

Chapter 2

Existing Conditions, Market Analysis, and Planning Process

Existing Land Use and Character

At the broad scale the land use pattern in the Washington Park planning area is straightforward:

- The neighborhood is predominately residential.
- Three commercial corridors with varying states of commercial activity follow the three main east-west streets.
- Active and abandoned industrial uses are located along the railroad viaduct, part of which is known as the 30th Street Industrial Corridor.
- Nearly all developed open space is located in one large park.
- Vacant lots are numerous and widely dispersed.

The majority of all residential uses located in the planning area are single-family detached dwellings or duplexes. The housing stock is predominately wood frame clapboard single-family houses and “over and under” flats, either constructed as two-flats or converted. Most of the housing stock dates from the last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century. The housing type is predominately two and a half stories with a steep gable roof facing the street; the houses set so close together and repeated down blocks that they mimic attached rowhouses found in eastern cities. There are very few multi-family residential uses, especially in buildings constructed as apartment buildings. Mixed-use buildings with ground level commercial space and apartments on a second or third floor also provide dwelling units along the commercial corridors.

While still high, the density of dwellings is dropping due to a growing checkerboard pattern of vacant lots. In fact, of the 2251 parcels in the study area, 436 are vacant, with vacant land accounting for 12.9 percent of overall land use in the study area (42.8 of a total 552.2 acres). Although a pattern of vacancy is difficult to discern, concentrations of empty lots are located along Lisbon Avenue, 35th Street, and blocks between Garfield Avenue and Brown Street. .

Commercial corridors line the three main east-west streets in Washington Park. North Avenue is Washington Park’s main retail and office corridor. North Avenue was affected by the Park West freeway project, which cleared blocks to the north of the commercial buildings for a freeway in the late 1960s and early 1970s; then, after the project was halted, left the land fallow for over a decade. In the mid-1990s, the potential to use the cleared land for new development



- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Planning Area Boundary | Commercial |
| Single Family Residential | Industrial |
| Duplex/Triplex | Public Institutional |
| Row House | Park Open Space |
| Multi Family Residential 4-6 Units | Transportation |
| Multi Family Residential 7 and Up | Vacant Land |
| Mixed-Use Commercial Residential | Unknown |

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Figure 3: Existing Land Use

was realized and townhouses were constructed on three blocks between 40th and 37th Street. Continued development on this land brought significant investment to the corridor, including the Metcalfe Community Center, a WE Energies facility, and a new Jewel-Osco grocery and drug store. Ironically, the clearance for the freeway has brought redevelopment opportunities that are now the anchors for continued revitalization of the North Avenue corridor.



Three blocks to the south of North Avenue, the existing land-use pattern along Lisbon Avenue shows that the street's role in the community has changed. Between 39th Street and the railroad tracks, approximately three dozen parcels that front on Lisbon are vacant, with additional vacant buildings, marking the street's obvious decline as a place for small businesses. Vliet Street has a greater mixture of commercial and residential units, in houses or second floor apartments, and fewer vacant lots than North Avenue or Lisbon Avenue. The commercial node at Vliet and 35th Street is active with a small neighborhood grocery and local and franchise fast food restaurants.



Open space in the planning area is consolidated in the historic landscaped Washington Park, designed by landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmstead. Milwaukee County owns and maintains the park system within the City of Milwaukee and Washington Park is one of the system's large regional parks. The park occupies 135 acres in the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood. The park's lagoon, shaded walks, and green lawns retain an air of the Romantic era of park development from early in the twentieth century. The Washington Park band shell was once a famous Milwaukee landmark, and has recently been restored. Athletic fields and courts, a senior center, and a swimming pool have been introduced into the park. Milwaukee County has planned a multi-million dollar renovation of Washington Park, yet without any other designated parks, the neighborhood will remain underserved by smaller recreation and green space.

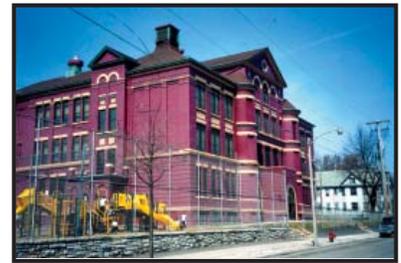


A narrow corridor of manufacturing and warehouse space is located along both sides of the old North Line railroad, now owned by Canadian Pacific Railway, a portion of which is part of the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. The railroad tracks are set in a viaduct which runs below the grade of city streets from the southwest corner of the neighborhood, where Miller Brewing and Harley-Davidson Motor Company are located, then crossing 35th Street and arcing to the north in the block between 31st Street and 30th Street. Vacant and abandoned factory and warehouse space is found along the railroad corridor, along with small machine shops and auto repair businesses. Other sites have been reused, including the area now used for a shopping center called the Westgate Marketplace, near where the tracks cross under 35th Avenue, and the new WE Energies facility where the corridor crosses under North Avenue. Just south of North Avenue, at Garfield and 31st Street, new investments are being

made to renovate a four-story warehouse as a development called Garfield Court.

Mixed into this basic neighborhood pattern are public and private institutional uses. There are three existing public elementary and middle schools: Westside Academy I and West Side Academy II, and Mary McLeod Bethune Academy. In order to meet the demand for classroom space, Milwaukee Public Schools is expanding Westside Academy II on a site north of the intersection at Lisbon Avenue and 35th Street, and has constructed a brand new school between 37th Street and 35th Street at Galena Street—the Bethune Academy—which replaced the old 37th Street School. The new Washington Park Library was constructed across from the park at the corner of Sherman Boulevard and Lloyd Street and dedicated in 2003. Use of the old library at the corner of Sherman Boulevard and North Avenue has yet to be determined, but plans for conversion to a commercial use are being considered. Just outside of the Washington Park planning area is the Medcalfe Community Center which also serves this area.

There are no major private institutions, such as a hospital, in the planning area. However, the Lisbon Avenue Health Center and a dentist's office are two of the viable uses on Lisbon Avenue, just west of 35th Street. Churches are located in storefronts and traditional church buildings on the three main commercial streets and on some side streets.



Major Streets and Access Routes

Three arterials traverse Washington Park in an east-west alignment: Vliet Street, Lisbon Avenue, and North Avenue. Vliet is a minor arterial that provides access to Wauwatosa to the west and the Near West Side. Lisbon Avenue, which merges with Walnut Avenue to the east, provides a quick route to downtown Milwaukee. North Avenue is a major arterial that connects from the East Side lakeshore neighborhood to far western suburbs. Main routes in the north-south direction include U.S. Highway 41, 35th Street, and 27th Street. The freeway portion of U.S. 41 extends from Interstate 94 and comes to an abrupt end in the study area at Lisbon Avenue. The other two arterials at 35th Street and 27th Street also have exits and entrances from Interstate 94, with 35th Street providing direct access to the center of the Washington Park community.



Figure 4: Major Roadways and Access Routes

Transit Routes

Transit routes are located along all of Washington Park's major streets and traverse the neighborhood from the main access routes. Route 35 on 35th Street provides service in a north-south direction and provides for transfer points to Routes 21, 57 and 11 at North, Lisbon, and Vliet streets. Routes 8 and 30 skirt around Washington Park and operate on Sherman Boulevard. Routes 27 and 6 run on 27th Street.



 Planning Area Boundary

 Bus Route

0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

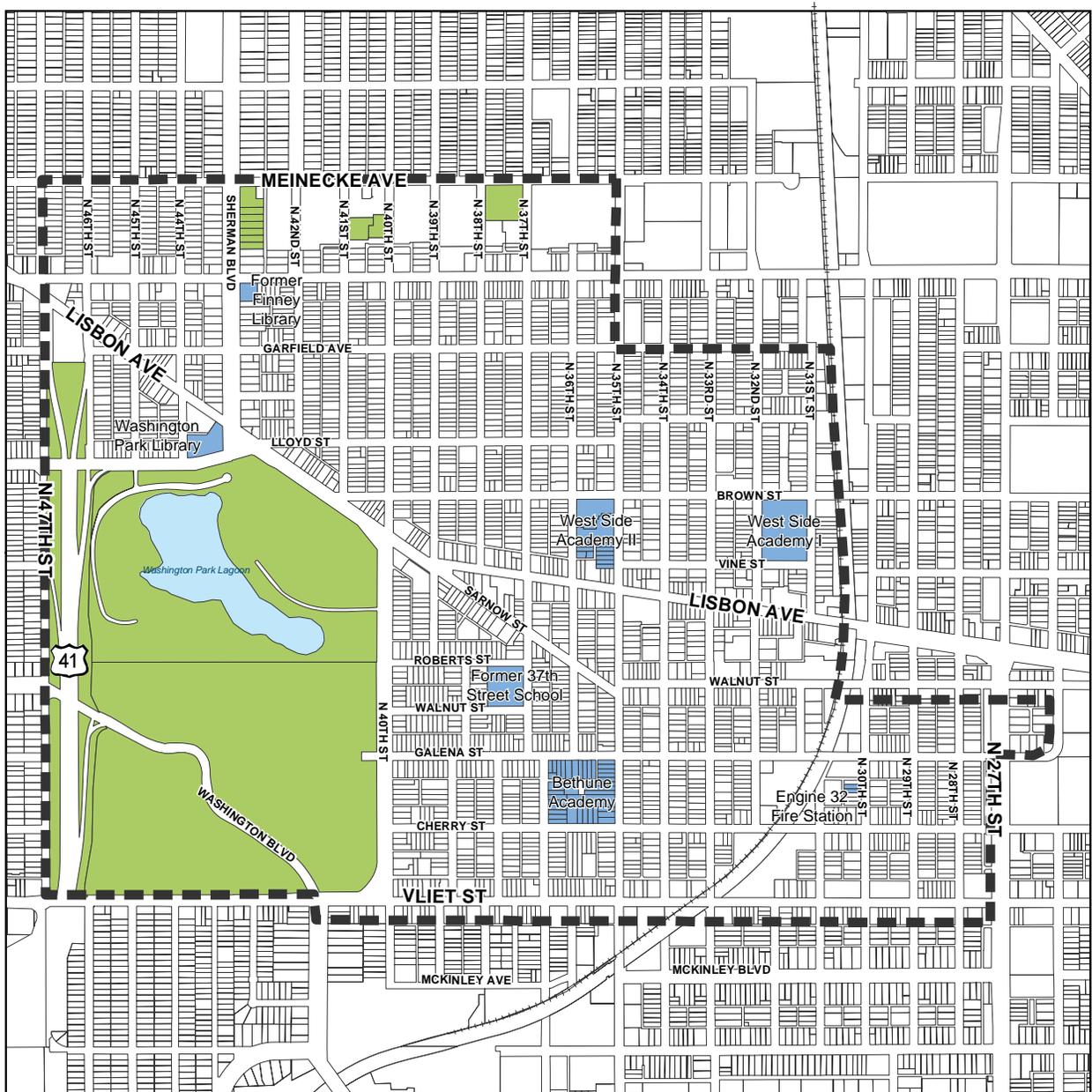


Figure 5: Transit Routes

Public Facilities

Public facilities in Washington Park include:

- Three Milwaukee Public School district schools: West Side Academy I, West Side Academy II, and Bethune Academy. The former 37th Street School is still owned by the district and may be used as a community facility.
- Washington Park Library, constructed and dedicated in 2003. The older Finney Library will be sold for private reuse or redevelopment.
- Washington Park, owned and maintained by Milwaukee County Parks.
- Milwaukee Fire Department, Fire Station for Engine 32 at 1551 N. 30th Street.
- Milwaukee Police Department, District 3 Headquarters, just outside the study area at 2333 North 49th Street. All of the study area is served by District 3.



- Public Facility
- Park/Open Space



Figure 6: Public Facilities

Demographics

Population and housing figures in this section are based on the most recent data available from the 2000 U.S. Census. The Washington Park planning area overlaps with six census tracts (excluding the small area in tract 120), which serve as the primary base for demographic analysis (See Figure 7). All blocks within the six census tracts were included for the purposes of this analysis, even those that lie outside the boundary of the planning study area.



Census data indicate that significant change occurred in Washington Park in the period between the 1990 census and the 2000 census. There was a considerable decline in population, households, and number of housing units in the community. In addition, average household size grew, while the median age of residents declined. Racial composition also changed, with continued growth in the population of immigrants from Southeast Asia. In regard to economic indicators for households and individuals, the data show a community challenged by limited educational attainment, low incomes, and high unemployment.

Population

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Washington Park was 15,247 at the time of the census. This is a 21.9 percent decline from the 1990 population of 19,529. The city of Milwaukee experienced a population decline of 5 percent over the same time period.

The northeastern part of the planning area (census tracts 97 and 98) lost roughly a third of its population between 1990 and 2000.

Households

The population decline in Washington Park between 1990 and 2000 came with a corresponding decline in households. The 2000 U.S. Census counted 4,108 households in Washington Park: a 22.7 percent decline from the 5,312 households counted in 1990. Citywide the number of households decreased 3.5 percent over the same time period.

Average household size in Washington Park is 3.8 persons, which is significantly higher than the citywide average of 2.5 persons. Census data reveals that a large percentage of the households in Washington Park are four-person households with children under the age of 18.

Housing

The 2000 Census counted approximately 4,888 housing units in Washington Park, of which 4,108 (84 percent) were occupied. Of the occupied units, 69.7 percent are renter-occupied and 30.5 percent are owner-occupied. This differs somewhat from the citywide share of 54.7 percent and 45.3 percent, respectively. Vacancy is a problem in the community with nearly 16 percent, compared to 6.8 percent citywide.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of housing units in Washington Park dropped by approximately 1,292 units, or 20.9 percent,



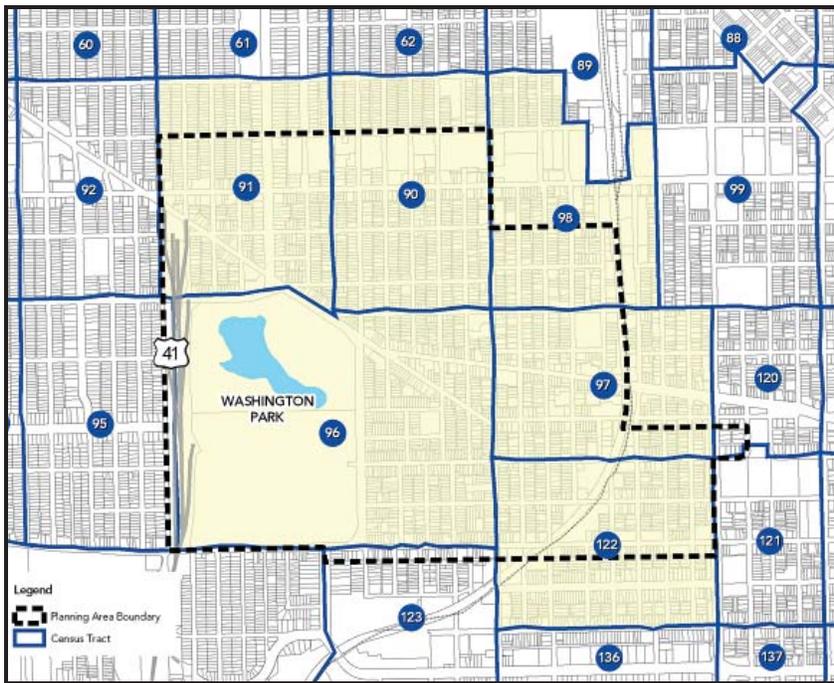


Figure 7: Analysis Census Tracts, 2000 U.S. Census

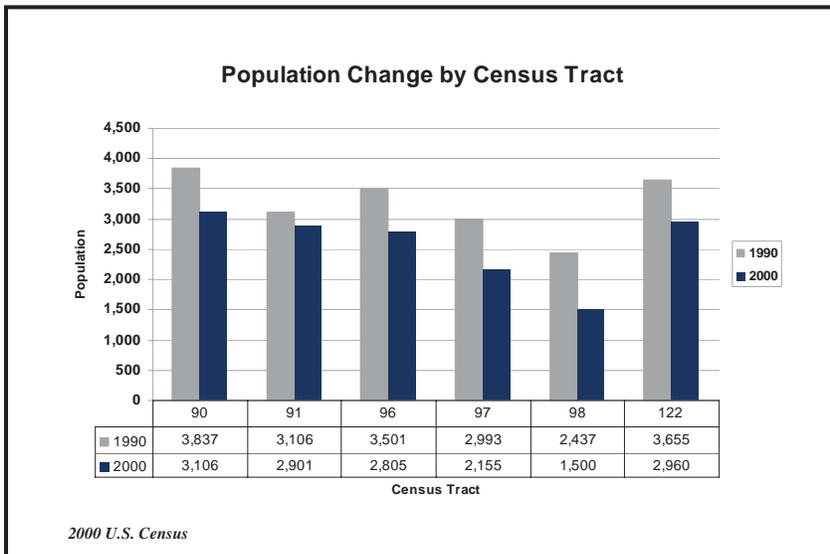


Figure 8: Population Change, 1990 to 2000

| Unit Types and Occupancy | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Washington Park | % of Total | Milwaukee | % of Total |
| Owner-Occupied | 1,245 | 30.3% | 105,235 | 45.3% |
| Renter Occupied | 2,863 | 69.7% | 126,953 | 54.7% |
| Total Occupied Units | 4,108 | 84.0% | 232,188 | 93.2% |
| Vacant | 780 | 16.0% | 17,037 | 6.8% |
| Total Units | 4,888 | 100.0% | 249,225 | 100.0% |

2000 U.S. Census

Figure 9: Households and Occupancy

between 1990 and 2000. Comparatively, the number of housing units citywide decreased by 2 percent.

Nearly 70 percent of Washington Park housing is renter occupied. In addition, residents pay approximately 37.8 percent of their income toward housing costs, which is above the Department of Housing and Urban Development recommendations that individuals and households apply no more than 30% of their income toward housing costs.

There are a total of approximately 2230 residential units in Washington Park according to the City of Milwaukee's Master Property Record. Approximately 48.2 percent (1,075 units) of housing units in Washington Park are single-family structures and 46.3 percent (1,033 units) are duplex structures. Approximately 3 percent of units are located in three-unit buildings, 1.4 percent are in four-unit buildings, and buildings with five or more units comprise less than 1 percent of all housing unit types in the community. Only one building in Washington Park contains over 30 units, this being a three-story courtyard-style apartment building located north of the park on Lisbon Avenue and Sherman Boulevard. The majority of the multi-family buildings date from the period between 1900 and 1927.

Age Distribution

Washington Park is a neighborhood that has a significantly younger population than the city average, and that difference is revealed through a comparison of the median age of residents. The median age of residents in Washington Park is just 18.7 years, which is nearly 12 years younger than the citywide median age of 30.6 years. And, of course, this statistic shows that half of the population of the planning area is less than 18 years old.

Residents age 5-14 years comprise the largest age group in the community (27.5 percent), followed by ages 35-49 years (17.7 percent), 22-34 years (16.9 percent), and 15-21 years (16.2 percent). The smallest age group is the 65 years and older age group, which makes up just over 4 percent of the total population in Washington Park. As the data shows, the majority of residents are children and adults of child-bearing age.

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

The majority of Washington Park residents are African American, making up 74.1 percent of the total population. The Asian population is a distant second with 12.3 percent of the total population, followed by whites (5.9 percent), Hispanics (4 percent) and other races (0.4 percent). This racial composition is indicative of Washington Park's position on the southwest edge of the overwhelmingly African-American north Milwaukee; yet, Washington Park has a growing diversity, mainly due to an influx of Asians.

The racial makeup of Washington Park is changing quickly, as demonstrated by a comparison of 1990 and 2000 census data. As the overall population of Washington Park declined 21.9 percent between 1990 and 2000, all but one racial group lost population. The Asian

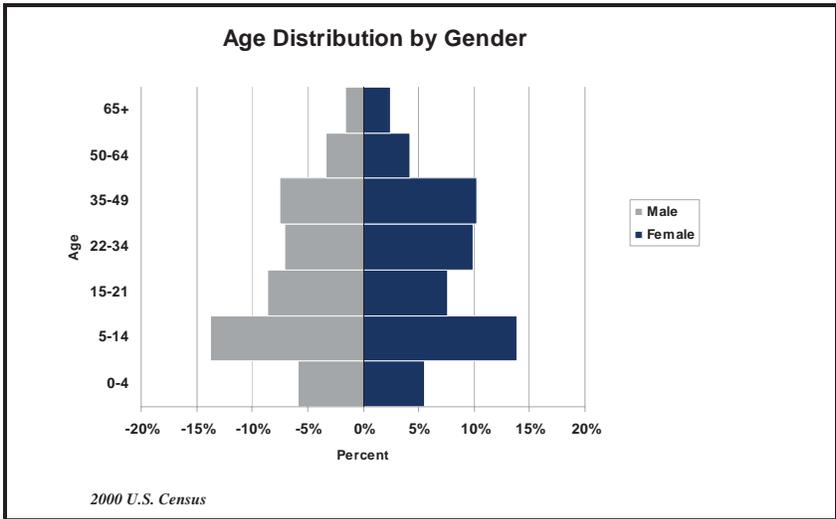


Figure 10: Age Distribution by Gender

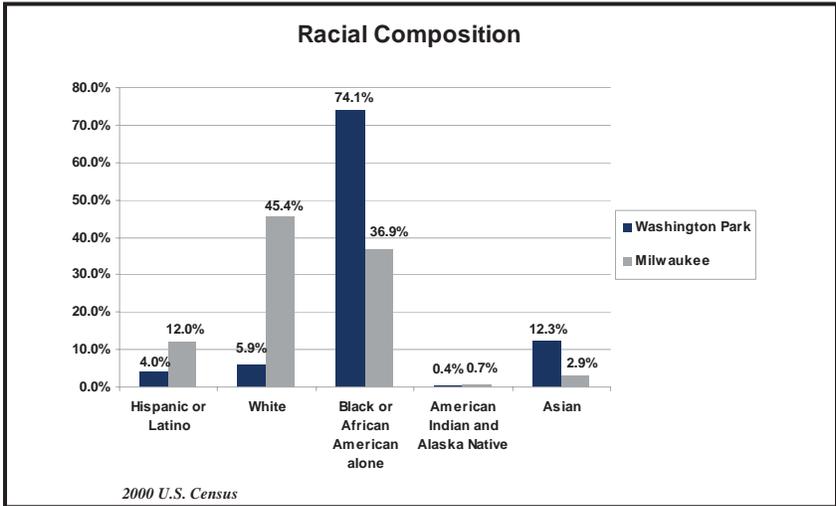


Figure 11: Racial Composition

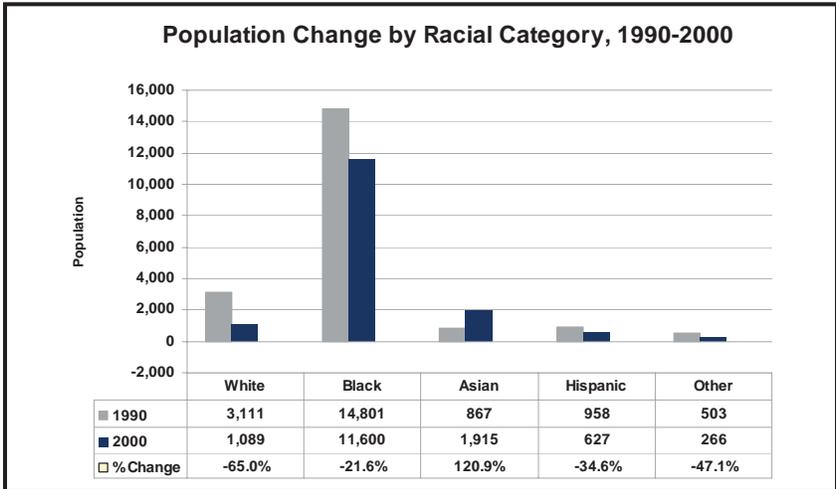


Figure 12: Population Change by Racial Category

population in Washington Park grew from 867 people in 1990 to 1,915 in 2000 (a 120.9 percent increase), moving Asians from the second smallest racial group in 1990 to the second largest in 2000, surpassing the white and Hispanic population. This growth is due to an influx of immigrants from Southeast Asian of Hmong and Laotian ethnicity, and their second generation American children.

Educational Attainment

Taken as a whole, Washington Park residents have educational levels below citywide averages. As the table below illustrates, a majority of Washington Park residents over the age of 18 enter high school, yet nearly 40 percent leave without a diploma and the dropout rate is more than twice the city average. Approximately 5.4 percent of residents have an Associate's degree, 4.5 percent have a Bachelor's degree, and just 0.3 percent have a graduate or professional degree.

Income

Washington Park is a very low income community. Median household income is \$19,734, compared to \$32,216 citywide. According to 2000 Census data, nearly 30 percent of households earn less than \$10,000 per year. Approximately 48.2 percent of Washington Park residents have incomes below the official poverty level set by the federal government, and census tracts 90 and 97 have poverty rates of over 50 percent. Comparatively, 12 percent of the population is below the poverty level nationwide, while 21.3 percent is below poverty level in the city of Milwaukee. The federal poverty level for a four-person households in 2000 was a gross yearly income of \$17,050. While income levels are generally low, there are portions of Washington Park that have residents with higher incomes, for instance along Sherman Boulevard and Grant Street. In addition, due to the relatively dense level of development, Washington Park provides a potential market for retail goods, as expressed in the analysis of purchasing power provided in following table.

Employment

According to the 2000 Census, 57.8 percent of Washington Park residents over the age of 16 are in the labor market, compared to 63.9 percent citywide. Approximately 13 percent of Washington Park residents in the labor force were unemployed at the time of the census.

A majority of Washington Park residents work in the education, health, or social services field (39.4 percent), according to an analysis of survey data from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Other industries include manufacturing (13.7 percent), entertainment, accommodations, or food services (9.4 percent), and transportation, warehousing, or utilities (9.1 percent).

| | Washington Park | Milwaukee |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Less than 9th grade | 5.8% | 7.7% |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 38.8% | 17.4% |
| High school graduate | 27.5% | 30.2% |
| Some college, no degree | 17.7% | 20.7% |
| Associate degree | 5.4% | 5.7% |
| Bachelor's degree | 4.5% | 12.3% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 0.3% | 6.0% |

Figure 13: Educational Attainment, 2000 U.S. Census

| Purchasing Power Profile | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Consumer Expenditure Category | Est. Annual Expenditures | Expenditures per Square Mile |
| Food at Home | \$15,363,925 | \$11,677,054 |
| Food away from home | \$4,012,992 | \$3,049,997 |
| Apparel and related services | \$4,621,455 | \$3,512,447 |
| Television equipment, tapes disks | \$1,952,710 | \$1,484,119 |
| Audio equipment, CDs, tapes | \$502,900 | \$382,219 |
| Household textiles | \$234,963 | \$178,579 |
| Furniture | \$1,037,844 | \$788,793 |
| Floor coverings | \$85,248 | \$64,791 |
| Major appliances | \$538,719 | \$409,443 |
| Small appliances and housewares | \$157,039 | \$119,354 |
| Computer hardware and software | \$486,675 | \$369,888 |
| Miscellaneous household equipment | \$704,175 | \$535,195 |
| Non-prescription drugs and supplies | \$877,869 | \$667,207 |
| Housekeeping supplies | \$1,691,880 | \$1,285,881 |
| Personal products | \$1,157,168 | \$879,483 |
| Home repair commodities | \$243,018 | \$184,701 |
| Total for 16 categories | \$33,668,580 | \$25,589,153 |

Source: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2004. The analysis is based on 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Surveys and 2000 U.S. Census data.

Figure 14: Purchasing Power

| Workers By Industry Place-of-Work | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Industry | Total Workers | % of Total |
| Total, Industry | 1,270 | 100.0% |
| Agriculture, forestry, mining | 0 | 0.0% |
| Construction | 79 | 6.2% |
| Manufacturing | 174 | 13.7% |
| Wholesale trade | 14 | 1.1% |
| Retail trade | 32 | 2.5% |
| Transportation, warehousing, utilities | 115 | 9.1% |
| Information | 0 | 0.0% |
| Finance, insurance, real estate | 28 | 2.2% |
| Professional, management, administrative services | 65 | 5.1% |
| Educational, health and social services | 500 | 39.4% |
| Entertainment, accommodations, food services | 120 | 9.4% |
| Other services (except public) | 103 | 8.1% |
| Public administration | 24 | 1.9% |
| Armed forces | 0 | 0.0% |

Source: Census Transportation Planning Package data on place-of-work of U.S. population based on 2000 Census long-form. Business Place-of-Work Drill Downs prepared by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2005.

Figure 15: Employment by Industry

Development Controls

The City of Milwaukee sets the context for development of public and private property through the provision of basic infrastructure, as well as regulatory controls, programs, and services. The previous sections on existing conditions and demographics describe the physical and social reality of the Washington Park neighborhood. Underpinning the physical pattern of development are City of Milwaukee regulatory controls on the use of land. An understanding of existing zoning regulations, regulatory districts, and development incentive programs is necessary in order to set planning goals and make recommendations on future land use. In addition, the City of Milwaukee and partnering jurisdictions own land and facilities in the planning area, and these community facilities can play a role in sustaining and revitalizing the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Current Zoning

The majority of land in the planning area is zoned for two-family dwellings, also known as duplexes. This zoning category also allows single family residential development. The district classifications are RT3 and RT4, for all of the land zoned for duplexes, combined as one color on the Current Zoning map. Portions of three blocks in the northwest corner of the planning area, along Sherman Boulevard and 46th Street are zoned for single-family dwellings. Newer townhouse and commercial projects in the former Park West corridor were developed under a Planned Development zoning classification, which provided the developers and City flexibility in project design. Only 27 parcels are zoned for multi-family units. One of these multi-family parcels is on Vliet Street (RM1), the rest are opposite Washington Park along Lisbon Avenue (RM4) and between North Avenue and Meinecke Avenue (RM3). The RM3 and RM4 districts allow medium-density multi-family residential uses. Two parcels are zoned for mixed-use residential or office (RO1) at the corner of Sherman Boulevard and Lloyd Street; one of the parcels being the new Washington Park library.

Two main zoning districts cover the commercial corridors along North Avenue, Lisbon Avenue, and Vliet Street. The North Avenue and Vliet Street shopping districts are zoned for Local Business, with the LB2 classification. The recently revised City of Milwaukee zoning code (Sec. 295-601) states that the Local Business districts “provide a wide range of goods and services to a large consumer population coming from an extensive area” and that “motor-vehicle-related activities are of major significance.” The code also states that the LB2 district is urban in its design standards, providing for small lots and short building setbacks. Nearly all of the Lisbon Avenue frontage in the planning area is zoned for Commercial Service, or CS. The code states that the CS district “provides areas where businesses and personal service establishments can be accommodated, but

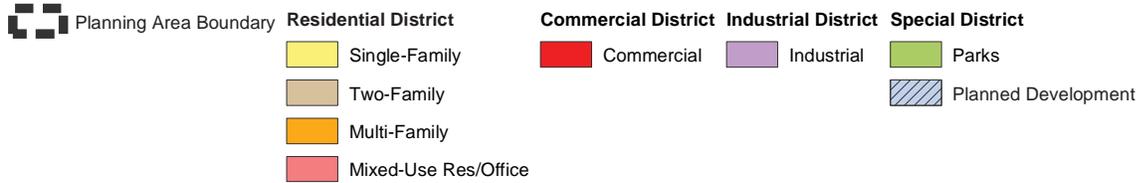
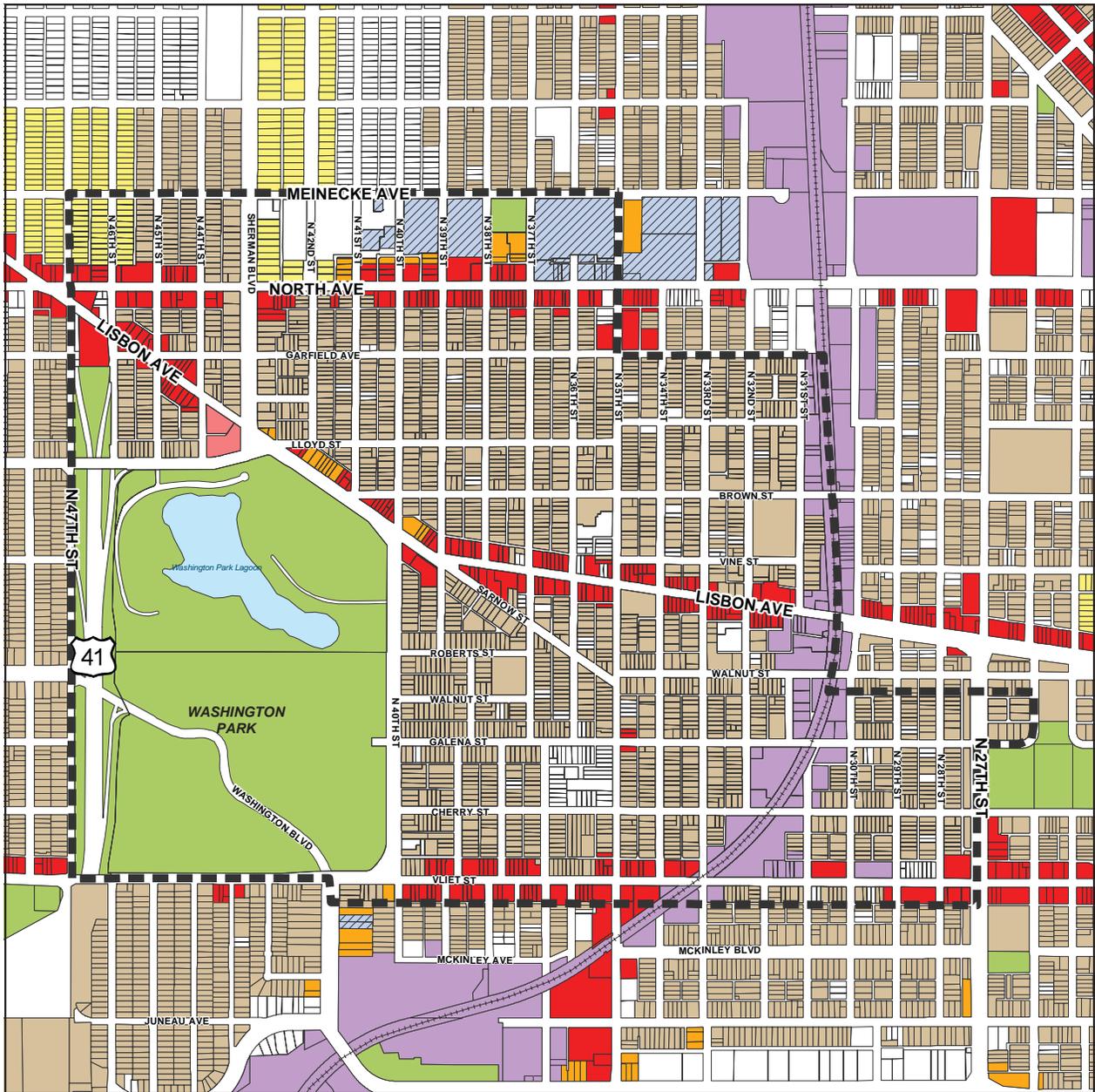


Figure 16: Zoning Districts

where extensive retail activities are not warranted by city plans.” It should be noted that within the LS2 and CS districts single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential units are permitted.

Land along the railroad corridor is zoned for light and heavy industry. The area south of Galena Street is zoned for light industry, in the IL2 classification, which is applied to older industrial corridors. The area north of Galena Street is zoned for heavy industry, in the IH classification, which allows the heaviest types of industry with large structures, external machinery and outdoor storage, and heavy truck and rail operations. This is the same IH classification that is applied to areas such as the Menomonee valley.

Two areas are zoned for parks: the large Washington Park and the smaller Butterfly Park between 38th and 37th streets at Meinecke Avenue.

Aldermanic Districts, Special Regulatory Districts, and Program Areas

Nearly all of the study area is in the 15th Aldermanic District, with the exception of the area to the south of Galena Street and east of 35th Street, which is in the 4th Aldermanic District. The Sherman Boulevard Historic District is a locally designated historic district, that includes all properties in the study area fronting on Sherman Boulevard. This historic district provides for extensive control over alterations to structures in along Sherman Boulevard.

Program areas in the study area include:

- Three Business Improvement Districts (BID)
 - 1) North Ave. east of Sherman Blvd. - BID 16
 - 2) North Ave. west of Sherman Blvd. - BID 28
 - 3) The 30th Street Industrial Corridor - BID 37

- Two Target Investment Neighborhoods (TIN)
 - 1) Harley TIN
 - 2) Metcalfe Park TIN

- Two Tax Incremental Districts (TID)
 - 1) TID 18
 - 2) TID 40

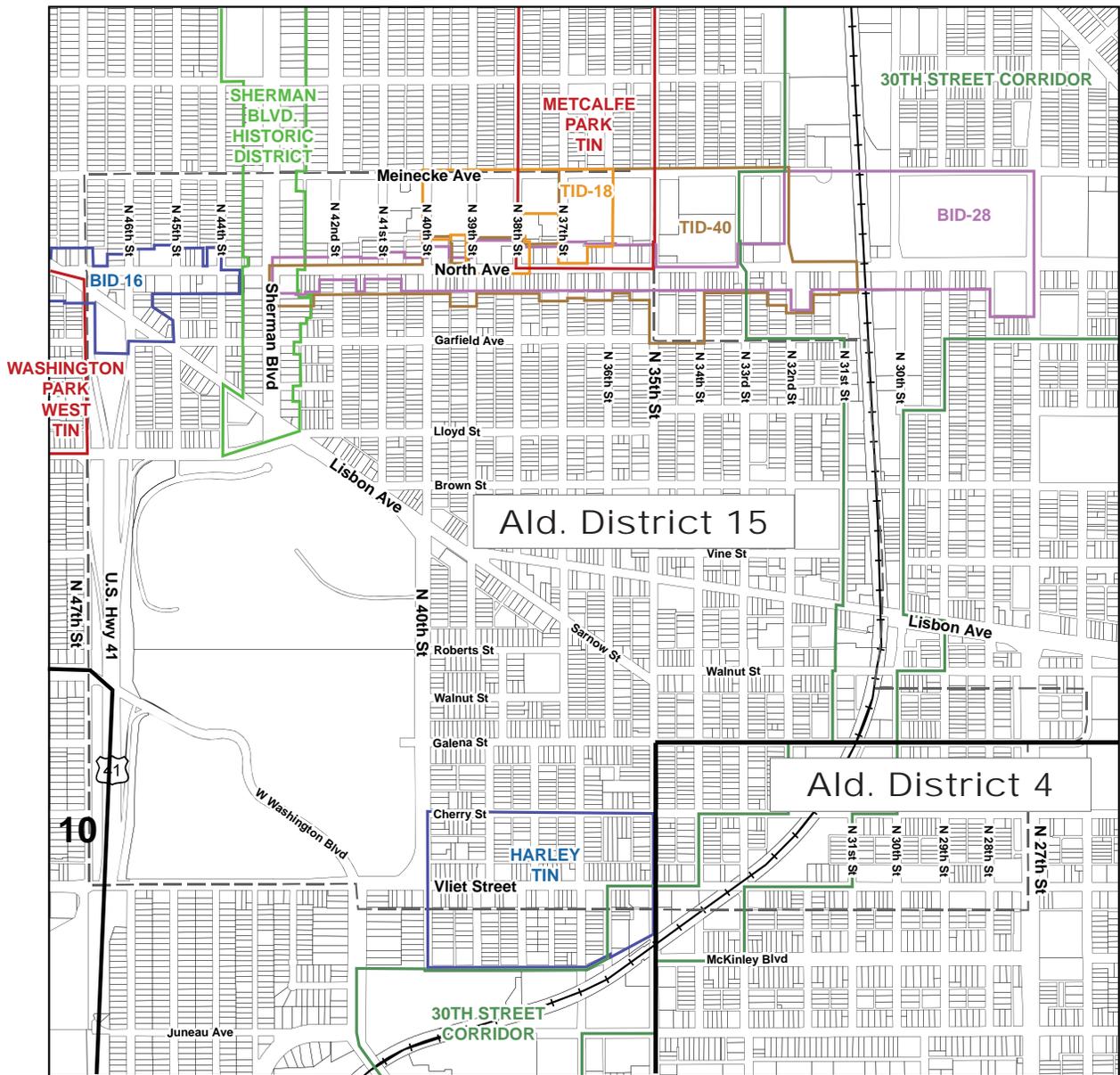


Figure 17: Aldermanic Districts, Special Regulatory Districts, and Program Areas

Market Analysis

The Washington Park neighborhood is challenged by a number of issues in regard to the strength of its market to support commercial, industrial, and residential development. Some indications of the market can be surmised from demographic data that pertains to the area's population, as provided in the previous section; while a summary of recent real estate development projects shows current trends and recent development catalysts. Perhaps most useful is the opinion of professionals working on development projects and programs in the Washington Park area. Their conclusions about the real estate market provide a useful guide for planning. Another approach is to use available databases to identify areas that are susceptible to change and make conclusions about existing development opportunities, represented with both maps and analysis.

Recent Significant Developments

As previously described in the Existing Land Use section, the Park West freeway project created the largest single change in land use the neighborhood has experienced since its first development. Major new investments in the Metcalfe Community Center, the Jewel-Osco full service grocery and drug store, and recent housing construction in the corridor are very important recent developments in the planning area.

An additional example of the power of public projects to affect change can be easily seen in the recent development of Bethune Academy, between 37th and 35th streets at Galena Street. The change in land use for the school is dramatic—the project taking a whole, square block that was formerly single-family and duplex dwellings, clearing those structures and constructing a new school. This new public investment creates an incentive for new private and public investment in the surrounding housing stock. The project will also create an opportunity to convert the old 37th Street School structure to a new use. The construction of the new Washington Park Library at the corner of Sherman Boulevard and Lloyd Street is another major public investment in the neighborhood.

While public projects can bring changes to specific locations with the construction of new community facilities, private investment is necessary to affect revitalization across the larger neighborhood area. In recent years North Avenue has experienced the largest amount of new private investment in the planning area.

The development of new housing stock in the Washington Park neighborhood is proceeding at a slower pace than the loss of houses. The construction of new single-family dwellings is being accomplished by a group of agencies and organizations that seek to provide housing that is affordable to residents of Washington Park.

Real Estate Market Analysis: Expert Opinion

This analysis focuses on the expert opinion of real estate and development experts currently working in Washington Park. Interviews were conducted between December 2004 to March 2005 and included commercial and residential developers, housing mortgage and rehabilitation experts, and leaders in local community development corporations.

Residential market

The Washington Park area provides affordable housing to residents of Milwaukee. Both ownership and rental opportunities are available, with the vast majority of units in 100-year-old wood frame cottages in an “over and under” duplex style. While many of these units are affordable to those with very low incomes, many units also fail to meet minimum code requirements. Interviews conducted for this analysis included providers of mortgage services and developers of new housing. The housing market in the planning area consists of renters leasing older houses from absentee landlords; renters leasing from new, and recently constructed, units developed by faith-based development organizations; new homebuyers providing “sweat equity” to rehabilitate dilapidated stock; and new homebuyers purchasing subsidized units constructed by a small group of subsidized housing providers. At present the market is depressed, but new projects and new entrants into the market are bringing a modest rise in housing values, with the potential for market stabilization for select projects perhaps leading to new market rate projects. Conclusions on the residential market are summarized below.

1. The Washington Park area has a monoculture of single-family and duplex houses most now over 100 years old. The neighborhood has few apartment buildings with multiple units.
2. Recent construction is bringing townhouse units, both owner and rental units to the neighborhood, in the former Park West freeway right of way between North Avenue and Meinecke Avenue, and new projects adjoining to North Avenue and along Galena and Vliet streets.
3. Interviewees see a strong market for new rental apartment units in Washington Park, but approvals and financing with existing subsidy programs is difficult.
4. Mixed-use projects under construction on North Avenue will bring new apartment units to the area for the first time in decades. Pent-up demand will lead to full occupancy for the new units. Interviewees express concern that new apartment construction will lead to downward pressure on the market for existing units in the old duplexes, leading to further dereliction and abandonment.

5. An analysis of housing sales in the planning area for 2002-2004 from City of Milwaukee data found the following:

- 2002 had 9 sales with a median of \$49,511. One house in the Sherman Boulevard historic district accounted for \$124,900 of the total sale value of \$445,600 for the year. If this house is not included, then the median value was \$40,087. The overall City of Milwaukee median sale price for a duplex in 2002 was \$75,400. The base median in Washington Park of \$40,087 was only 53 percent of the Milwaukee median home value.

- 2003 had 26 sales, with a median of \$43,535. Again, excluding the one house sold on Sherman Boulevard that year, the median drops to \$41,840.

- 2004 had 13 sales, with a median of \$62,022. One house again on Sherman Boulevard accounted for \$149,000 of the total sales value of \$806,293. Excluding the house on Sherman Boulevard the median home sales value in the planning area was \$54,774.

- In general, homes located on Sherman Boulevard in the northwest corner of the planning area, and homes that face Washington Park, have higher values than homes in other areas.

5. An interviewee sees Walnut Hill and Washington Park as “second tier” areas, with Sherman Boulevard and Martin Park as the first tier in value and desirability.

6. While the neighborhood is still predominately African-American, a majority of home buyers, especially in the southern half of Washington Park, are Southeast Asian, Hmong and Laotian immigrants. Hmong buyers are concentrated west of 27th Street, with Laotians to the east of 27th. Family sizes are large, usually four to five persons. This market is 45 percent of the Milwaukee County Median Income, which is about \$67,000 for a family of five, or approximately \$20,250 in family income. Automobile insurance is a factor, the rates being cheaper west of 27th Street. St. Michael’s Congregation, located on North 24th Street, is a focus of community networking for Latinos and Southeast Asians.

7. Allied Churches Teaching Self Empowerment (ACTS) has assisted roughly 25 percent of housing transfers in Walnut Hill and Midtown since 1992. On some blocks up to 50 percent of sales were brokered by ACT. Typical ACT product is a \$40,000 mortgage, with \$20,000 for rehabilitation and \$20,000 for purchase. ACT closed on 3 houses in late 2004 for between \$2,000 and \$15,000 purchase. Three to four years ago a \$40,000 mortgage was typical with WHEDA assistance. Rehabilitation money has been more difficult to attain, and the market

is tightening with \$40,000 to \$60,000 mortgages. The Southeast Asian homebuyers are causing the costs to rise through their purchases.

8. WHEDA mortgages are important. Nearly all of the housing units constructed in the planning area have been subsidized through WHEDA housing tax credits. Mortgages for purchase of existing housing are also subsidized by WHEDA loans.

9. The North Avenue corridor is showing the most strength, with projects by New Covenant Housing Corporation providing new construction rental units, which began with 38 dwelling units in a townhouse style constructed on the 3800 block of Meinecke Avenue in the former Park West freeway right of way. New Covenant's Gateway Plaza project on the 3500 block of North Avenue was completed in early 2005, offering two-bedroom units at \$650 monthly rent subsidized at 60 percent of the County median.

10. Scattered vacant lots are problematic from the point of view of assembling parcels for redevelopment projects and allowing a critical mass of new construction that will hold value.

11. Habitat for Humanity in Milwaukee has chosen Walnut Hill as its primary area for construction of new houses.

12. Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation, a non-profit development arm of the City of Milwaukee is currently focusing its efforts in the area from Cherry to McKinley, from 39th to 35th streets. NIDC's analysis of the market shows that income levels in Washington Park are too low to sustain development of new construction. It costs NIDC roughly \$160,000 to build a house, and NIDC needs to sell it for at least \$120,000, with the difference a direct subsidy. Too many families in Washington Park are unable to afford a \$120,000 mortgage, and scattered site development makes it difficult to attract working class families.

13. Although NIDC administers federal funds as part of its Target Investment Neighborhood program, very few of the houses in the Metcalfe Park area are able to meet the minimum requirements for code compliance and lead paint removal. NIDC also offers lead abatement loans, but few homebuyers can afford the loan.

Commercial market

There are three main commercial corridors in the planning area: North Avenue, Lisbon Avenue, and Vliet Street. All three streets have experienced a decline in the amount of utilized retail space since the 1970s, with a large number of storefronts boarded and commercial and mixed-use buildings demolished during the last two decades. The North Avenue Community Development Corporation's Gateway

District Revitalization Plan states that 50 of 72 buildings along North Avenue in their district, focused between 31st and 39th streets, “were either boarded up or neglected” (pg. 6) at the start of 2003. Along Vliet Street a similar ratio of vacant and boarded storefronts can be found. The situation along Lisbon shows a collapse in the commercial market to a point that 12 of 18 blocks facing the street between 40th and 30th street have significant vacant lands.

However, there are also indications of a rising market for quality commercial space, especially in the North Avenue corridor. Land originally cleared for the Park West freeway project, which initially crippled the market along North Avenue, became a major redevelopment opportunity area that now supports North Avenue’s revitalization. Interviews were conducted with representatives from key development organizations working on commercial and mixed-use projects in the planning area, including the North Avenue CDC and New Covenant Housing Corporation, and the developer of the Garfield Park project. Comments on the residential market are also important, given the potential for mixed-use and new residential development along the commercial corridors.

1. Interviewees and the consultants conclude that Washington Park can not support three commercial streets.

2. North Avenue is the strongest of the three commercial streets. The North Avenue CDC is crucial to continued revitalization, and their approach combines business development, commercial real estate development, and coordinated investment in public infrastructure. Interviewees stated that NACDC projects are stabilizing and reviving the market along the street. New Covent Housing Corporation projects and the Garfield Park project are also important components of the continuing revitalization.

Current projects along North Avenue include:

- Columbia Square, at 33rd Street and North Avenue, which is new construction of 22 affordable apartment units and 7,000 square feet of storefronts space in a three-story mixed-use building. NACDC is the developer, with Section 42 Affordable Housing Tax Credits providing needed equity to the project. All the units have 2 bedrooms and will rent for \$575 in 2005.

- Toussaint Square, also by NACDC, will have 23 apartments and 14,000 square feet of retail space, including rehabilitated space and new construction.

- A new food court at 37th and North Avenue is under development, with a projected project budget of \$1.5 million.

- Gateway Plaza, developed by New Covenant, was completed in 2005. The project includes a rehabilitated mixed-use building with 20,000 square feet of retail space fronting North Avenue, 6 dwelling units on the second level of this building, and new townhouses facing 35th Street. WHEDA tax credits are subsidizing the project. The retail space will be used for a new restaurant and a shoe store.

- New Covenant is also rehabilitating a mixed-use building at 44th Street and North Avenue.

- The former Finney Library on Sherman Boulevard will be reused by New Covenant as part of its proposed redevelopment project encompassing the whole block from 42nd Street to Sherman Boulevard. The project will include 20 units of new housing and 15,000 square feet of retail space.

- Garfield Park is a mixed-used reuse project beginning on North Avenue at 31st Street and extending south to Garfield Avenue, just east of the study area. The developer is proposing a market-based reuse project that will focus on condominium and rental units within a four-story, brick, former industrial building along the North Line railroad tracks. Rental units will be marketed for approximately \$900 per month, with for-sale condominium units at \$100 per square foot, or \$120,000 to \$180,000.

3. WHEDA tax credits and loans are very important to making projects feasible.

4. Lisbon Avenue is only three blocks to the south of North Avenue. While in the past the street had a theater and multi-story mixed-use buildings, it is now the weakest of the three commercial streets. The City's former goal of widening Lisbon Avenue stifled the diminishing market by requiring deep setbacks, but widening the street is no longer City policy. Criminal activity is a major problem along Lisbon Avenue and its many vacant lots.

5. Commercial nodes at 35th Street at Lisbon and Vliet have the most potential for retail space because of the passing traffic and transit stops.

6. Vliet Street has lower traffic levels than North Avenue or Lisbon Avenue, and has an existing mix of uses that includes more residential, but the market for commercial space is weak.

7. Current projects on Vliet Street include construction of seven new rowhouses at 37th Street, by West End Development with assistance from NICD and WHEDA. This residential project is replacing what was a boarded mixed-use building with storefronts.

Industrial market

The North Line railroad tracks are the basis for the 30th Street industrial corridor running through Washington Park. The general decline of industry in north Milwaukee affects the market for industrial uses, as well as markets for residential and commercial uses due to a depressed job market for local residents. In 2005, only two customers for freight rail remained on the North Line: Miller Brewing and Tower Automotive. In the winter of 2005 Tower Automotive, located to the north of Washington Park at Capitol Drive, filed for bankruptcy and planned to close its manufacturing facilities that used the North Line freight service. An interview was conducted with a representative of the 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation, a local business association for the manufacturers in the corridor, to gain insights into the market for industrial uses in the corridor, and specifically the portion of the corridor that lies within the planning boundary.

1. The portion of the 30th Street corridor south of North Avenue to Vliet Street, where the corridor narrows and curves to the west, is not marketable for the majority of new industrial uses and future uses are not like to be industrial.
2. Some small heavy commercial and industrial uses remain in the Washington Park portion of the corridor, including a metal processing plant at 31st and Brown and other uses at Lisbon Avenue.
3. There are sites, including the former Esser Paints plant at Galena Street, with known contamination of soil, and grant requests have been made for remediation.
4. Manufacturers in the corridor now utilize freight truck service, not rail, because it is cheaper for the majority of uses and provides more options for moving goods.
5. Advantages for businesses locating in the 30th Street corridor include tax incentives, such as the “Renewal Communities” program designated by the federal government; low costs per square foot of space relative to other industrial areas; opportunities to rent or purchase space and land; and good access from Capitol Drive/ Highway 190 and from Interstate 43.
6. Disadvantages or constraints to business location include perceptions about safety and security in the corridor and concerns about contaminated land in the corridor and costs and responsibility for remediation.
7. The business mix in the entire corridor is fairly typical for Milwaukee, with electrical control manufacturers, plating and stamping operations, and machine tools.

8. The biggest brand names remaining include Miller Brewing and Master Lock, although Master Lock has recently relocated its headquarters out of the corridor, with a manufacturing plant remaining just north of the planning area.

9. Businesses in the corridor are starting to consider the local labor pool and needs for training.

10. The developer of a project called Garfield Park, which is converting a former industrial building in the corridor at North Avenue to a mix of residential and hospitality uses, sought and received a rezoning from heavy manufacturing to the IM, Industrial Mixed district, originally written to allow conversion of multi-story warehouse buildings in the Third Ward.

Susceptibility to Change Analysis

Although the existing pattern of development in the planning area seems to a large extent un-mutable, in fact the Washington Park area has experienced profound changes in its physical and social structure over recent decades. Demographic shifts from European-Americans to African-Americans and the recent growth in Asian-Americans shows one kind of flux, while poor maintenance or abandonment continues to eat away at the aging original housing stock, gradually creating a new pattern of vacant lots. An analysis of the susceptibility for change in the planning area will provide a key to generating planning concepts.

Utilizing geographic information system data sets provided by the City of Milwaukee, a series of maps were produced to visualize areas that are susceptible to change. These maps are labeled:

Figure 18: Year Built

Figure 19: Vacant and Tax Delinquent Property

The first map was produced from data on the year structures were built, and categorized into 25 year increments. Houses in the Walnut Hill section of the planning area are older than areas to the west, many built between 1875 and 1899, while the majority of houses built west of 35th Street were constructed in the period from 1900 to 1924. This follows a general pattern of development proceeding west over time out from the downtown.

The age of a structure can be a measure of future viability as a dwelling, with structures reaching a point of obsolescence when further investment and rehabilitation stops. Given a trend toward absentee ownership and conversion to rental units, and a market that serves some of the lowest income tenants in the region, a trend toward disinvestment in the original housing stock has developed and accelerated over the past few decades in Washington Park. Disinvestment and lack of maintenance can lead eventually to abandonment. Abandoned and boarded houses are prey to further damage, with fire as a frequent final incident prior to demolition.

However, age is not always an indicator of obsolescence, and a counter trend in Washington Park is toward rehabilitation of selected buildings. Some of the houses in the neighborhood were quite grand at the time of construction. Individual houses in the Walnut Hill area, some dating from the 1870-1890s, have been fully restored. These houses include original farmstead buildings that were built prior to subdivision, and other houses that were built by master carpenters. One house in Walnut Hill, fronting on 34th Street, has been designated a local historic landmark. The most important area of historic houses

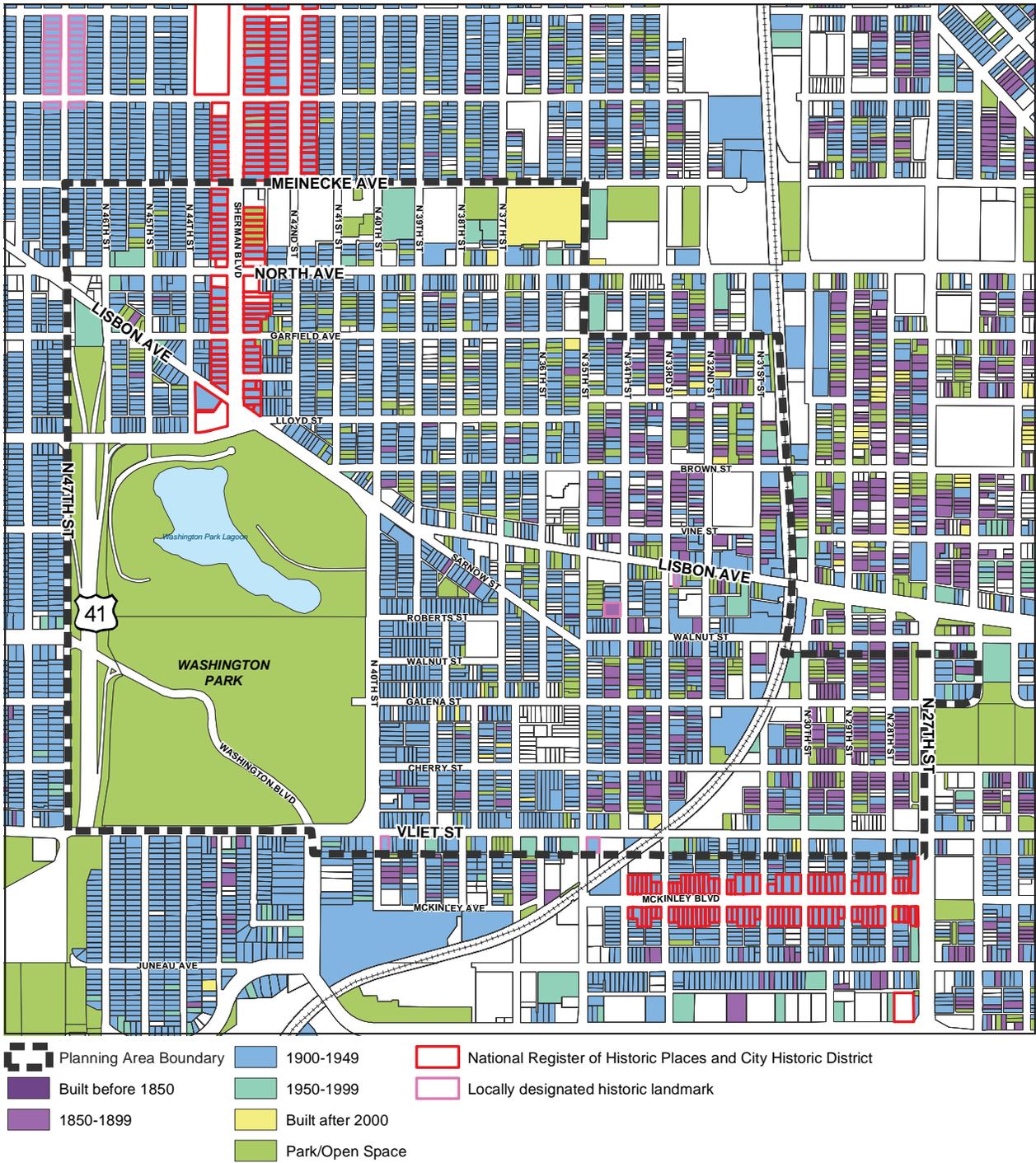


Figure 18: Year Built

are those located in the Sherman Boulevard Historic District, which include three half blocks in the planning area. A local historic district was created by the City of Milwaukee in 1995 encompassing this area and blocks to the north. In April of 2004 Sherman Boulevard was listed on the National Register of Historic Places kept by the National Park Service. The local designation carries with it regulatory controls administered by the City of Milwaukee that limit alterations to the mainly residential buildings, and for the most part precludes any demolition. A recent proposal to build a drug store on the site of the former Finney Library was affected by opposition due to the site's location within the historic district. Therefore, that part of the neighborhood is not susceptible to change.

The Vacant and Tax Delinquent Properties map displays the most telling data in regard to trends in the planning area and future susceptibility to change. The map graphic emphasizes vacancy by showing parcels as vacant and then overlaying other data on City ownership and tax delinquency. Tax delinquency can indicate that an owner is no longer maintaining a property, and can result in forfeiture and transfer of title to the City.

Widespread disinvestment and demolition is evident in the planning area. The number of vacant lots has reached a level where vacant land is emerging as the fastest growing land use. This trend does not just affect residential property, but also commercial structures. Three blocks along Lisbon Avenue have two or fewer buildings fronting on the street. The amount of vacant land indicates that Lisbon Avenue is no longer a viable commercial street and that other land uses should be considered. It should be noted that this data set only shows vacant land and not vacant buildings. Given the sheer number of vacant lots and their wide dispersal across much of the planning area it is difficult to recognize patterns, yet close examination does reveal blocks where the number of vacant lots rivals those with structures. Besides Lisbon Avenue, 35th Street and blocks between Garfield Avenue and Brown Street also show many vacant lots.



-  Planning Area Boundary
-  Vacant Land
-  Park/Open Space
-  City-Owned Property
-  Tax-Delinquent (2 or More Years)



Figure 19: Vacant, City-Owned, and Tax Delinquent Property

Development Opportunities

Consideration of recent development trends, the opinion of real estate professionals, and databases that show where change is likely, allows conclusions to be made and summarized that identify potential development opportunities and approaches:

- The North Avenue corridor is an example for other areas of the neighborhood in how to generate new development. Large blocks of vacant land allowed a critical mass of new construction to change the direction of the market and provide more confidence to investors that new development would hold and accrue value.
- Several residential blocks south of North Avenue, with Garfield, Lloyd, and Brown as cross streets, have a large number of vacant lots. The current condition weakens the continued stability of the North Avenue revitalization, but also presents an opportunity for a large-scale infill and redevelopment project.
- The vacancy along Lisbon Avenue is an opportunity waiting to be explored. There is enough available land to create a new face for that part of the neighborhood, if even a limited number of new development projects could be successfully undertaken.
- The City of Milwaukee is actively working to assemble property along 35th Street and construct new infill housing. Opportunities to assemble parcels along side streets may also become evident.
- Public investment in community facilities should be seen as catalysts for private investment on surrounding blocks, including the new library, park renovation, and the new school at 35th and Galena Street.
- Creation of new green space is one possible future use for portions of blocks that have a majority of parcels vacant as redevelopment occurs.

Public Participation Summary

The Washington Park Comprehensive Plan is an outgrowth of a neighborhood based planning process organized during 2002 and 2003 under an umbrella organization known as the Washington Park Partners, which received funding and support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Milwaukee office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The Washington Park Partners includes local development and support organizations including: Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development (LAND), Allied Churches Teaching Self Empowerment (ACTS), Select Milwaukee, Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC), West End Development Corporation (WEDC), Hmong American Friendship Association (HAFA), North Avenue Community Development Corporation (NACDC), Habitat for Humanity, area churches, Our Next Generation (ONG), the Boys and Girls Club, and other organizations.

Washington Park Partners produced and distributed their plan in the summer of 2004, entitled: "Planning For Hope: Partners for Change in Washington Park." This planning process included eight planning task force meeting between December 2002 and September 2003, held in Washington Park and open to participation by members of the public. In addition to these planning meetings, Camiros, Ltd., the group's planning consultant, presented concept plans, strategies, and illustrative plans to City staff and officials on June 16, 2003 and at a public meeting held on August 9, 2003.

All of the basic planning concepts identified in this City of Milwaukee, Comprehensive Plan were first identified through this public process. Subsequent meeting of the Washington Park Partners have continued to work on projects in Washington Park, and the Partners acted as the task force during the preparation of this City plan.

City staff met several times with WPP, which made up a Plan Advisory Committee. In addition, City of Milwaukee staff led two open houses to solicit further input from local groups and residents. At these open houses residents were asked to provide comments on design via a design preference survey. During this visual survey asked residents to rank images on a scale of -5 to +5 and provide comments on the positive or negative aspects of each image. Images were grouped into various categories including, residential, commercial, parking, and public space. In addition, residents broke out into smaller groups to discuss specific topics such as development/redevelopment opportunities, circulation, and visual character. Each group was provided with large maps of the area and asked to annotate the map with comments and illustrations.



Preparation of this plan report was also informed by the previous work done on the Near West Side Plan (2004) and the Fond du Lac and North Comprehensive Plan (2004). This planning documents provided the basic outline for City of Milwaukee comprehensive plans and also included recommendations for areas that met or overlap with the Washington Park Plan. Specifically, recommendations for Vliet Street are addressed in the Near West Plan, and recommendations for North Avenue east of 35th Street are contained in the Fond du Lac and North Plan.