

# *Executive Summary*

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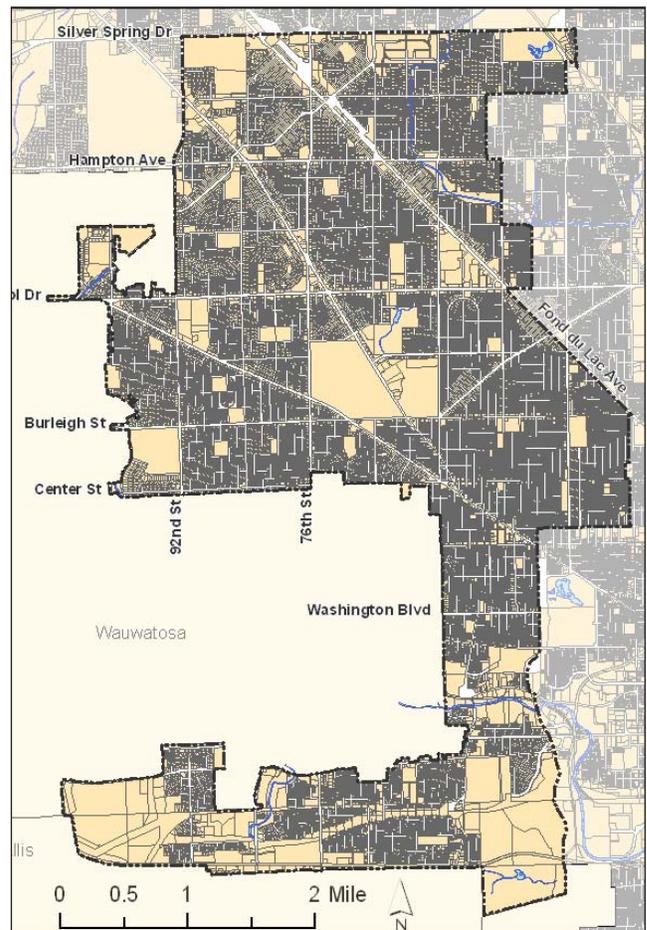
## **INTRODUCTION**

The West Side Area Plan covers 10,304 acres - or 16.1 square miles - on the western edge of Milwaukee. Its boundaries are approximately W. Silver Spring Drive on the north; W. Fond du Lac Avenue, North 42nd Street, North 35th Street and U.S. Highway 41 on the east; the City of Milwaukee municipal boundary with Wauwatosa on the west; and West Allis on the south along the I-94 freeway corridor. The planning area represents more than 15% of the City of Milwaukee's land mass and includes a diverse mix of neighborhoods, shopping districts, institutional uses, and regional destinations.

The West Side Area Plan is a component of the City's broader comprehensive planning effort and has been developed with the input of area business leaders, residents, property owners, elected officials, and City staff.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

The City's area planning process is designed to be inclusive and sought the input of the West Side's many neighborhoods and districts. Opportunities



for participation included: a community survey, image preference survey and discussion, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, a series of public meetings and workshops, small group meetings, and an open house. As a result, the West Side planning team gained valuable insight and feedback, which guided the development of the Plan.

### ***Plan Structure***

The West Side Plan includes broad policies and strategies, as well as recommendations tailored to specific locations. The Plan's land use policies and strategies apply to the area as a whole. They are categorized by land use type and generally support adaptive reuse and redevelopment that supports traditional neighborhood use patterns, as well as the existing context.

The Plan also identifies policies and redevelopment strategies for specific districts and corridors within the boundaries. These recommendations take into account the existing conditions of the areas, as well as the assets and opportunities identified by the local organizations.

Finally, the West Side Area Plan identifies eight significant catalytic projects and initiatives. These projects aim to illustrate a community-supported vision, while outlining general redevelopment principles and tools that could apply to other projects within the West Side. The primary goals of a catalytic project are to leverage investment in a neighborhood or district, increase the value of surrounding properties, and foster visible change within a project area.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

The following summary outlines some of the key findings discovered during the planning process, including demographic trends and data, as well as issues, assets, and opportunities identified through public outreach.

### ***Existing Conditions Overview***

Demographic trends and projections can help analyze development patterns and assess future

needs within a community. An analysis of 2000 U.S. Census data found the following:

- The West Side area is home to approximately 123,985 people or 20.8% of the City's residents.
- The population is relatively stable, with a minimal decline projected between 2000 and 2014.
- Home values on the West Side are slightly lower than values City-wide. They are anticipated to remain relatively stable (based on 2007-2008 data) with only a slight decline projected for the area.
- Home ownership is higher on the West Side (58%) than the City as a whole (45%). In general, owner-occupancy tends to be stronger in the western half of the planning area.
- The West Side area mirrors the diversity of the City overall, with a 51% minority population (predominantly Black - 43%).
- The West Side represents approximately 19% of the City's total workforce.

A review of land use within the West Side also reveals several key trends, including:

- Residential areas are primarily composed of single family homes, though there are concentrations of duplexes in the older neighborhoods on the eastern side of the plan area.
- The northwestern neighborhoods of the West Side are generally more homogeneous than the southeastern neighborhoods in terms of age of construction, architectural style, lot size, density, street width and block size.
- Generally, multifamily housing units are concentrated along the major arterials with higher concentrations located on the northwestern side of the plan area.
- There are sections of the major commercial corridors that are thriving, however there are many areas that are in need of revitalization and stabilization. There is a desire to make these commercial corridors

more pedestrian-friendly and customer-friendly.

- Parks are fairly well distributed throughout the area, although there are still some neighborhoods without direct access to parks or open space.
- There are direct connections between the Interstate Highway 94 corridor and many of the major institutions of the West Side, including Miller Park, the Milwaukee County Zoo, and State Fair Park.
- There is very little vacant land within the West Side.

### ***Public Outreach Overview***

Over the course of many months, several public outreach activities were conducted, including surveys, community-wide workshops, and interviews. The input gathered during these events identified several common themes, including:

#### **Assets**

- Quality housing stock
- Safe neighborhoods
- Diversity of population
- Spirit of activism
- Access to transportation infrastructure (local roads and freeways)

#### **Opportunities**

- Limit non-commercial uses on commercial corridors; support higher quality neighborhood shopping
- Improve neighborhood support for locally owned businesses
- Address concerns regarding local traffic and infrastructure
- Improve access to and quality of parks and open space
- Enhance alternative transportation options (public transit, bicycle, walking)

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on a detailed review of existing conditions, ongoing planning efforts within the West Side, and public input, several recommendations were incorporated into the West Side Area Plan. These policies and strategies are intended to guide decision-making, while reinforcing a community-supported vision for the future. Key recommendations for the West Side include:

### **Neighborhoods**

- Strengthen neighborhood identity, local assets community character, and physical environment
- Support “aging in place” features, including walkable neighborhoods and access to transit, parks, and neighborhood commercial districts
- Encourage single-family, owner-occupied development
- Encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment throughout the neighborhoods, including foreclosure properties

### **Districts**

- Support mixed-use development, providing balance to commercial corridors, vibrancy, and increase public safety
- Support or reestablish “destinations” and strong identities for areas within the West Side, including “landmark” institutions that serve the neighborhood and region
- Encourage locally-owned businesses that support the neighborhood and the community
- Promote the reuse of vacant buildings and lots in commercial areas with uses that contribute to the district
- Improve access to and amenity value of civic spaces (e.g. libraries, schools)
- Discourage non-commercial uses on commercial corridors (e.g. daycares, churches, social service providers)

### **Corridors**

- Reinforce techniques that provide traffic calming and support walkable shopping areas
- Promote traffic calming techniques and devices in all corridors, particularly those with transit stops or adjacent to residential areas and civic uses (e.g. libraries, schools)
- Support multi-modal transit options within the district, based upon the type of corridors. Options to consider include: high-speed transit; local transit (e.g. bus); and bicycle/pedestrian access

### **Sustainability**

- Encourage “green building” techniques and sustainable infrastructure in the community

### **Market Saturation & Capture**

In order to fully capitalize on the identified gaps or opportunities in commercial markets (see Market Analysis), it is necessary to (1) meet site and building requirements, (2) provide sufficient access for customers, (3) provide current updated retail formats for various stores, and (4) a welcoming and inviting shopping environment. In the case of local business and neighborhood shopping districts, this will probably mean a combination of Main Street strategies coupled with traffic calming and streetscape improvements. In every case, it will also require effective organization of businesses to work together to actively improve and promote the business district.

The industrial market in the plan area is negligible given an oversupply of industrial land in the surrounding area. A similar assessment may be made for the office market within the area, with the stipulation that older office space if upgraded may play a renewed role in capturing demand for financial and service related firms, e.g., education and health care.

Residential markets in the plan area require that there are newer housing products to meet demand, with covenants or other stipulation that owner-occupied units remain owner-occupied.

### **Catalytic Projects & Initiatives**

In addition to providing policies and redevelopment strategies, the West Side Area Plan also identified several redevelopment projects and programs aimed at increasing both economic value and community identity. These catalytic projects and initiatives outline a community-supported vision, as well as general guidelines and tools for redevelopment that are applicable throughout the planning area.

The following catalytic projects were selected for the West Side for (1) their ability to have a large, significant and positive economic impact on the immediate and surrounding area, e.g., job creation, improvements to services, shopping, or quality-of-life for Milwaukee residents; (2) their potential for leveraging investment both in the project area and in surrounding or spin-off projects that add long term value to the property tax base; and (3) their demonstrated basis for partnership with both the private sector businesses and community-based organizations in the project area, to ensure that project goals are met and a high standard of development is achieved.

- Gateway Zones & Aging Commercial Corridors
  - Midtown Gateway Area
  - Capitol Drive / 76th Street / Appleton Avenue
  - Hampton Avenue / Appleton Avenue / 84th Street / Grantosa Drive
- Local Business & Neighborhood Shopping Districts
  - Redevelopment Opportunities
  - Illustrated Design Manual
- Neighborhood Improvement Demonstration Project
- Major & Ongoing Initiatives
  - Master Plan for the Revitalization of Westlawn (Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee)
  - Mosaic on Burleigh - Visioning & Strategic Planning for the Burleigh Main Street District

# WEST SIDE AREA PLAN: CATALYTIC PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

