



# Harambee North-Keefe Avenue Corridor

## Safe Growth - Milwaukee 2013

### **Contributors:**

Jacob Corr– Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office

Chris Grant– Riverworks Development Corp.

Derrick Lemmie Jr.– Milwaukee Police Department

Glen Mattison– Neighborhood Resident

Bree Spencer– Safe and Sound Inc.

# Visioning

## Neighborhood and Safety Team Objectives:

- 1) Reduce nuisance activity along the West Keefe Avenue
- 2) Activate neutral space along the West Keefe Avenue corridor and in doing so improve neighborhood cohesion

## Planning process to date:

Step 1: First meeting of the D5 SafeGrowth Team post initial training— assign tasks including procuring asset maps, speak with residents and invite participation in the community meeting, crime data

Step 2: Gather data— figure out what information the team has currently and gather data to fill any gaps

Step 3: Community Meeting at Hope School— discuss neighborhood concerns and wishes, get an understanding of local hotspots and cool spots, schedule safety audits

Step 4: Conduct Safety Audits - conducted on the South East corner of the intersections along West Keefe Avenue from 1st to 5th Streets

Step 5: Meet with SafeGrowth Team post audits— discuss audits, begin to plan report outline and presentation

Step 6: Create Asset Maps - Use RiverWorks relevant neighborhood data and meld it with a map of the West Keefe Avenue using GIS

Step 7: Get Crime Statistics - Several weeks after the initial request and several attempts to follow-up later, receive excellent crime statistics from Milwaukee Police Department's OMAP division

Step 8: Ride Along with police officer— view Club 2 C activity around bar close

Step 9: Meet with the SafeGrowth Team— final discussion related to the report and presentation, final assignment of tasks, discussion of Club 2 C activity

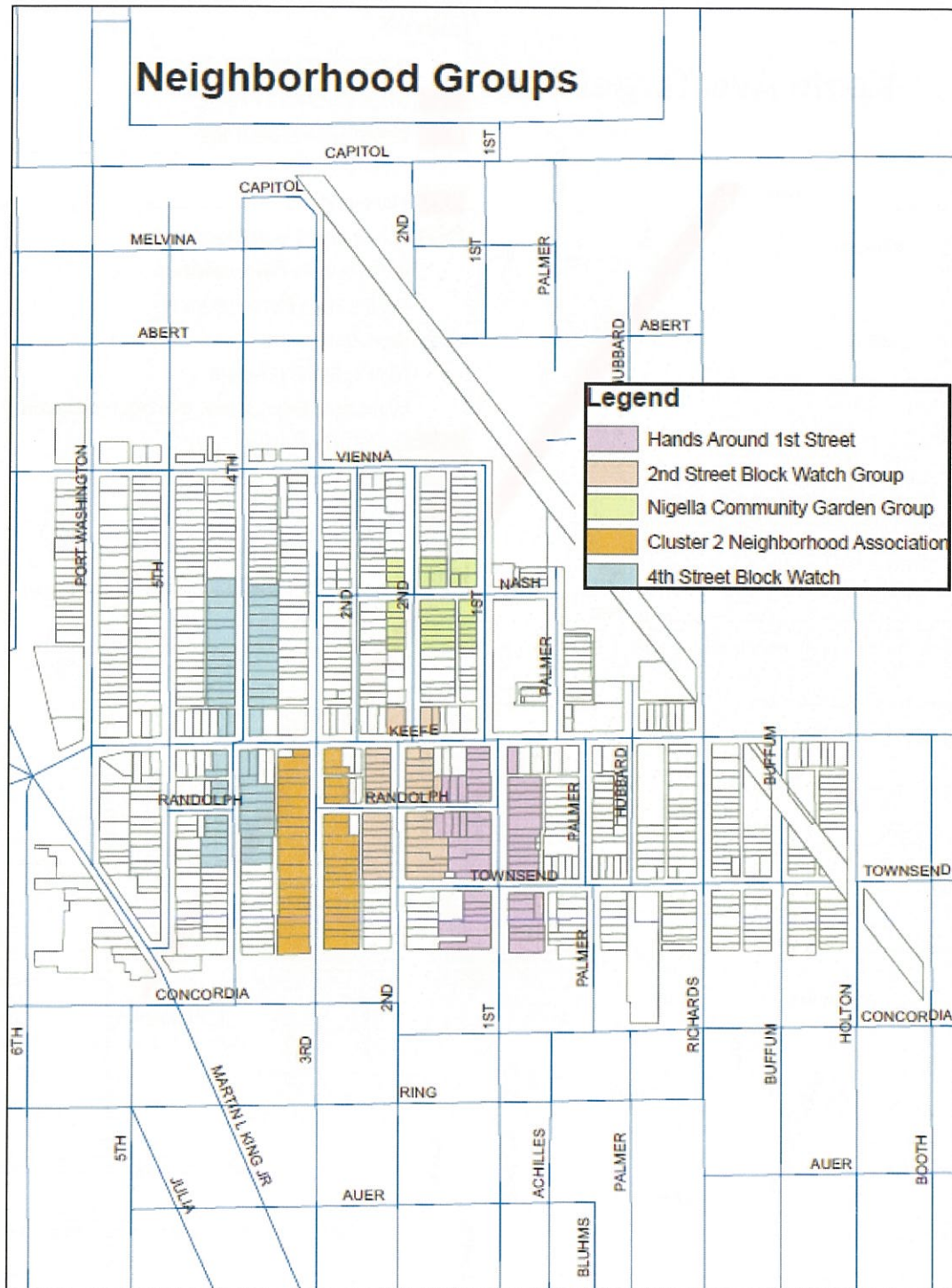
## Data collected:

Asset Maps	Resident Feedback
GIS Info for Corridor	Photos
Crime Statistics	Video
Census Data	Safety Audits



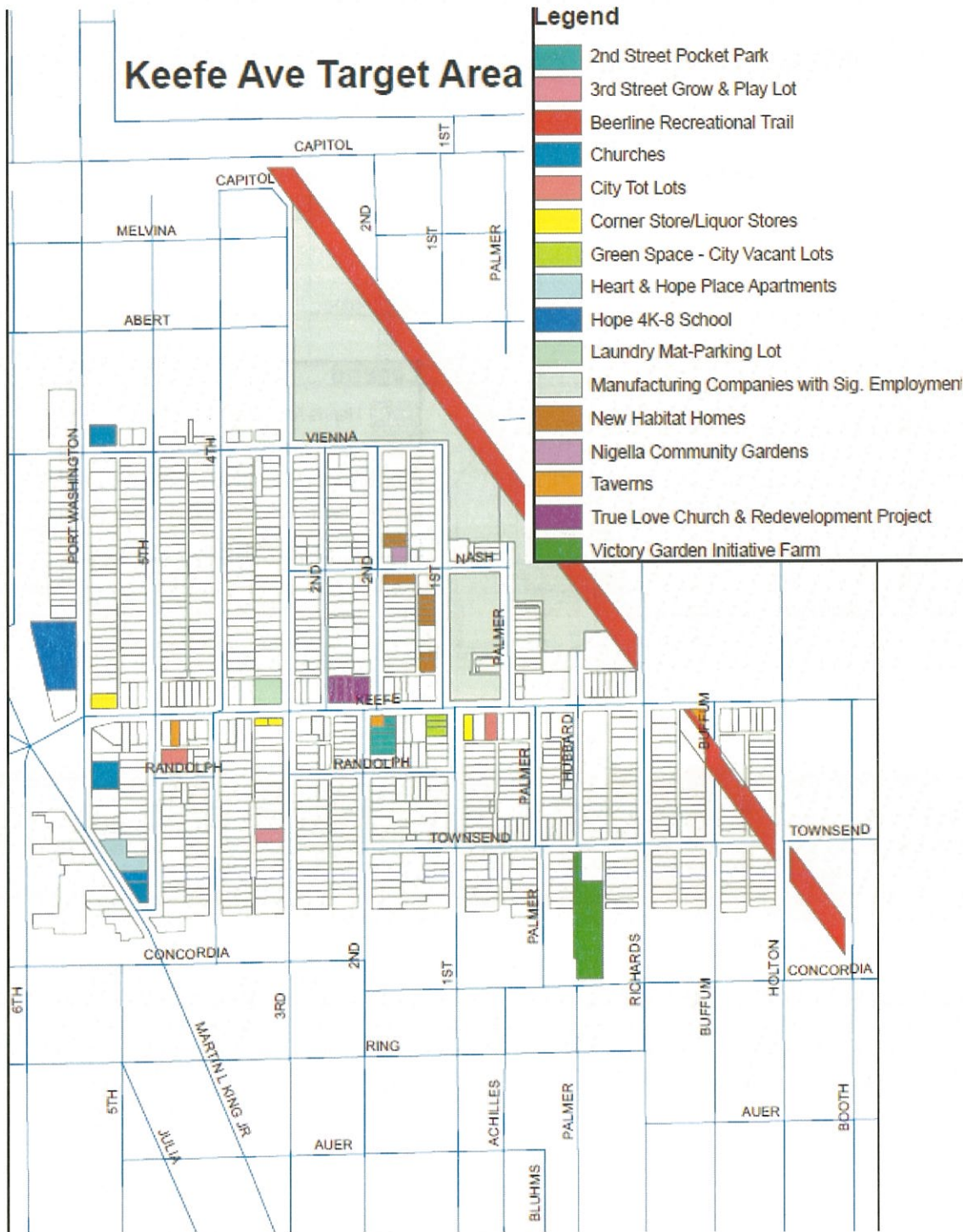
# Visioning: Asset Maps

Below is a map that shows the locations of the five local neighborhood groups. One barrier that exists within the area is actually the lack of unity between these groups. They may be geographically close to one another but they may be miles apart in terms of vision and willingness to work together.



# Visioning: Asset Maps

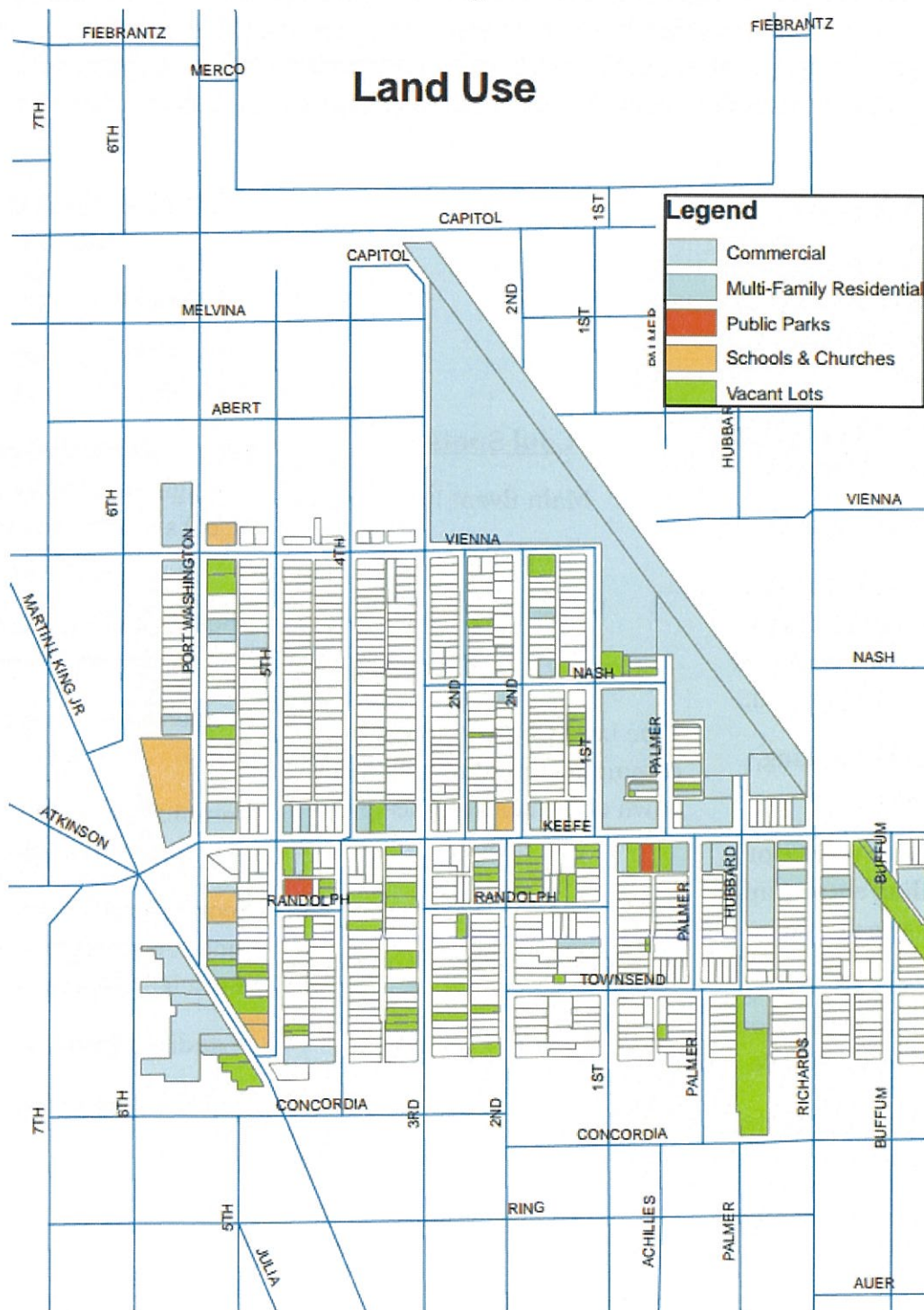
This map shows the diverse land use along the West Keefe Avenue Corridor. Based on our SafeGrowth Planning Project, it looks as though incompatible land use may be a causal factor behind some of the worse nuisance activity in the area. Notice the incompatible land use at 2nd and Keefe, which has a bar, a park and a church.





# Visioning: Asset Maps

This map shows land use information particular to public, commercial or multi-family residential space. The remaining parcels are residential, but many of those are vacant. These vacancies as well as the vast number of rentals versus the number of home owners in the area make it more difficult for residents to create and maintain neighborhood cohesion.



# Visioning: Community Meeting

Invitations to this meeting intentionally came from our SafeGrowth team member, Glenn, who is a resident of the area and Sunne, a RiverWorks employee who has a great rapport with the neighbors. We have only held one meeting to date, but look forward to working with these residents more in the future.

We were all really impressed with the turn out for a first meeting, sixteen people attended and participated in the discussion. Despite all the difficulties in the area, it was refreshing to see so many people excited about the prospect of change. Below are the results of our discussion which was again, led by our team member Glenn, who facilitated at a pace that really helped residents get their creative juices flowing.

## Neighborhood Concerns:

Overgrown brush – people can hide and loiter without being seen from the street, can ambush people

Landlords that have a revolving door of irresponsible tenants

Loud music – houses and cars

Vacant houses – people break-in and have house parties. Some houses have had a raze order for years but still not being razed.

Loitering – Public Drinking, Smoking

Not a lot of calls for service or people not providing correct info when they call

Speeding – in some areas they even race in the same route, along N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and W Keefe Ave

Drug Dealing – Along W Keefe, lots of traffic

Unsupervised Children running around

## Cool Spots:

Main Event Lot

Hope School

Beer Line Trail

2<sup>nd</sup> & Keefe Pocket Park

True Love Church – Soon to be community buildings, shutting down of former nuisance properties

2<sup>nd</sup> & Nash

N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Play & Grow

## Utopian Neighborhood Ideas:

Better Lighting & Cameras

More Good Businesses along W Keefe – like restaurants, etc.

Great Communication amongst neighbors, businesses and CBO's – more connectivity & cohesion

Beautification: bus shelter in Five Points, Freeway exit

Farmers Market on Main Event lot

Community Center on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ln & W. Keefe

Coordinated Vibrant Neighborhood Association – Capitol to Burleigh/Expressway to Hope

Landlord Initiative/Compact

More Owner-occupied houses



# Problem Identification: Crime Statistics

This map clearly shows that crime is an issue in the West Keefe Avenue Corridor. Both personal and property crimes are concerns in this area.

The crimes shown on the map occurred in the first seven months of 2013.

City of Milwaukee  
Keefe Avenue: 1st to 4th Street

- Homicide
- Rape
- robbery
- Aggravated assault
- Burglary
- Theft / larceny
- Motor vehicle theft

Offense	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Jan-Jul 2013	2007-2012	2011-2012
Homicide	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	100%	N/C
Rape	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0%	0%
Robbery	17	12	15	17	7	15	4	-12%	114%
Agg Assault	23	23	13	28	13	20	13	-13%	54%
Burglary	13	31	18	24	39	38	11	192%	-3%
Auto Theft	21	12	14	5	16	12	5	-43%	-25%
Theft	36	37	49	55	35	21	22	-42%	-40%
Arson	0	1	3	0	2	0	2	N/C	-100%
<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Property Crime</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>-21%</b>
<b>Total Crime</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>-4%</b>



0 0.1 0.2 Miles



The above map shows major IBRS offenses along Keefe Ave from 1st to 4th st (and surrounding one block area). The data was retrieved from the Milwaukee Police Department Daily Crime Summary (DCS) fact table and includes incidents between 1-1-2013 and 7-31-2013.

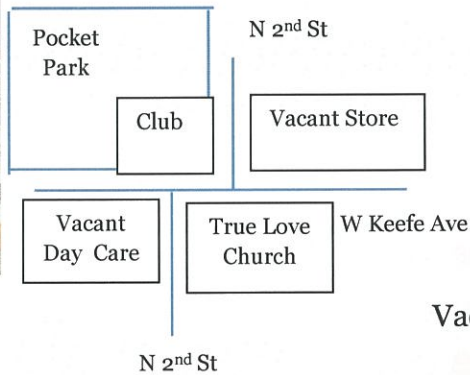
The above map shows 1-1-2013 to 7-31-2013 crime density for the city of Milwaukee. Darker shaded areas are locations of higher crime.

# Problem Identification and Analysis

The most challenged corner along the corridor, 2nd & Keefe, demonstrates how context is everything when trying to understand a neighborhood.



Vacant Day Care and Club 2 C  
along W Keefe facing East



Vacant Store Front and True Love Church  
along W Keefe facing West

2nd & Keefe is an example of incompatible land use, which by itself is a neutral feature. As noted on the map above, 2nd & Keefe has a bar, two vacant buildings— a former salon and a former daycare and a church. The pocket park is contiguous to the bar. 2nd Street, both North and South of Keefe is residential. East and West of this intersection, along Keefe, is residential. Prior to this project, the pocket park was a puzzle. It is a beautiful space, but it isn't really utilized by the neighborhood residents during the day.

During our project, the team discovered something interesting about how incompatible land use at this corner has created significant territoriality issues in this area. The night time activities at the bar haunt the pocket park long after the bar-goers are gone, turning what should be defensible public space into offensive space that no one wants to go near during the day.

## **This creates a two fold barrier to change:**

- 1) Long standing problems are not just harder to correct, but also harder to get residents to rally around. The SafeGrowth Team isn't the first group of concerned CBOs and public servants to express concern about this area. Residents may be skeptical—what makes this time any different?
- 2) Due to the lack of neighborhood identity, it can be very difficult to get residents to take any ownership over change when it does happen. The Pocket Park behind Club 2 C is an excellent example. Residents helped to initially put the park together. Maintaining the park has been a different story. Who can blame them when every Thursday and Friday night the park is over run with people exhibiting no regard for the neighborhood? It is hard to care about a "public space" that is a constant reminder of a problem area.



# Problem Identification and Analysis

## Surveillance

The West Keefe Avenue Corridor suffers from isolation. Remembering the SafeGrowth training discussion about natural surveillance our team was surprised to realize just how isolated this area feels when discounting the presence of vehicle traffic. West Keefe is a major connector between different parts of the city.

During the day, there are few people around to provide “eyes on the street”. At night there is a crowd of people so loud and so large that people might feel isolated both from outside and within the group.

## Movement Predictors

Movement predictors are clear in this area, for both positive and negative movement, and this was reflected very clearly in the safety audits. Through the audits it was made clear that lighting and landscaping are points of considerable concern for residents at each intersection along West Keefe Ave between 1st and 5th. This feeling was also reflected at the community meeting, where participants described better lighting as an attribute that could be found in a utopian neighborhood.

## Maintenance

There is not much litter, which is a wonderful and surprising attribute in this area. The area feels clean, but somehow this doesn't really positively affect the image of the area. It is likely that the vacant properties along West Keefe, some of which are residential and others which are commercial, work against attempts to beautify the area. If the corridor feels abandoned, with few pedestrians and several boarded up buildings, the overall sense is a neighborhood that has no positive identity or cohesive culture. For those interested in utilizing city space to set up illicit businesses or activities, a seemingly unclaimed neighborhood is a desirable staging ground.

# Problem Identification & Analysis: Club 2 C

Club 2 C has been a problem for a long time. However, due to an interesting mix of resident reporting fatigue, reporting gaps and political obstacles, it has not been addressed.

This club is in a run down building that looks very much like a rental residence. During the day the building does nothing for the community but provide a couple of places for possible entrapment and increase the feeling of isolation.

Night time is a different story. On Thursday and Friday nights, the intersection of 2nd and Keefe becomes overwhelmed by car and foot traffic and the SE corner of the street is filled the brim with club goers. There are people shouting, music blaring and loiterers spill down the block in both directions. Fights and shots fired, shootings and even the occasional homicide occur around this spot, yet it has been difficult to provide enough information to the licensing committee to get them to tie these activities directly to the bar. Thus during the last license committee hearing the bar manager received a 10 day suspension of his license, but nothing further.

During our SafeGrowth Planning Project, two members of our team did a ride along with an Officer in an undercover car just prior to bar close in the wee hours of Saturday morning. The activity outside the club from 1:00 to 2:00 am was shocking.



The picture on the left is the intersection of 2nd & Keefe during the day. At night, the area transforms. On the right is a picture of the traffic and parked cars that are drawn to the corridor as a result of the club. They clog traffic in this residential neighborhood, making it impossible for residents to drive through this area, let alone walk or otherwise engage with their neighborhood space.

During the day this area is not used for parking. In fact, even at night the parking along the West Keefe Corridor is exclusive to a block in either direction from 2nd & Keefe which is where the club is located.



# Strategy: Short Term

## Foundational Goal

**To -> For -> With** driven where residents drive the plan through regular community input sessions, planning and implementation.

In the short term it is important to identify and address the concerns brought up in the community meeting that are most accessible to the SafeGrowth Team and its partners. Include residents in the planning stages and encourage them to participate in other ways as the process continues. Use the short term projects as ways to build relationships between neighbors. Based on a working knowledge of municipal processes, we will remind residents that neighborhoods that are identified as caring about their community build relationships with service providers. As a result of those relationships, service providers will care more and put more effort into the neighborhood responding more quickly and more effectively to concerns.

## Lighting

Focus on green spaces that swallow light

Increase/Improve lighting using funding from:

- RiverWorks Business Improvement District
  - MKE Department of Public Works
- MKE Community Improvement Project Grant



Picture of a vacant lot on the SW corner of 1st & Keefe at 1:50pm

## Landscaping & Sight Lines

Use these tool to try and reduce risk in potential entrapment areas

Vacant lot on SW corner of 1st and Keefe—  
significant landscaping

Tot Lot

Sunshine Foods—SW Corner of building



Picture of a vacant lot on the SW corner of 1st & Keefe at 1:50am



# Strategy: Mid Term

## Space Activation

Use space activation as a tool for building neighborhood cohesion.

The desire for appropriately active space was clearly expressed by residents. This came through in the Safety Audits in which showed that residents feel there is an absence of positive cultural and social activities in the area. This also came through during our community meeting where residents described a desire for green space use, beautification and economic development. The desire for more community cohesion and connectivity was expressed and could be better met through the creation of more defensible rather than defensible space.

Riverworks will continue their efforts to connect residents to resources and to one another through art and will evolve their approach to include the West Keefe Corridor green spaces, including the Pocket Park, Tot Lot and vacant lots. RiverWorks has already worked with residents to improve the Pocket Park, but as discussed earlier, the space still isn't being used to promote positive community activities.

The SafeGrowth Team will work to engage outside partners to foster connectivity with the help of residents including resources like: Victory Gardens and Groundwork Milwaukee to establish gardens, a farmer's market, etc.

The Harambee Great Neighborhoods Initiative "Community Pride Projects" may be able to spot light a West Keefe green space.

The SafeGrowth Team, which will expand to include residents, will work with Medovations— a business in the area with clearly demarcated private space—to figure out if there is a way to activate the space around their factory in a positive way. There is also a perception amongst residents that Medovation does not hire people from the neighborhood, but they do! Encourage Medovation to do some public relations work and help them educate residents about the business.



2nd & Keefe Pocket Park



Medovations Business Complex, 1st & Keefe



# Strategy: Long Term

We have identified a couple of long term goals to reduce nuisance and improve neighborhood cohesion. Resident participation and innovation is so important to this process however that we find it difficult to predict just what our long term goals will be since they will evolve with resident input and participation as we implement.

## Long Standing Nuisance Abatement

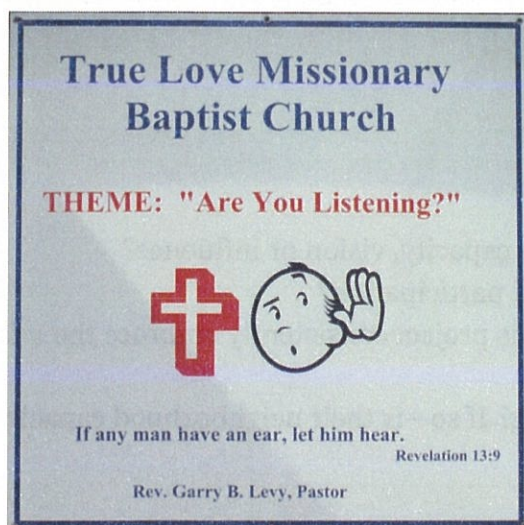
One of the struggles that the Community Prosecution Unit has faced in abating nuisance activity in this area is lack of continuous resident feedback through police calls or through interactions with regulatory entities like the City Licensing Committee. When residents do participate in these processes, they don't always get the results they hoped to achieve. The result is frustration and reporting fatigue.

If we are successful in building a more cohesive neighborhood through our work in the short and long term, we will have more success with nuisance abatement. We will have more access to community intelligence, more willingness on the part of residents to report and with those two pieces in place, we should have enough to build an efficient abatement strategy.

We will focus on drug houses along the West Keefe Avenue Corridor as well as the nuisance activity at Club 2 C. Closing down some of the drug and inappropriate club behavior would be a huge win for this neighborhood. People would feel safer and perhaps be able to address the issues of territoriality that have kept areas unavailable to residents.

## Help Residents Build a More Close Knit Neighborhood Group

Per the Neighborhood Group Asset map it is clear that there is enough interest in forming a neighborhood group to sustain some kind of organizational force of residents. One of our long term goals would be to help encourage the development of a unified neighborhood group, perhaps a Neighborhood Association. This was identified as one of the qualities of a utopian neighborhood during our community meeting.



Sign on True Love Church - a good reminder of our mission to work *with* the neighbors

# Evaluation

## **To evaluate whether or not our West Keefe Avenue Corridor project is successful we will utilize:**

- Safety Audits: Compare to original Safety Audits to see if there has been any improvement
- Crime Data: Has there been any decreases in crime since the beginning of project implementation?
- Has there been an increase in the number of residents involved in:
  - Community Feedback Meetings
  - Project Implementation
  - Neighborhood Activities
  - Neighborhood Association
- Number of new or improved businesses in the area

## **Did the wishes of the residents articulated in the first D5 SafeGrowth Plan Community Meeting come to fruition?**

- If so:
  - Are the community members happy with the changes that have occurred as a result of this project?
  - How will the SafeGrowth Team and neighbors need to evolve to continue benefiting the neighborhood?
  - What can be improved in the future?
  - Have the successes and opportunities for improvement been documented?
- If not:
  - What didn't work?
  - What could be done better in the future?
  - Who needs to be at the table to fill gaps in capacity, vision or influence?
  - Was there enough resident ownership and participation?
  - Did the service providers involved with this project consistently embrace the *with* aspect of the SafeGrowth Model?
  - Were there any issues with lack of funding? If so—is their neighborhood capacity to raise funding in the future?