

Strategic Action Plan for Walker's Point - Document Outline 6/8/2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Walker's Point - Need for an Action Plan

1.1.1 Recent trends demonstrate fundamental changes.

1.2 Overview, history, boundaries, role in city development

1.2.1 Overview and "Sense of Place"

1.2.2 History of Walker's Point in summary

1.3 Planning context and issues

1.3.1 Investigate parking problems, real and/or perceived.

1.3.2 Expand upon the idea of a cultural, arts and entertainment district.

1.3.3 Investigate the merits of a locally designated historic district along S. 2nd Street.

1.3.4 Find ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections.

1.3.5 Recruit more neighborhood-serving businesses to Walker's Point.

1.3.6 Complete the planned build-out for the Reed Street Yards.

1.3.7 Review zoning for alignment with land use planning.

1.4 Planning partners/stakeholders/revenue sources

2. Information gathering and analysis

2.1 Area profile/maps

2.1.1 Population

2.1.2 Recent investments

2.1.3 Housing Conditions

2.1.4 Zoning

2.1.5 Land use/susceptibility to change/snapshot of real estate for sale

2.2 Summary of recent studies

2.2.1 Parking study (GRAEF) /4.14 under Strategic Actions

2.2.2 Building Opportunity study (Continuum/Spanish Center/Esperanza Unida)

2.2.3 UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning Studio Project

2.3 Developments and noteworthy initiatives underway

2.3.1 GMC Creative Placemaking Initiative

2.3.2 Innovation District Initiative

2.3.3 Reed Street Yards

2.3.4 Inner Harbor

2.3.5 Arts@Large - Corredor Creativo, Paliafito Park

2.4 Recommendations of previous plans

2.4.1 Near South Side Area Plan

2.4.2 ReFresh Milwaukee

2.4.3 Growing Prosperity

2.4.4 Milwaukee RiverLink Guidelines

2.4.5 2014-15 Walker's Point Association Annual Strategic Plan

2.5 Summary of focus groups / public workshops

3. District-wide Policies and Strategies

3.1 Overall goals.

- 3.1.1 Value and maintain social and economic diversity.
- 3.1.2 Keep Walker's Point affordable and sustainable.
- 3.1.3 Make Walker's Point a more walkable and bikeable community.
- 3.1.4 Encourage inventive and authentic businesses.

3.2 Maintain and enhance a fully functional community.

- 3.2.1 Cluster neighborhood retail and service businesses.
- 3.2.2 Connect walkable bikeable commercial corridors.

3.3 Promote and preserve diverse development types in distinct places.

3.4 Preserve, grow and attract manufacturing companies and jobs.

- 3.4.1 Maintain a healthy and robust mix of uses.
- 3.4.2 Retain and attract a variety of businesses.
- 3.4.3 Maintain and create affordable space for small businesses.
- 3.4.4 Look for ways to fund cooperative work spaces.

3.5 Increase the quantity and variety of housing.

- 3.5.1 Introduce more micro-housing.
- 3.5.2 Consider incorporating alternative forms of affordable housing.
- 3.5.3 Consider forming an artists' live/work community in or near the Creative Corridor.
- 3.5.4 Consider co-housing as a way for seniors to age in place.

3.6 Maintain historical character by rehabilitating existing buildings.

- 3.6.1 Reuse building stock instead of tearing it down.

3.7 Design new buildings to create authenticity.

3.8 Emphasize Sustainable Street Network Principles and Complete Streets.

- 3.8.1 Allow streets to serve all groups in the community.
- 3.8.2 Design streets for all modes of transportation, not just automobiles.
- 3.8.3 Make streets an important part of the public realm.
- 3.8.4 Reclaim streets.

3.9 Support creative placemaking techniques in creating a sense of community.

- 3.9.1 Support and coordinate current creative placemaking initiatives.
 - 3.9.1.1 S. 5th Street, S.6th Street and National Avenue Creative Corridor Initiative
 - 3.9.1.2 South Secondscape Artscaping Identity Plan
 - 3.9.1.3 Greater Milwaukee Committee's Creative Placemaking Initiative

3.10 Exploit unconventional opportunities for green space.

4. Strategic Actions and Initiatives

4.1 Value and maintain the social and economic diversity of Walker's Point.

- 4.1.1 Identify opportunities for creative placemaking.
- 4.1.2 Continue to review development policies for consistency with goals for economic and social diversity.
 - 4.1.2.1 Keep historic mixed use, e.g. walk-to-work neighborhoods that incorporate a range of uses to serve the neighborhood residents.
 - 4.1.2.2 Keep mixed use in adaptive reuse of older buildings, e.g. residential, commercial, "makerspace" or product design and assembly, light manufacturing.
 - 4.1.2.3 Support building projects that create a high-density high-amenity urban environment.
 - 4.1.2.4 Support building projects that create an "innovation district" form of academic/industry/design collaboration and cross-fertilization.
 - 4.1.2.5 Support building projects that create affordable housing for communities--intentional housing, shared housing cooperatives, veteran's housing, etc.
- 4.1.3 Continue to review current zoning for consistency with goals for economic and social diversity.
 - 4.1.3.1 Keep Industrial-Mixed (IM) zoning category for most of Walker's Point.
 - 4.1.3.2 Keep Industrial-Heavy (IH) zoning category for heavy industry that requires spatial isolation.
 - 4.1.3.3 Do overlay district zoning where it furthers the planning goals of the Walker's Point neighborhood.
 - 4.1.3.4 If the Harbor District Initiative is successful in securing funds from the State or from other sources to do a waterway plan for the area, consider a zoning overlay to implement the recommendations of that plan.

4.2 Keep Walker's Point affordable and sustainable.

- 4.2.1 Develop a strategy to help owners rehabilitate their buildings.
 - 4.2.1.1 Continue to pursue current financial strategies in addressing the needs of commercial, industrial and mixed use property owners--rehab loan programs, "white box" and city Retail Investment Fund (RIF), etc.
 - 4.2.1.2 Investigate funding mechanisms for affordable cooperative work spaces and buildings.
 - 4.2.1.3 Support property owners who seek state and federal historic tax credits and other funds such as WHEDA's Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), in doing projects that benefit Walker's Point.
- 4.2.2 Green the district (Walker's Point).
 - 4.2.2.1 Enlist the help of local architects and landscape architects to find sufficient green space for residents.
 - 4.2.2.2 Identify locations that could be developed as additional play areas for children (including rooftops).
 - 4.2.2.3 Use green elements to define major traffic arteries, e.g., S. 5th and 6th, National Ave, S. 2nd Street.
 - 4.2.2.4 Incorporate permeable paving and other "green" features in design of streets and parking areas.
 - 4.2.2.5 Consider a redesign of the 6th Street roundabout that would better accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.
- 4.2.3 Implement recommendations of parking study (GRAEF). See Appendix 6.1 for full study.

4.2.3.1 Emphasize shared parking.

4.2.3.2 Reduce unrestricted, on-street parking coupled with off-street parking solutions.

4.2.3.3 Support integrated parking structures before freestanding parking structures.

4.2.3.4 Balance parking to fit the needs of the larger district.

4.2.4 Continue the Milwaukee Riverwalk Initiative on the Walker's Point (south/southwest) side of the river.

4.2.4.1 As the river edge is developed, create a continuous riverwalk that meets the Milwaukee RiverLink Guidelines and the design standards of the Site Plan Review Overlay District.

4.2.4.2 Use stub ends (public streets that end at the river's edge) and unnamed city rights-of-way to create public access points.

4.2.5 Support the Harbor District Initiative (overlapping the Port of Milwaukee Redevelopment Project area) in the following actions.

4.2.5.1 Conduct a stakeholder-driven planning and visioning process for The Harbor District.

4.2.5.2 Restore the district's full potential as a green sustainable economic hub that serves industries throughout the state and the world.

4.2.5.3 Identify critical sites in need of brownfield remediation.

4.2.5.4 Bring together local, state, and federal government efforts, private sector interests, and the local community to achieve a world-class revitalization of this area for the benefit of the City and the Region.

4.2.5.5 Set a new standard for how waterfronts "work" environmentally, economically, and socially.

4.2.6 Evaluate criteria and support for historic district focused on S. 2nd Street.

4.2.6.1 Conduct a preliminary study to determine a boundary and a critical mass of buildings that would merit the creation of either a National Register Historic District or a Local Landmark District, or both.

4.2.6.2 Hold meeting(s) with property owners to discuss the benefits and broader results of creating a local historic district.

4.3 Make Walker's Point a more walkable and bikeable community.

4.3.1 Create stronger, walkable, bikeable connections on major east-west streets (Pittsburgh, Florida, National) and north-south streets (1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Streets) in Walker's Point. Do traffic calming where feasible. For more on this topic, go to Chapter 5 Catalytic Projects, Section 5.3.

4.3.1.1 Connect in an identifiable way the major trails that converge in Walker's Point (Hank Aaron State Trail, Oak Leaf Trail, the Kinnickinnic River Trail, the Milwaukee Riverwalk and the proposed Milwaukee Streetcar route future extension.

4.3.1.2 Reinforce trail/riverwalk connections (and district identity) with a combination of artistic wayfinding, graphic markers/insignia, and public art.

4.3.1.3 Make a stronger, more visible connection via a pedestrian bridge from the Hank Aaron State Trail at the Harley-Davidson museum to the MMSD parking area or to the Reed Street Yards plaza.

4.3.2 Identify streets in Walker's Point where the public right-of-way could work for complete street design.

4.3.2.1 Work with local groups, the Department of City Development and the Department of Public Works to limit curb cuts on complete streets.

4.3.2.2 Use traffic calming measures, e.g., right-of-way design, signage, graphic symbols, embedded pavers or pavement texture) on complete streets or potential complete streets to enhance walkability.

4.4 Encourage inventive and authentic businesses in Walker's Point.

4.4.1 Implement a creative district or corridor (Corredor Creativo) for 5th/6th and National Avenue (described further in Section 5.1 in Chapter 5 - Catalytic Projects).

4.4.2 Form organizational support for key commercial corridors (Business Improvement District, Community Development Corporation, Main Street organization or Merchant's Association). For more on this topic, go to Chapter 5 Catalytic Projects, Section 5.1 Creative Corridor, Items 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.

4.4.2.1 Consider the merits of forming a new business improvement district (BID), merchants' association or Main Street organization to assist in management of commercial corridors, e.g., marketing/promotion, property and other ongoing maintenance, streetscape enhancements, design guidelines and recruiting a balanced mix of "destination" and neighborhood-serving businesses.

4.4.2.2 Identify best type of organization for S. 5th Street, S. 2nd Street, Florida Street and National Avenue.

4.4.2.3 Walker's Point Association should, if possible, fund a position to provide organizational support for the commercial corridors.

4.4.3 Introduce more neighborhood-serving businesses that draw customers from Walkers Point, Third Ward, Downtown, Bay View and markets to the north, south and southwest (e.g. a full-service grocery store within the new Freshwater Plaza at S. 1st and Greenfield).

4.4.4 Support a Walker's Point Innovation District ((described further in Section 5.2 in Chapter 5 - Catalytic Projects).

4.4.4.1 Working with stakeholders, identify cultural, physical and economic assets for the Innovation District.

4.4.4.2 Using those identified assets, create real estate, entrepreneurial, and cultural asset maps.

4.4.4.3 Formulate both physical (building/site) and quality of life improvements to support the district.

4.4.4.4 Recruit businesses within industry clusters that will benefit from intellectual partnerships and proximity to other businesses within those same clusters. Note: Innovation district industries must be clean industry by virtue of its proximity to residential, commercial and recreational uses within the same district.

4.5 Improve the aesthetics of the district (Walker's Point).

4.5.1 Repair and rehab older buildings.

4.5.2 Ensure that new buildings (updated or infill buildings) fit the historic context of Walker's Point. New buildings (updated or infill buildings) should add to or enhance, not imitate historic architectural styles.

4.5.3 Work with property owners to restore historic facades.

4.5.4 Upgrade security fencing, e.g., chain link topped with barbed wire or concertina wire, to modern security fencing, e.g. architectural mesh on rail framework, welded steel wire, industrial palisade, etc.

4.5.5 Work with the railroads that currently cross through Walker's Point to improve the appearance and exterior surfaces of railroad bridges, and to make them gateway elements to the extent feasible.

4.5.6 Landscape parking lots (perimeter and interior). Improve paved areas with broken pavement, weeds, and replace bent or rusted chain link fencing--request support from Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) if needed.

4.5.7 Clean up and secure any illegal dump sites or unmonitored lots that have attracted "junk piles."

4.5.8 Work with property owners to improve storefront windows in commercial districts. Seek to remove or re-open boarded up or blocked out windows, especially storefront windows at street level (unless they are boarded temporarily for security reasons).

4.6 Identify additional opportunities for public art.

4.6.1 If possible, through the Walker's Point Association, engage neighborhood stakeholders to identify opportunities for public art or other arts-related amenities. Identify both conventional and unconventional opportunities, e.g., retaining walls and building facades (with permission), green space, public rights-of-way (street and sidewalk areas) and infrastructure, with permission from DPW.

4.6.2 Enlist the help of Walker's Point artists and arts organizations to identify opportunities for public art.

4.6.3 Preserve and enhance signatory and notable structures.

4.7 Continue to review ideas for "catalyst" or key opportunity sites.

4.7.1 Continue to review opportunities identified by the UWM SARUP Urban Development studio for Walker's Point (see Appendix 6.4). If possible, conduct a charette for those with greatest potential with local architects, artists, developers, investors, and key stakeholders from the Walker's Point community.

4.7.2 Continue to pursue redevelopment opportunity sites identified in Walker's Point public meetings, and as they arise.

4.7.2.1 At the southeast corner of S. 1st and Pittsburgh--do multi-family residential with parking on the lower level behind commercial.

4.7.2.2 Along E. Florida Street, support or give priority to mixed use multi-family housing, live/work/sell cooperative housing, or co-housing intentional communities.

4.7.2.3 At the northwest block of 2nd and Freshwater Way--create a gateway building, a mixed use complex, to the Reed Street Yards Eco-district.

4.7.2.4 At the property located at 822 S. 2nd Street--seek blight elimination and redevelopment.

4.7.2.5 Purchase from city (with preference given to Walker's Point businesses and residents) and redevelop vacant and foreclosed properties in the area, e.g., NW corner of 6th and National.

4.7.2.6 Redevelop former Esperanza Unida building at the corner of 6th and National Avenue (process has been started, project is underway).

4.7.2.7 Develop oversized parking lots, e.g.. S. 4th and Virginia (MPS); S. 6th and Bruce (Aurora).

4.7.2.8 Over time, seek redevelopment of low-density (non-historic) uses to higher density uses.

4.7.3 Review post-industrial sites and "functionally obsolete" warehousing and manufacturing buildings for potential as mixed-use renovations or new construction.

5. Catalytic Projects

5.1 Implement a creative district or corridor (Corredor Creativo) for 5th/6th Streets and National Avenue

5.1.1 Create a Business Improvement District (BID) or alternative group to manage the Creative Corridor.

5.1.2 Business Improvement District alternatives.

5.1.3 Create a TID to support improvements in the Creative Corridor.

5.1.4 Reconstruct S. 5th Street as a complete street.

5.1.4.1 The city's "kit of parts" or other special improvements to the public right of way

- 5.1.4.2 TID funded enhancements
- 5.1.4.3 Individual businesses' "personalized" spaces or elements
- 5.1.4.4 Other innovative approaches to recapturing public space to enhance the corridor

5.1.5 Reverse blighting influences on S. 6th Street.

- 5.1.5.1 Economic opportunity.
- 5.1.5.2 Challenges.

5.1.6 Apply creative placemaking techniques to the corridor or district

- 5.1.6.1 Ask local businesses and arts organizations to do "creative placemaking" and develop arts programming for the Creative Corridor.
- 5.1.6.2 Pursue grant opportunities to reclaim and reinvent Paliapito Park.

5.1.7 Strengthen National Avenue as an east-west corridor through Walker's Point.

- 5.1.7.1 Create a "Main Street" district along National Avenue (1st Street to I-94).
- 5.1.7.2 Long term goals.

5.1.8 Redevelop opportunity sites within the Creative Corridor

- 5.1.8.1 Redevelopable Buildings and Parcels
- 5.1.8.2 Update - 611 W. National (former Esperanza Unida building)

5.1.9 UWM Urban Development Studio Concepts.

- 5.1.9.1 Greening the district.
- 5.1.9.2 Overlooked opportunities (in no particular order).
- 5.1.9.3 Improving the gateway entry.
- 5.1.9.4 Complete streets and bike pathways.
- 5.1.9.5 Balanced approach to parking.
- 5.1.9.6 Increasing the residential base.
- 5.1.9.7 Transit-oriented development (TOD)

5.2 Support a Walker's Point Innovation Initiative

- 5.2.1 Consider adding a zoning overlay to support the Walker's Point Innovation Initiative.
- 5.2.2 Keep the diversity of the Walker's Point neighborhood.
- 5.2.3 Improve physical and social connectivity.
- 5.2.4 Build industry partnerships that can implement the best available structured network for high speed data transmission, computing and storage in metro Milwaukee.
- 5.2.5 Continue to develop projects that incorporate local arts and culture.
- 5.2.6 Preserve and adapt historic buildings for mixed use.
- 5.2.7 Support both the new and old economy in job creation.
- 5.2.8 Do more to green the Walker's Point neighborhood.
- 5.2.9 Provide waterfront access where opportunities present themselves.
- 5.2.10 The City and Innovation Initiative partners should continue to explore both public and private sector financial tools tailored to support cost-effective and flexible space for start-ups and entrepreneurial business platforms.
- 5.2.11 Ensure Bradley Tech is a high performing school.

5.3 Make and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections.

- 5.3.1 Address opportunities and challenges as existing tools permit.
 - 5.3.1.1 Create better signing and wayfinding for urban trails that converge in Walker's Point.
 - 5.3.1.2 Make the 6th Street roundabout more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
 - 5.3.1.3 Add designated bicycle lanes on National Avenue.
 - 5.3.1.4 Consider removing angle parking on S. 5th Street.
 - 5.3.1.5 Consider adding traffic calming to more pedestrian-oriented streets.
 - 5.3.1.6 If feasible, add to the designated (signed) east-west bike routes.
 - 5.3.1.7 If feasible, improve designated (signed) north-south bicycle accommodations.
 - 5.3.1.8 Add bike sharing stations and auto alternatives to increase transportation choices.
 - 5.3.1.9 Pursue available greening solutions for S. 1st Street.
 - 5.3.1.10 Extend the Milwaukee Riverwalk as properties develop along S. Water Street.
 - 5.3.1.11 Use Riverwalk stub ends and unnamed city rights-of-way as public access points.
 - 5.3.1.12 Pursue future improvements and areas for city/neighborhood study and collaboration.
 - 5.3.1.13 Resolve "small" problems that detract from quality-of-life.

5.4 Complete the Reed Street Yards Eco-district

- 5.4.1 Recent projects
 - 5.4.1.1 Freshwater Way
 - 5.4.1.2 Global Water Center Water
 - 5.4.1.3 Water Tech One
- 5.4.2 Redevelopment challenges and financial costs
 - 5.4.2.1 Need for environmental remediation
- 5.4.3 Potential for job creation
- 5.4.4 Pedestrian bridge from Harley-Davidson Museum to Reed Street Yards

5.5 Add Local Landmark designation to the S. 2nd Street Historic District

- 5.5.1 Preliminary study of S. 2nd Street local historic designation
- 5.5.2 What would local designation mean for the property owners?
- 5.5.3 Making the case for local historic designation - an added layer of protection
- 5.5.4 Making the case for local historic designation - economic benefits
- 5.5.5 Making the case for local historic designation - timing relative to the Milwaukee market

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Walker's Point Parking Study (GRAEF)
- 6.2 Building Opportunity Study (Continuum/Hispanic Center/Esperanza Unida)
- 6.3 Summary of survey comments
- 6.4 2015 UWM SARUP Urban Development Studio Presentation: Concepts for a 'Corredor Creativo'
- 6.5 Historic Preservation fact sheets - National Register and Local Designation
- 6.6 Near South Side Plan Catalytic Project #3 - Create a Cultural, Arts and Entertainment District