenue	FaB Wisconsin	DCD	FaB, grants	Short term
Action #6: Attract and retain a diverse tenant mix along Cesar Chavez Drive	Chavez BID	DCD	BID funds, DCD buisness assistance programs	On-going
Action #7: Aggressively implement STRONG Neighborhoods strategies along Greenfield Avenue	DPW	DNS, DCD, WSNA	City	Short term
Action #8: Continue to engage with La Causa to ensure appropriate reuse of their facilities on Greenfield Avenue	La Causa	DCD	N/A	Medium term

Living In Walker Square				
Action	**Lead Implementer**	**Supporting Entities**	**Funding Sources**	**Implementation Time Frame**
Key Action #1: Increase the availability and use of resources for new homeowners to purchase homes in Walker Square and existing homeowners to make repairs to their homes	DCD	SOC, WSNA, UCC, MCC, local lenders	City, grants, lenders	Short term
Key Action #2: Continue to leverage the strength of non-profit partners working in Walker Square	WSNA	SOC, WSNA, UCC, MCC, Safe & Sound, HCCW, etc.	N/A	On-going
Key Action #3: Identify and engage in targeted collaborations to address pressing public safety concerns	WSNA	MPD, SOC, Safe & Sound, DNS, CPU	N/A	Short term
Key Action #4: Continue to reinforce and build the Walker Square neighborhood's identity and "brand"	WSNA	UCC, SOC, local real estate agents	Grants/donations for specific projects	On-going
Action #5: Preserve the traditional character of the Walker Square Neighborhood while targeting new, mixed income, residential development at strategic locations along Walker Square's main arterials	DCD	Developers	Developers, tax credits and grants for specific projects	On-going
Action #6: Utilize code enforcement and other strategies to address problem properties in Walker Square	DNS	WSNA, MPD	N/A	Short term

Improving the Public Realm				
Action	**Lead Implementer**	**Supporting Entities**	**Funding Sources**	**Implementation Time Frame**
Key Action #1: Invest in Walker Square Park	Milwaukee County	WSNA, UCC	County, grants, donations	On-going
Key Action #2: Transform West National Avenue into a complete street	DPW	DCD, National Avenue buisness owners	City, potential BID	Short term (study restriping, beutify) / long term (potential reconstruction)
Key Action #3: Transform West Mineral and West Walker Streets between South 9th and South 11th Streets into pedestrian friendly, tree-lined boulevards	DPW	DCD	City, grants	Medium term
Key Action #4: Develop a network of local street bikeways that prioritize and optimize safe and efficient bike travel	DPW	Bublr, Bike Fed	City, grants	On-going
Action #5: Increase the tree canopy throughout the neighborhood	DPW	WSNA	City, grants	On-going
Action #6: Improve the experience for transit users in Walker Square	Milwaukee County	Buisness owners, DPW	County, BID, City	Short term
Action #7: Improve pedestrian crossings on Greenfield Avenue	DPW		City	Short term
Action #8: Consider converting South 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Streets to two-way traffic	DPW	DCD, WSNA	N/A	Medium term
Action #9: Improve the pedestrian experience under the elevated freeway along West National Avenue and West Washington Street	DPW	DOT, WSNA	City, DOT, BID	Medium term
Action #10: Consider future alternatives to the freeway ramps at Interstate 43/94 Exit 311	DOT	DPW, DCD, WSNA	DOT	Long term

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Department of City Development

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