

Walker's Point Strategic Action Plan - Executive Summary

This strategic action plan for Walker's Point, home to some of Milwaukee's most creative businesses and organizations, was undertaken primarily to accomplish the following:

- (1) Create a template (value statements, guidelines, and actions) that will allow for new development, but also keep the Walker's Point neighborhood livable and affordable, and preserve its best features as perceived by the people who live, work, invest, and arguably have made it the desirable place that it is.
- (2) Working with the Department of Public Works, develop a series of improvements to streets and other public rights-of-way to improve the walkability and bikeability of the Walker's Point neighborhood.
- (3) Discuss possible solutions to ongoing challenges for the neighborhood: affordable housing, lack of neighborhood-serving businesses, the need for a business organization to shepherd growth, and others.
- (4) Discuss ways to reinforce (not lose with an influx of new development) the character that people find desirable and continue to provide real support for a neighborhood that is in the words of many of its longtime residents--diverse, LGBT-friendly, affordable, sustainable, self-reliant, inventive and authentic.
- (5) Pursue catalytic projects capable of sparking new investment. Reinvent S. 5th and S. 6th Streets and National Avenue as a Creative Corridor--a kind of arts, culture and entertainment district with broad appeal to residents and visitors to the area. Consider the merits of a local historic district on S. 2nd St. Promote an "Innovation Initiative" (the integration of mixed use, creative collaboration and high tech). As new riverfront projects come online, extend the riverwalk with public access and green space. Use the creative place making techniques suggested by UWM students to enliven commercial corridors.
- (6) Consider suggested remedies for a parking shortage from a Parking Study conducted by GRAEF Engineers, Architects and Planners, along with some comparisons between Milwaukee and other cities. For example, the Study mentions a shortage of shared or public parking, not a shortage of parking lots.
- (7) Establish goals for development that the city can use as a guideline for approving (or not approving) new development in Walker's Point--specifically special or limited uses and Detailed Plan Developments. For example, as the city reviews post-industrial sites and "functionally obsolete" warehousing and manufacturing buildings for potential as mixed-use renovations or new construction, what are the redevelopment goals that determine where and how these post-industrial sites should be converted.
- (8) Find ways to green the neighborhood--create both active and passive recreation sites, green space and parks, and uncover overlooked or underdeveloped opportunities for gardens, greenways and lanes.
- (9) In keeping with the values of Walker's Point residents, encourage energy-efficient transit-oriented development, and find ways to support sustainable development that includes rehab of existing homes.

Principal leadership in accomplishing these goals will likely continue to come from the local Alderman, the Walker's Point Association and the many civic-minded businesses and groups such as Arts@Large, the Mandel Group, Greater Milwaukee Committee and citizens who contribute their energy and time.