

M I L W A U K E E

# comprehensive **Plan**

DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT • JUNE, 2006

## Washington Park

*A Plan for the Area*

### **Washington Park Partners**

Building  
partnerships

**Good design  
is good  
for business**

**Strengthening  
the neighborhood**

Increasing  
value





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# **Washington Park Comprehensive Area Plan**

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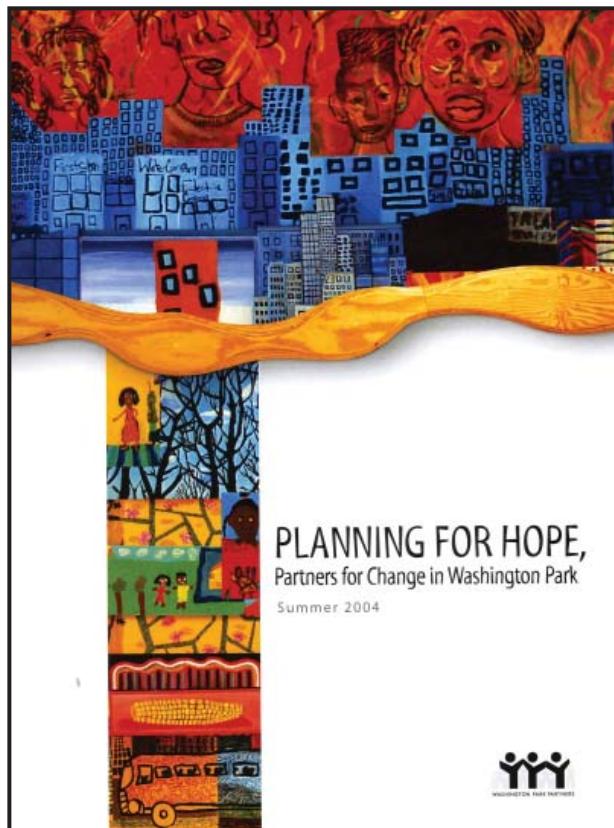


# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Washington Park Comprehensive Area Plan has been a community-based planning effort based upon the momentum created by recent revitalization activities and current neighborhood assets, including its close proximity to downtown, easy access to freeways and major bus routes, historic architectural charm, and most importantly, dedicated and active neighborhood associations and residents. The plan establishes priorities for strengthening these community housing, business, retail, transportation recreational and cultural assets. The plan promotes investment and provides guidance for public and private development initiatives.

This plan is largely based on work that preceded this planning effort undertaken by Washington Park Partners (WPP). WPP created a quality of life plan entitled “Planning for Hope”, for the area which identified many of the strengths, opportunities and challenges of the area. WPP heavily engaged the community in its process to gain insight into the concerns of the residents. The City of Milwaukee, in partnership with WPP, used the ‘Planning for Hope’ document as the basis for this plan.



## Planning Context

### **City Comp Plan Structure**

The preparation of the Washington Park Comprehensive Plan has been done under the authority of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, Wis. Stat. 66.1001, more commonly referred to as "Smart Growth" Legislation. The 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, and subsequently 1999 Assembly Bill AB872 and 2001 Wisconsin Act 16, revised planning legislation for all communities in the State. The Smart Growth legislation provides a framework for developing comprehensive plans, and requires that any program or action of a community that affects land use must be consistent with the community's comprehensive plan. Therefore, upon adoption of all land use decisions must be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies outlined in the Milwaukee Washington Park Comprehensive Area Plan.

The City of Milwaukee's comprehensive planning process has been structured to recognize the different levels of interest, the need to plan for the entire City as well as its smaller geographic areas. Consequently, the City's Comprehensive Plan consists of two components: a citywide policy plan and multiple area plans. The Washington Park Comprehensive Plan is one of these area plans.

The overall organization of this plan is intended to create a document that is clear, concise, and user-friendly. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a succinct review and analysis of neighborhood characteristics, including the existing demographic and physical conditions and a summary of the public participation process results. The Land Use chapter identifies the types of uses and related design guidelines planned for the Washington Park area as a whole. The District and Corridor chapter specifies geographically where those land uses should be located and provides additional design standards specified to those locations. The Catalytic Projects chapter identifies a number of specific sites within the area and makes recommendations for the development of those sites. By structuring recommendations, first for the whole neighborhood, then for specific districts, and finally for particular sites, policy recommendations can easily be referenced based on specifics of a reinvestment proposal.

### **Plan Purpose**

The purpose of the Washington Park Comprehensive Plan is to create a place where people can live, work and play in a safe, inviting community. The plan establishes priorities for strengthening and building upon the neighborhood assets. The plan promotes investment and provides guidance for public and private development. By creating new business opportunities, enhancing existing recreation and cultural alternatives, creating pedestrian-friendly areas, and creating a lifestyle option that can result in minimizing the development of

outlying areas, the improvement to the area will provide benefits for the neighborhood, city and region.

## Plan Goals and Objectives

### **Overall Goal**

- Preserve the overall neighborhood character as a compact, interconnected and walkable area.
- Build upon the traditional development patterns and existing assets of the neighborhood.

### **Residential**

- Strengthen and improve the exiting neighborhood fabric.
- Increase owner-occupancy throughout the Washington Park area.

### **Commercial**

- Create retail destinations that utilize existing commercial land and infrastructure.
- Enhance the marketability of commercial nodes to promote economic stability and growth.

### **Institutional and Public Spaces**

- Increase sense of security throughout the Washington Park Area.
- Enhance pubic destinations and gathering places for residents and visitors.

### **Transportation, Parking and Infrastructure**

- Recreate the historic neighborhood traffic patterns to maximize route alternatives.
- Improve the viability of transportation alternatives.

## Neighborhood Context

### Community Boundaries

The boundary for the Washington Park Neighborhood Plan encompasses the areas designated as Washington Park and Walnut Hill, while also including small portions of the Metcalfe Park and Midtown neighborhoods. The Washington Park planning boundary fills the area between the previously completed Near West Side and Fond du Lac and North comprehensive plans, ensuring that all of the area between U.S. Highway 41 and Interstate 43, from Interstate 94 to North Avenue is covered by a City of Milwaukee comprehensive plan document. The east side of N. 47th Street, which frames U.S. 41, is the western boundary for this study. Vliet Street along the south side of Washington Park is the southern boundary, also including those parcels that front on the south side of Vliet Street from Highland Boulevard to 27th Street. The eastern boundary is defined by 27th Street, a short block along Galena Street and 26th Street, then includes those parcels that front on Walnut Avenue from 26th Street to the CP Railroad tracks between 31st and 30th streets up to Garfield Avenue and then 35th Street. The northern boundary is Meinecke Avenue, so as to include all of the North Avenue corridor and former Park West freeway right of way.

### Location within the City

Washington Park is located between the I-94 and Fond du Lac Avenue corridors, on the northern border of the Near West Side neighborhood. At the sub-regional scale, Washington Park lies nearly equidistant and on a line between downtown Milwaukee and Mayfair Mall; the neighborhood is located approximately 3 miles west of downtown Milwaukee, and 4 miles east of the Mayfair Mall shopping and employment center. If 35th Street is taken to mark the conceptual middle point of the Washington Park neighborhood area, then Wauwatosa begins 25 blocks to the west at 60th Street. The neighborhood's location can also be conceptualized as being in that tier of western destinations that include Miller Park stadium, Miller Brewery, and Harley-Davidson Motor Company. In fact, the Harley-Davidson plant and headquarters lies less than a block south of the planning area boundary, while Miller Brewing Company lies just beyond Washington Park. Miller Park stadium and the Menomonee Valley are a dozen blocks south of the neighborhood.

### Physical and Cultural History

In the last decades of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th century, the area that is now the Washington Park neighborhood was a newly subdivided section of the City of Milwaukee located at the northwestern periphery of the growing metropolis. Streets were laid out in the standard Milwaukee grid, creating blocks nearly 700 feet long from north to south and 300 wide. Plats maximized the number of lots on each block, with the majority being 30 feet wide along the



Figure 1: Study Area Location and Adjacent Neighborhoods



street frontage and 120 feet deep. These narrow lots created a dense development pattern once they were filled with houses, but one that met buyers' desire for a detached dwelling. No rowhouses were built in the area, and practically no apartment buildings, instead real estate developers marketed small wood frame cottages to families looking for a house and yard.

In the area east and north of the landscaped Washington Park, the population that bought the new homes was homogeneously German. Within a city that was predominately of German descent, the Washington Park area was even more so, with few families that were Polish, Irish, or Italian. Roger Simon's analysis of the city-building process in this section of Milwaukee notes a number of interesting characteristics of the first settlers:

Milwaukee's new neighborhoods were the sections disproportionately devoted to childraising. . . . The chief distinguishing characteristic of these families was their middle position both in social and economic terms. Ethnically, they were neither recent immigrants nor native American stock; they were overwhelmingly German. Fifty-five per cent of the family heads were German-born, and 27.8 per cent more were native-born of German parents. They were also predominately artisans, shopkeepers, foremen, and minor officials which placed them roughly in the middle of the socioeconomic order (*The City-Building Process: Housing and Services in New Milwaukee Neighborhoods 1880-1910*, Simon, 1978, pp. 32-33)

Some urban historians postulate a German immigrant preference for a detached house and a yard as perhaps stronger than for some other ethnic groups, however, the south side of Milwaukee where Polish immigrants were a majority also favored single-family houses. While this desire to own a house led to the particular pattern of settlement found in the Washington Park area, it is also evident that many families in the middle working class could not afford the mortgage on such a house: analysis of the 1905 census and building permits show a trend to build two-flat duplexes following the turn of the century (Simon, p. 30). A two-family dwelling allowed the owning family to rent out the second unit, at least until the mortgage was paid. Therefore those portions of the neighborhood that were built after 1900 have more duplexes, with 35th Street as a useful line marking earlier settlement to the east from blocks to the west developed after this trend took hold, where roughly half of the houses were built as two-flat duplexes.

Settlement of the Washington Park area was dependent on access for the middle class population to manufacturing employment in the Menomonee Valley to the south and other factories located along a railroad corridor built by the Milwaukee Road that ran from the valley north through the neighborhood between 30th and 31st streets.



Planning Area Boundary



Figure 2: Aerial Photography and Planning Area Boundary

Small shop owners built places of business along the main streets, including North Avenue, Lisbon Avenue, and Vliet Street, while clerks and other semi-professionals had access to employment in the downtown business district via streetcars.

Following World War II, a sweeping demographic change gained momentum in the Washington Park neighborhood. Milwaukee's small African-American population grew during the period of the first World War, and then surged in the post-World War II era, when industrial jobs were plentiful in the city's manufacturing districts, drawing migrants to the city from southern states. The fair housing struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s created an opening for a wider dispersal of African-American families in the city, during the same period that the original settlers and their descendants were lured to fast growing suburbs to the west.



As described in the demographic analysis given below, by 1990 the Washington Park neighborhood was just over 75 percent African-American—a remarkable change from the German-American neighborhood a quarter century before. It should be noted that Simon's (p.56) description of the neighborhood at the early period of this transition notes the "obsolescence" of many of the old houses and a trend toward disinvestment. Yet even harder times were to come when the bottom fell out of the manufacturing economy that supported the majority of African-American families.



Huge manufacturing plants in the Menomonee and Milwaukee river valleys closed in the 1980s, as did many plants in the 30th Street industrial corridor, along the North Line of the old Milwaukee Road, running through Washington Park. This began what a series of articles published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in December of 2004 called a "job loss worse than the Great Depression" with the newspaper's analysis showing that: "In 1970, at the city's industrial peak, the black poverty rate in Milwaukee was 22% lower than the U.S. black average. That turned around by 2000, when the black poverty rate was 34% higher than the national figure. Among the nation's 20 most populous cities in 2000, Milwaukee had the highest rate of black poverty." (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 4, 2004). The series of articles highlighted the former industrial might of the city, with a focus on decline of manufacturing along the North Line. The article states that in 2004 only two freight customers remain on the North Line: Miller Brewing and the former A.O. Smith, now Tower Automotive, which employed 8,000 workers making automobile frames as recently as 1979, a third of them African-American. Tower recently announced that it is shifting what is left of its production to Mexico, retaining only 150 jobs in Milwaukee. The effect of this economic decline on neighborhoods in north Milwaukee, including Washington Park has been profound.

It is important to consider this background of the Washington Park community in order to set planning for the future in context. That context includes the people and the place. This comprehensive plan for the Washington Park neighborhood area describes the physical environment in the study area, most of it being the houses that the original developers built for German immigrants, and provides information on social demographics, which continue to change with a new group of immigrants from southeast Asia. Most importantly the plan considers recent development and investment in the neighborhood, from the public and private sectors, and proposes how these revitalization efforts can be reinforced, built upon, and extended throughout the planning area.



# 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



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 commercials streets and on some side streets.



## **Major Streets and Access Routes**

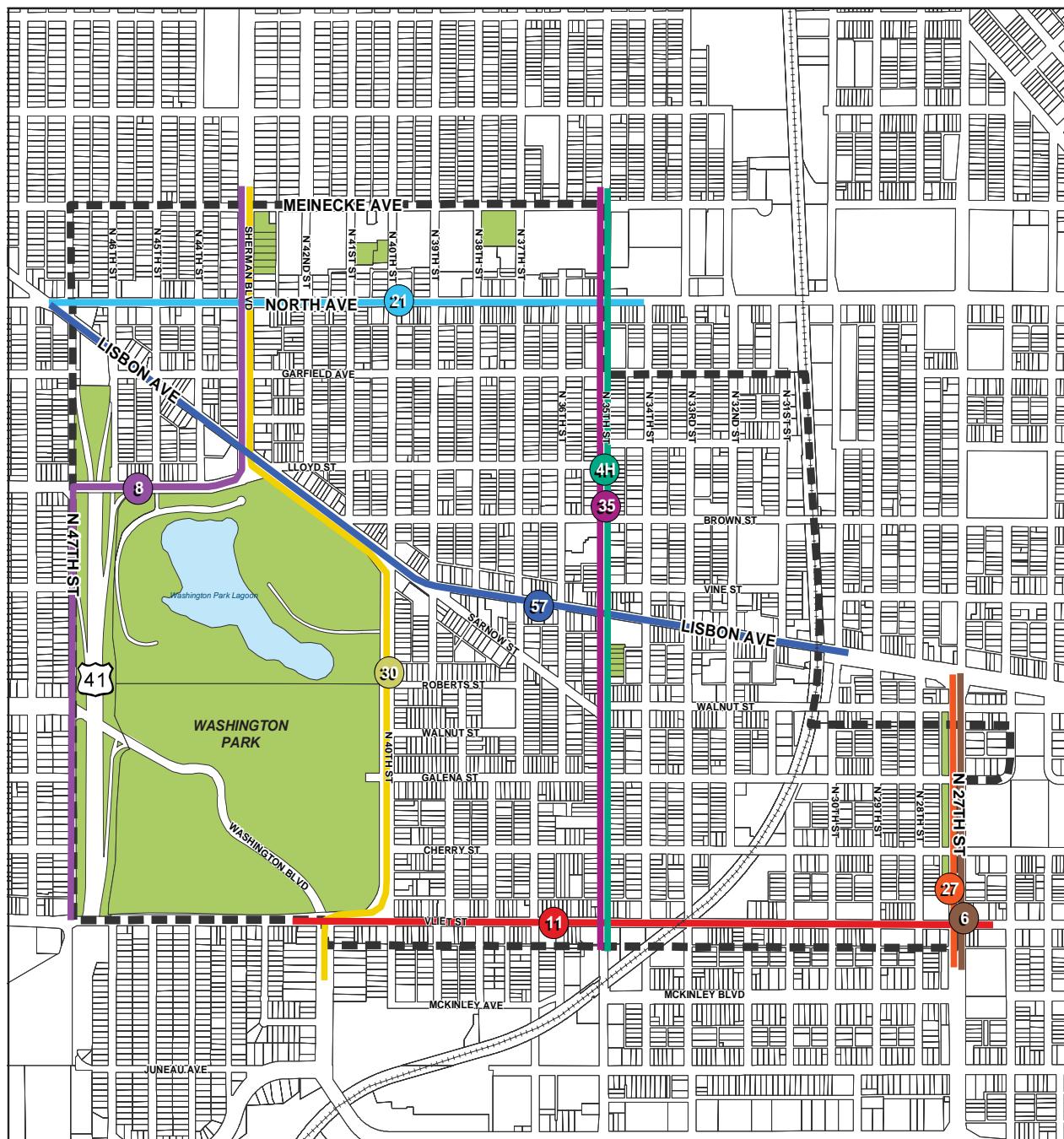
Three arterials traverse Washington Park in an east-west alignment: Vliet Street, Lisbon Avenue, and North Avenue. Vliet is a minor arterial that provides access to Wauwatosa to the west and the Near West Side. Lisbon Avenue, which merges with Walnut Avenue to the east, provides a quick route to downtown 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

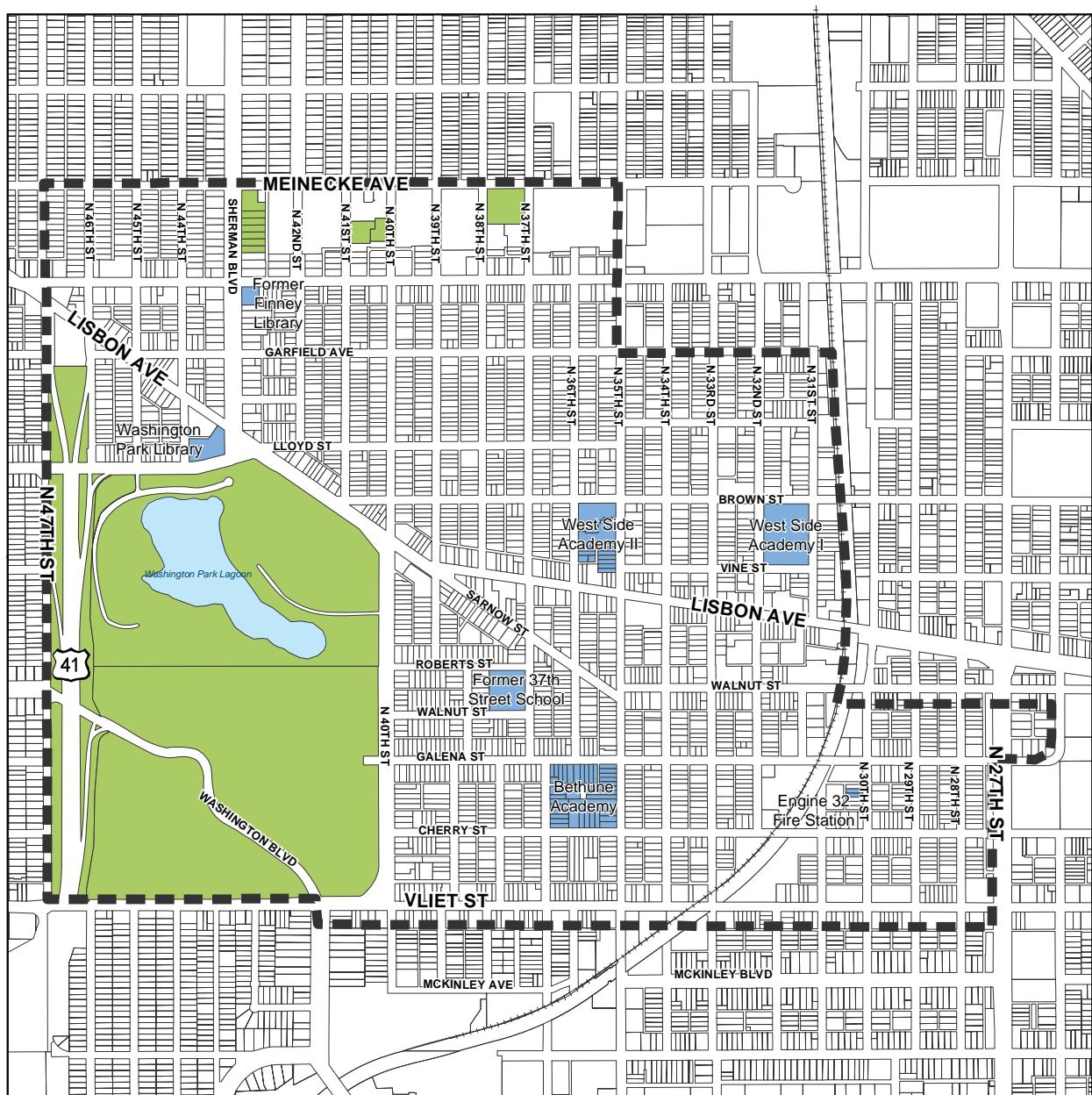


Figure 5: Transit Routes

## **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

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



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,



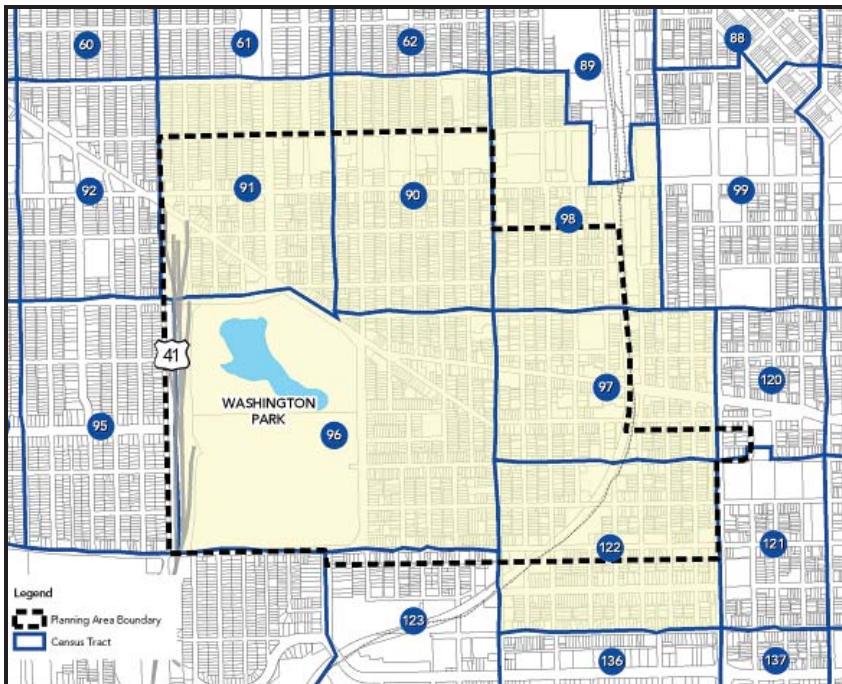


Figure 7: Analysis Census Tracts, 2000 U.S. Census

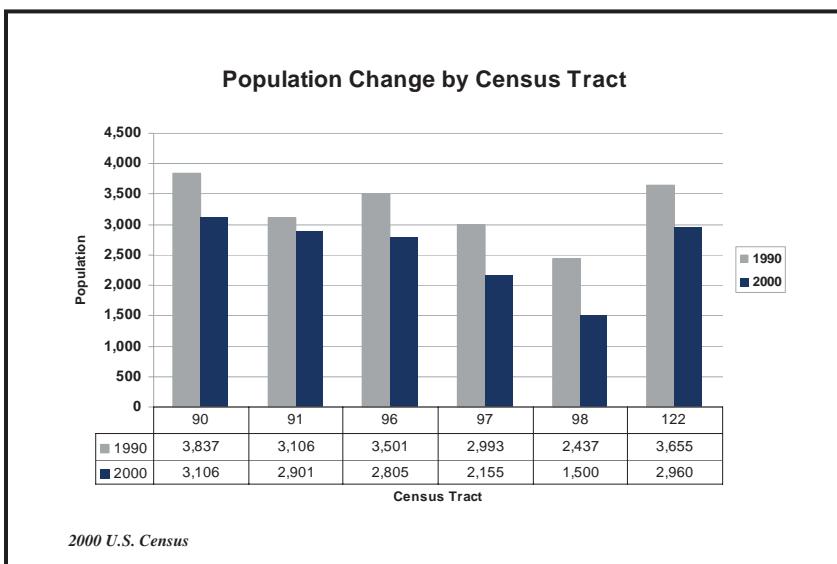


Figure 8: Population Change, 1990 to 2000

Unit Types and Occupancy				
	Washington Park	% of Total	Milwaukee	% of Total
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	1,245	30.3%	105,235	45.3%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	2,863	69.7%	126,953	54.7%
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	4,108	84.0%	232,188	93.2%
<b>Vacant</b>	780	16.0%	17,037	6.8%
<b>Total Units</b>	4,888	100.0%	249,225	100.0%
<i>2000 U.S. Census</i>				

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

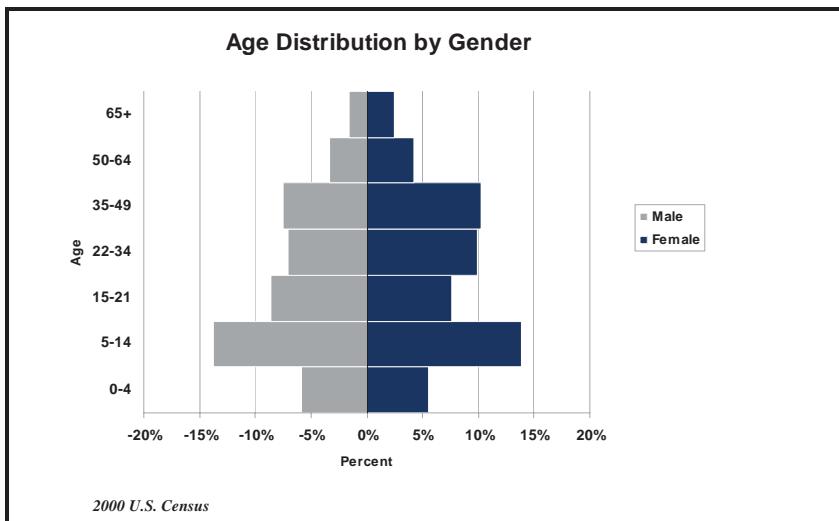


Figure 10: Age Distribution by Gender

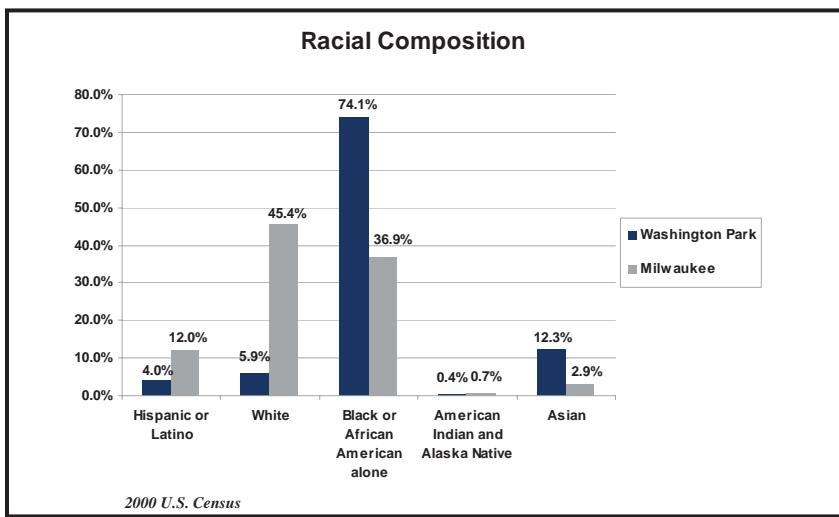


Figure 11: Racial Composition

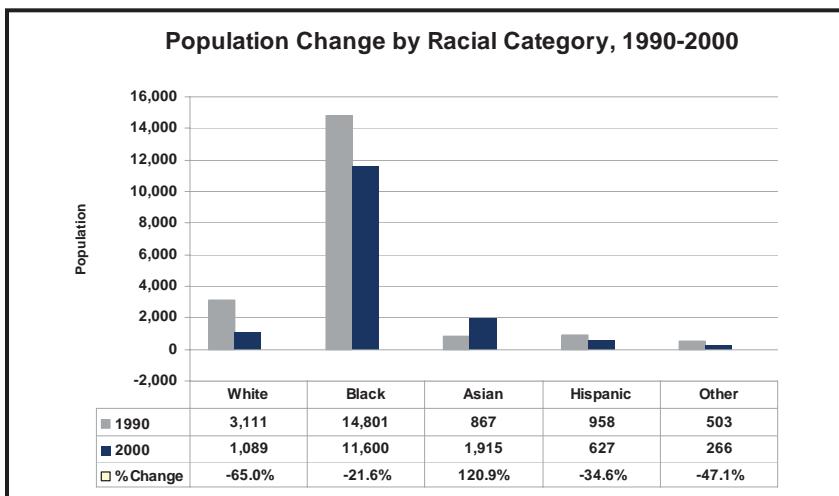


Figure 12: Population Change by Racial Category

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
<b>Total for 16 categories</b>	<b>\$33,668,580</b>	<b>\$25,589,153</b>

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

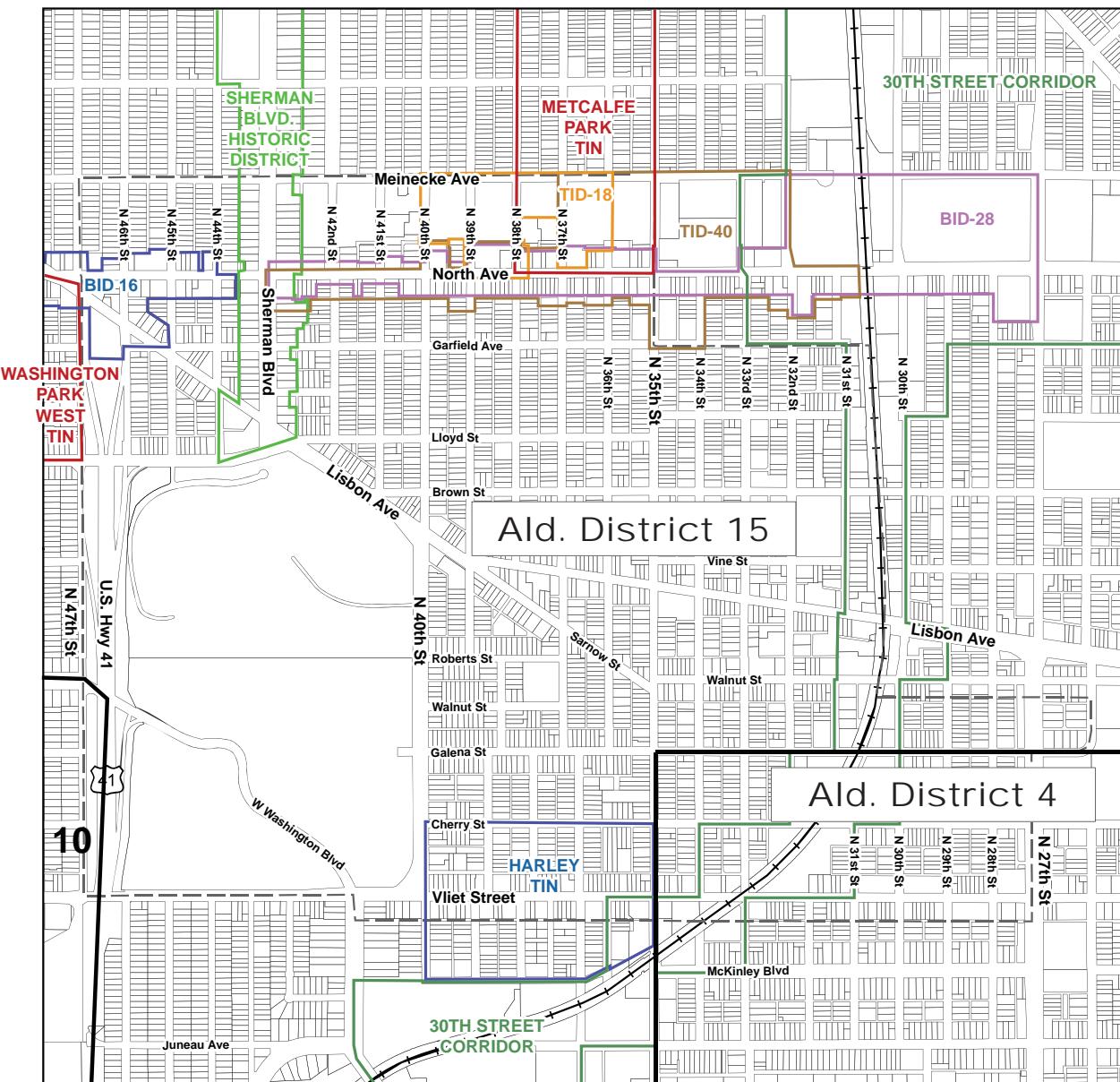


Figure 17: Aldermanic Districts, Special Regulatory Districts, and Program Areas

## 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 competed 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 shear 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)

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

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.

# Chapter 3

## Land Use Policies and Plan

### Introduction

City of Milwaukee's overall policies addressing land use, building form and redevelopment strategies in the Washington Park area are stated in this chapter. A brief definition of overall land use policies is provided. A further discussion of goals and policies is provided for each land use, including recommended urban forms and standards. The chapter ends with policy statements regarding City transportation facilities and street infrastructure.

The policies are organized according to a set of land use categories. The seven land use categories are:

- Residential, Single-Family and Multi-Family
- Mixed Use Commercial and Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Civic and Institutional
- Park and Open Space
- Transportation and Infrastructure

In regard to residential land uses, it is recognized that aspects of use, such as density, strongly correspond to issues of form, and are more readily understood as housing types. Policy in regard to residential land use is expressed by a discussion of the acceptable residential types in the Washington Park planning area, given in the two broad categories of single-family and multi-family types. Commercial uses are also discussed in relation to building types.

### Overall Land Use Policies

#### Overall Goal

The Overall Land Uses Strategy is intended to reinforce and reassert traditional patterns of development, characteristic of older Milwaukee neighborhoods. These patterns form the relationship of the public and private realms, the layout of streets and blocks, the physical character of sites and buildings, and those tangible and 'intangible' elements that create a sense of place. Where neighborhood character has been eroded, new development or redevelopment should return these areas to an improved state of health and well being, and in doing so, restore a sense of belonging and sense of place.

### **Overall Uses Policies**

- Traditional neighborhood use patterns should be preserved and adapted to changes in households, markets, lifestyles, etc.
- Follow current zoning unless a specific zoning change is identified in within the Districts and Corridors and/or Catalytic Projects Chapters of this Plan.
- Non-conforming uses and/or structures may remain if the use remains economically viable, if the structure is maintained in good condition, and if it is not detrimental to surrounding properties. The review process should include public input asserting that non-conforming uses and/or structures continue to make a positive contribution to the neighborhood.

### **Overall Form Policies**

- Preserve the overall neighborhood character as a compact, interconnected and walkable community. New development should adhere to traditional neighborhood building patterns and densities. Larger building mass and higher density is appropriate along major arterial streets.
- Make walking safe, attractive and convenient.
- Minimize conflict between uses by creating buffers or transitions. The transitions may be use, building typology, design (scale, massing, height, and area), or landscaping.
- Minimize the intrusion of the automobile into the public realm, and more specifically, that part of the public realm reserved for pedestrians.
- Maintain good visibility between buildings and their surroundings.

### **Overall Redevelopment Strategies**

- Increase home-ownership
- To strengthen the tax base, encourage additional taxable uses over additional non-taxable uses.
- Consider historic sites, buildings and districts as valuable irreplaceable assets to be used as key pieces of a larger redevelopment effort. For rehab or additions, maintain the historic character of the existing building wherever possible.
- Protect historic buildings so their eventual redevelopment potential can be realized. Support the creation of National Register Historic Districts or sites in order to make owners eligible for federal and state tax credits.
- Permit selective demolition of structures that serve as a blighting influence on the neighborhood, or can no longer be feasibly restored to contribute to the immediate surrounding area.
- Cluster new development to have the greatest positive impact on surrounding property values.
- Couple new construction with rehab, renovation and preservation of surrounding properties to maximize benefit to the neighborhood.

# Residential Policies

## Residential Uses Goal

Reinforce and build upon the historic development pattern and assets of Washington Park, while also improving the quality of the neighborhood's housing stock. Provide a greater diversity of housing types to meet the current and future needs of residents. Promote construction of new housing on vacant lots and rehabilitation of existing structures.

## Policy Context

The original housing stock in Washington Park was limited mainly to frame houses built as single dwellings or duplexes, most with an upper and lower unit in a two and a half story structure. Most of this stock is now over 100 years old and in need of renovation. The City of Milwaukee supports rehabilitation of this housing stock, especially through the use of "sweat equity" ownership arrangements. However, it also is recognized that many structures are beyond repair, and do not meet minimum building code requirements to allow use of public funding mechanisms. Therefore, a combined strategy of rehabilitation and new construction will be pursued.

Developers on North Avenue see a market for well-maintained rental units in new and renovated mixed-use structures and rental townhouses, bringing diversity to an area where most residents rent units in older single-family and duplex frame houses. New townhouses have also been under development on Vliet Street, while the City and developers of subsidized housing construct single-family houses in the Washington Park neighborhood.

The Plan recommends continued rehabilitation of older housing stock and construction of new single-family housing types throughout the residential portions of the neighborhood, and development of mixed-use and multi-family projects where appropriate on major arterials.

## Residential Use Policies

### Appropriate Types/Mix

- Discourage the conversion of a purely residential structure in a residential zoning district into a non-residential use (such as day care centers, community living arrangements, etc.)
- Vary building types to include single-family homes, granny flats, rowhouses, townhouses, duplexes and multi-unit mid-rises. Transition building types to increase density from single-family residences in residential areas up to multi-unit buildings in mixed-use areas.
- Encourage residential above retail on commercial corridors and between intensively developed commercial nodes
- Encourage live/work units

### Density

- Maintain the broad range of dwelling unit diversity to allow for a mix of single-family homes, starter homes, townhouses condominiums and apartments.

### Location

- Locate residential land uses to ensure compatibility with adjacent non-residential land uses. Discourage locating single-family structures adjacent to commercial/industrial uses generating excessive noise, traffic, lighting or other incompatible characteristics. Encourage locating medium and high-density residential categories near commercial areas and public open spaces and on sites with good access to major arterial and transit routes.
- Encourage a range of housing types and opportunities in proximity to employment centers to achieve a balance between housing and job opportunities and to ease commuter travel.
- Encourage residential townhomes, rowhouses, and multi-unit midrises along commercial corridors where retail and commercial activities as the primary uses are no longer supported by the surrounding residential densities.

## **Residential Form Policies**

### Block Form

- Design typical residential blocks to be short and narrow with an alley in between.
- Infill development and new construction should be compatible in with the existing scale and massing design.
- Within predominantly residential neighborhoods, design streets after the existing Milwaukee neighborhood patterns including on street parking, limited curb-to-curb pavement widths, and off street parking to the rear of residential structures with access from an alley.

### Parcel Form

- Maintain original platted lot sizes for single family and duplex lots, typically 30 or 40 feet in width and 120 feet in depth. Any changes in platting should include lots that are compatible with the surrounding context.
- Size of structures in relationship to the lot size and placement of the building on the lot should be placed on appropriately sized parcels. For example, small lots are appropriate for small houses.
- Keep building setbacks consistent with the existing conditions of the block and/or area. Make front yard build-to lines and rear yard set backs for all construction equal to the average of the adjacent, block, or neighborhood structures, whichever is most compatible.
- Where alleys exist, access rear garage or parking area by means of the alley. In terms of infill development, if no alley exists, design the least obtrusive curb cut onto the front or side street.
- Limit driveways in number and minimize in width to the greatest extent possible. Driveways should cross at right angles so as to limit the impact on pedestrians.

## Housing Types (Building and Site Elements)

This section describes the housing types the Plan recommends and suggests locations, with specific projects or approaches highlighted in District Concept Plans in the next chapter. The types are organized in two broad categories of single-family types and multi-family types.

### Single-Family Types

#### Original Stock: Milwaukee Cottages and Bungalows

Most of Washington Park's housing stock is in the classic Milwaukee worker cottage and bungalows. This housing type gives the neighborhood its character: a gable-front vernacular form with front porches and stoops. These houses are appropriate along all residential blocks.

#### New Construction Single-Family Detached

Frame houses built on existing lots should blend with the older housing stock, specifically new construction should be two or two and a half stories. The vernacular elements of the typical gable-front house should be encouraged. Where a more modern style is desired, the massing and proportion of the building should be compatible with the surrounding buildings. Single-story or ranch houses are not recommended. In order to maintain the existing urban character and promote population density, the Plan recommends maintaining the traditional lot widths where possible, increasing the width only for larger homes of superior quality and detail.

#### New Construction Single-Family Attached

Attached housing types mimic the look of a single dwelling in a side-by-side arrangement of units in row house, or townhouse styles, or through stacked units. An individual exterior entrance must be provided for each unit to be considered a single-family type. The classic over and under duplex house is supported by the Plan, but is not a type favored by most contemporary developers. Rather, today's duplexes usually share a party wall; however, the stacked triplex is again gaining in popularity for new construction in many older urban areas, though it is not a common form in Milwaukee.

Economies of scale and shared land costs favor development of more townhouse units in Washington Park. Townhouse units are appropriate for many residential blocks in District A, especially those that have a large number of vacant lots and do not have a cohesive fabric of the original stock. See the District A Concept Plan and Catalytic Project for Garfield and Lloyd Blocks. Row house or townhouse units are also appropriate for blocks on Vliet Street in Districts B and C.



Classic Milwaukee 'cottages' in the local vernacular gable-front form, these along Galena St.



Three new construction single-family houses along 35th St., flanked by older houses, show preferred forms that mimic existing context.



Attention to proportion and details, such as front porches, helps new construction fit on neighborhood blocks.



The first row house units built in the study area, on 42nd St. on land cleared for the Park West freeway; each of the three units shares party walls, yet has an individual entrance.



Dwelling units above commercial space on Lisbon Ave.



Renovated apartment units over commercial space on North Ave., with new townhouses along 35th St.



Apartments in the mixed-use Columbia Square project completed in 2005 on the 3300 block of North Ave.



The Glen View Apartments facing Washington Park and Lisbon Ave., offer a local example of a 'brownstone' type of masonry construction.



United Methodist provides housing at the corner of 40th St. and Lisbon facing the park, in an attractive brick apartment building, which is the largest multi-unit building in the area.

## Multi-Family Types

Originally Washington Park had very few multi-family dwelling units, and those that were built were typically on the main arterial streets on the upper floors of small commercial buildings. In the past, Lisbon Avenue had a number of large apartment buildings, however they have all been torn down. The Plan does not support division of single-family houses or duplexes to apartments with more than three units.

### Renovated Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential

A number of upper floor residential units in commercial buildings have been rehabilitated in recent years, particularly along North Avenue. The Plan supports this type of renovation.

### New Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential Buildings

This type of structure usually has a shared exterior entrance and shared corridors leading to upper level dwelling units, and is therefore a type of multi-family housing.

The Plan recommends construction of new units in multi-family arrangements in mixed-use buildings, primarily along North Avenue.

### New Four and Six Unit Multi-unit Buildings

Washington Park has very few multi-unit buildings with four or six units. This type of housing is desirable for that part of the rental market that seeks space, but does not want to live in a large building. Careful attention must be paid to locating and managing these types of buildings. New construction is appropriate on Park View Blocks in District A and along Lisbon Avenue in Districts B and C.

### New Construction Multi-unit Buildings, Over Seven Units

A search of City data bases showed only five apartment buildings in the planning area with over seven units. These are true apartment buildings, originally constructed as multi-family structures. Although buildings with a large number of units require on-site management, these buildings can also be attractive and should only be built as masonry structures. Careful attention must be paid to locating and managing bigger apartment buildings, yet sites on the Park View Blocks in District A and along Lisbon Avenue in Districts B and C may be appropriate.

## Residential Redevelopment Strategies

### Acquisition/Demolition/Rehab

- Encourage conservation of existing structures along with infill housing. Renovation is preferred over demolition.
- Discourage demolition of residential units for the purpose of building surface parking lots.
- Use spot acquisition when code enforcement actions accumulate or

a property is deemed a nuisance to the neighborhood.

- Support existing and encourage additional programs that grant dollars or provide tax breaks to home owners for rehabilitation.

#### Concentration

- Avoid concentrating residential special uses, as defined in the zoning code, within individual neighborhoods.

#### Public/Private Housing Mix

- Increase owner occupancy.
- Undesirable or undersized vacant city-owned lots shall be offered for sale to adjacent owners, except when there is a greater priority for the land, such as creating infill development that adds to the tax base, or land assembly for a project that will benefit the surrounding neighborhood.
- Develop mixed income housing throughout the neighborhood.
- Place subsidized family housing on scattered sites; design should conform to the existing neighborhood character.

## Commercial Uses: Corridors And Nodes

### Commercial Uses Overall Goal

Concentrate commercial uses at corridors and nodes along Washington Park's main arterial streets. Plan for a marketable amount of commercial land use as supported by neighborhood residents and those traveling along the main arterials from outside the area.

### Policy Context

The Washington Park planning area has three commercial corridors:

North Avenue  
Lisbon Avenue  
Vliet Street.

Within each of the three corridors there are concentrations of commercial activity that can be thought of as commercial nodes, most prominently at each street's intersection with 35th Street, the main north-south arterial. Given different sub-regional roles and markets for commercial uses on each of the arterials, including varying levels of vehicular traffic, the Plan recommends an approach tailored for each of the three corridors so that together the commercial areas meet the needs of area residents and business owners. In addition to policy statements provided here, specific strategies and projects along corridors are discussed in Chapter 4.





### North Avenue

The Plan recognizes that North Avenue is the primary commercial corridor for the Washington Park area, and that the future land use plan, zoning, and City development programs should reinforce the on-going revitalization of North Avenue. The Plan heartily recommends a concerted effort to sustain the momentum for revitalizing North Avenue, as supported by policies, urban design guides, and catalytic projects.



### Lisbon Avenue

A major recommendation of the Plan is to change City policy in regard to land use and zoning along Lisbon Avenue to reflect a new vision for the corridor between 40th Street and the railroad tracks. With North Avenue only three blocks to the north, the market for retail and other services in Washington Park does not support a large amount of commercial space along Lisbon. Therefore the strategy for Lisbon Avenue is to work to develop new residential uses, in multi-unit developments.

### Vliet Street

With lower traffic levels and a more diverse mix of residential, commercial, and small industrial uses than either North Avenue or Lisbon Avenue, Vliet Street is in good position for continued infill and renovation. A relatively vibrant node of restaurants and small groceries is located at the intersection with 35th Street, and a solid commercial area is also on 35th Street at the Westside Marketplace just south of the railroad corridor. Small industrial uses are more numerous east of the tracks. The Plan recommends continued infill and redevelopment along Vliet Street, with a focus on supporting the 35th Street commercial node, and developing residential uses in single-family types, primarily row houses or townhouse development on other blocks.



### Commercial Use Policies

#### Appropriate Types/Mix

- Encourage street level, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses. Encourage offices to locate on the second floor above retail, and allow at street level in areas where there is no negative impact on the street vitality. Encourage residential apartments and condominiums above retail uses.
- Allow residential uses along commercial corridors in areas where retail and commercial activity as the primary use are no longer supported by the surrounding residential densities. Residential uses along commercial corridors should be multi-story, densely developed, with minimal curb cuts along the commercial corridor.

#### Location

- Existing corner commercial uses within residential blocks are permitted as long as they are economically viable and physically well

maintained, and as long as their use does not become automobile-oriented or otherwise detrimental to the neighborhood.

- Incorporate large scale tenant uses in commercial corridors when the use supports smaller uses by acting as an anchor or draw for the corridor. These uses should add to the commercial/retail mix in a positive way, providing a greater range of goods and services or better price structure than already exists, similar to the way a large department store anchors a mall of boutiques and smaller specialty shops.
- Discourage the expansion of commercial uses into surrounding residential neighborhoods. Permit limited commercial expansions if the uses are compatible in scale and intensity with residential neighborhoods, if they provide a service to adjacent residents, and the traffic, noise, hours of operation, lighting and building mass are compatible. Locate commercial uses within residential neighborhoods on street corners and not within a neighborhood block.
- Commercial day care facilities are encouraged to locate in existing commercial buildings that have land adjacent to them for the purpose of outdoor play areas.

## **Commercial Form Policies**

### **Block Form**

- On vacant lots along commercial facades, discourage surface parking and rather promote buildings. Locate off-street parking behind the building where possible.
- Maintain the existing street wall of commercial buildings. Buildings should be built-out to the street so that, collectively, the buildings on a block work together to define the pedestrian area and the street itself.
- Encourage streetscape elements that unify the area: benches, lighting, entry markers, planters, and/or paving patterns.
- Design commercial districts and corridors with on-street parallel parking, two-way traffic, and a maximum speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Keep curb cuts to a minimum and shared when possible.
- Maintain the traditional street grid pattern of the area, and provide alleys for off-street deliveries.
- Make walking attractive, easier, and convenient.

### **Parcel Form**

- Promote development of commercial and office center with shared road access rather than linear patterns with individual driveways.
- Encourage connections between parking lots.

## **Commercial Types (Building and Site Elements)**

Retail commercial uses are perhaps the most dynamic in terms of urban form in the American landscape. Perceived “market forces”

continue to bring evolutions to retail business models, and subsequent development of new building types. At present, the “superstore” marketing and “big box” forms dominate retailing, replacing earlier models of the single-proprietor “mom and pop” shop and downtown department store. For decades, the commercial areas of Washington Park have struggled to maintain a share of the overall retail market, for residents and the potential market along heavily trafficked arterials. Many of the multi-tenant storefront buildings along North, Lisbon, and Vliet are vacant, which creates an atmosphere of abandonment even if adjacent residential blocks are well maintained.

It is interesting to note that the current revitalization along North Avenue, especially near 35th Street was spurred by the development of a new full service grocery and drugstore on a large site just north of the older North Avenue commercial corridor. In this case, the introduction of a popular “big box” retailer has helped to revitalize the area, including the renovation of older storefronts and the construction of a new mixed use building. However, it took the halted Park West freeway project to provide a site big enough for this supermarket, while most of the parcels along North Avenue remain too shallow to locate other major retailers. This example shows the close relationship between issues of commercial land use, market demand, and urban form in regard to available lots and site layout. The section below provides a brief outline of common commercial types and locations where these types of urban forms should be encouraged.



#### Single-Tenant, Single-Story Buildings

This commercial type is the current champion in terms of providing the space that fits the dominant retailing model, which focuses on development of national and local brand name retailers, or franchise restaurants and convenience stores. Washington Park examples include the relatively new “Jewel-Osco” near the intersection of North and 35th, and an adjacent “Subway” sandwich shop on the northeast corner of the intersection. These structures reflect not only their business model, but also a focused financing that must account only for the potential of a retail market for a specific type of business. The Future Land Use Plan maps appropriate locations for this type of use along the three main commercial corridors, under the basic “commercial” category. Commercial nodes along 35th Street are good locations for single-tenant buildings, where the market has enough potential to attract major retailers or franchise restaurants.



#### Traditional Storefront Buildings

Because traditional storefront buildings frequently include upper level residential or office space, existing or potential locations for this type of building are indicated under the “mixed use commercial and residential” category. However, some of these building types may also be found in the basic “commercial” category. It is the traditional storefront building that enlivens urban commercial corridors, opening

directly onto the sidewalk, and in many cases built without any on-site parking. However, due to a declining population base in Washington Park and competition from the big box retailers, who provide easy parking, the traditional storefront is a celebrated, but endangered building type. This building type is appropriate along the three main commercial corridors, but the Plan encourages concentrations along North Avenue, and at the commercial nodes at 35th Street.

#### New Mixed-Use Buildings

Perhaps the best hope for bringing back urban commercial corridors is the construction of new mixed use buildings that include new storefronts and new dwelling units. The inclusion of new apartments and condominiums help to build in a ready market for storefront shops and services. Columbia Square, just east of the study area on North Avenue is an example of this development type. Mixed use projects are becoming increasingly popular across all market segments and are finding more financiers willing to undertake the project, which in many cases is actually led by the marketing of the residential units. This building type is most appropriate along North Avenue, with some potential along Lisbon Avenue if a market for new storefront space is anticipated.

#### Automobile-Oriented Businesses and Forms

Businesses such as gas stations, automobile repair, automobile sales, and drive-through fast food restaurants and banks have their own particular urban form that is shaped by the desire to circulate cars through a site. A relatively new gas station along North Avenue is a welcome development, and fast food franchises near 35th and Vliet also bring vitality to a challenged commercial corridor; however, the City should discourage too great of a concentration of this type of development. Although a necessity, especially in terms of servicing automobiles, this form is antithetical to the urban commercial corridor, where the pedestrian environment is supported by continuous building frontage. Gas stations and businesses with drive-through lanes create large curb cuts and usually set the building back from the street, opening a hole in the street wall. These uses should be precluded at the main commercial nodes at 35th Street, where pedestrian access and transit usage should be favored.

#### Site Layout and Development Guide

Washington Park is an urban neighborhood and the City is interested in encouraging the development of urban commercial forms, some aspects of which are summarized in the following set of site development guides. The City of Milwaukee Zoning Ordinance provides details on specific required design standards for commercial districts, with North Avenue and Vliet zoned Local Business 2 and Lisbon currently zoned for Commercial Service. The crucial issues for site layout addressed in the zoning code include: front setback, side setback, minimum glazed area along the street frontage

(storefront windows), and off-street parking mandates. Nothing in this report is intended to contradict or supersede the requirements of the zoning code. There are no required front or side setbacks in the LB2 or CS districts, and maximum setbacks at an average of the block, which in many cases will be no setbacks. Minimum front glazed area in the LB2 district is 60 percent, showing a desire for traditional storefronts, and 10 percent in the CS district, showing less of a pedestrian orientation.

Desired approaches to commercial site layout are summarized with the following concepts:

- Commercial buildings should front on the sidewalk and adhere to the traditional build-to line that brings storefronts and entrances to meet the sidewalk.
- On typical commercial lots, required off-street parking should be placed to the side of a lot or behind the principal structure. Exceptions may be accepted for “big box” retail types, however, the preference will still be to bring a portion of the structure up to meet the sidewalk of principal street frontage. Exceptions may also be accepted for automobile-oriented businesses, such as gas stations.
- Street fronting facades should have glazing covering a majority of the façade, creating traditional storefronts.

### **Commercial Redevelopment Strategies**

#### **Demolition/Rehab/Infill**

- Discourage residential demolition for building commercial surface parking lots.
- Preservation, adaptive reuse, and infill of context-compatible buildings (in that order) are preferred approaches to vacant buildings and lots on commercial corridors.

#### **Concentration**

- Avoid over concentration of commercial uses such as gas stations, daycares, and check cashing/pay day loan establishments.

#### **Taxable/Non-Taxable Uses**

- Encourage new taxable over new non-taxable uses, unless a strong case is made that the non-taxable use supports the surrounding tax base and spurs economic development.

## **Civic and Institutional**

### **Overall Goal**

Maintain public facilities, including public schools and the Washington Park Library, as centers of community life and activity

in Washington Park. Provide land for the provision of necessary City services, including fire and police facilities. Support institutional uses, including churches, private schools, health clinics, and social service providers.

### **Policy Context**

Three elementary schools are among the most prominent public facilities in the Washington Park neighborhood. These schools are:

West Side Academy I  
West Side Academy II  
Mary McLeod Bethune Academy.

In addition to these schools, the new public Washington Park Library is an important resource and neighborhood asset. Just outside the planning area is the new District 3 police headquarters near 49th Street and Lisbon Avenue. Investments in new public facilities are an important indication of City policy and support to neighborhood revitalization efforts. The construction of the new elementary school at 35th and Galena Street, completed in 2005 and named the Bethune Academy, is a very important project undertaken by the City. The school provides new educational facilities for neighborhood residents, and is also a major catalyst for new housing construction on the surrounding blocks. Proposals for the old 37th Street School have included conversion to residential units and using the school for private social service agencies and training programs. In either case, consideration should be given to compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Civic and Institutional Use Policies**

- Continue to support neighborhood revitalization through the maintenance of existing public facilities owned by the City of Milwaukee, and coordinate with the Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee Public Library systems in regard to facilities planning.
- Support creation and expansion of job training centers.
- Locate institutional uses with high traffic generation at the intersections/nodes of commercial corridors rather than in stable residential areas.
- Encourage decentralized institutional uses rather than large centralized uses that require customers (users of the service) to drive and park.
- Create school/library/park connections that make it easier for children to walk between places.
- Consider parking as an accessory use that should not exceed what is necessary to accommodate visitors and employees.

### **Civic and Institutional Redevelopment Strategies**

- Encourage new taxable uses over new non-taxable uses, unless a strong case can be made that the non-taxable use supports the surrounding tax base or spurs economic development.
- Locate tax-exempt uses in building previously occupied by tax-exempt tenants or on the upper floors of buildings along commercial corridors. Discourage tax-exempt tenants on the first floor along commercial corridors.
- Discourage concentration in number and intensity of social service providers in the neighborhood in proportion to the county/region.
- Support expanded primary care capacity delivered by target area facilities (such as community health centers)

## **Industrial**

### **Industrial Overall Goal**

Consolidate industrial uses in the 30th Street corridor and along Vliet Street east of 30th Street. Encourage remediation of soil contamination and reuse of industrial lands.

### **Industrial Policy Context**

The amount of industrial land use in the Washington Park study area is less than a hundred acres and available sites are small by historic and current standards. These sites are surrounded by residential uses, making access to these sites difficult and often disruptive to the residential neighborhood. The main industrial areas are to the north and south of Washington Park. The Plan recommends retention of important industrial businesses, but also foresees a gradual transition of remaining lands to other uses, primarily open space or residential, provided that issues related to soil contamination are addressed.

### **Industrial Redevelopment Strategies**

- Support established industrial businesses that add to the local employment base, but plan for a reduction of industrial use and transition to open space and residential uses.
- Discourage new industrial developments within the Washington Park planning area.
- Work with the responsible parties to remediate soil contamination on industrial sites.
- Relocate small repair shops and other industrial uses along the east side of 31st Street, along the railroad viaduct, between Garfield and Brown streets, across from the proposed West Side Park. Plan for new residential and open spaces uses that will complement the park development project.
- Plan for new open space on former industrial sites along the 30th Street viaduct, as part of a greenway development project.

# PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

## Overall Goal

Provide for public parks and open space within easy and safe pedestrian access from all residential blocks. Maintain safe park facilities and equipment and provide a secure environment for public enjoyment of neighborhood parks. Promote the use of existing parks through recreational programming provided by the Park District and private athletic clubs and programs. Seek to maximize the value enhancing influence of open space on surrounding property, and undertake projects to create new open space amenities as a catalyst for private investment.

## Policy Context

Milwaukee County owns and maintains Washington Park, which, at 138 acres, is one of the system's large regional parks. The County prepared a master plan for renovating Washington Park in 2000, with an expected investment of over \$10 million in new facilities and needed maintenance to the grounds. A renovation of the band shell has been undertaken with private funds, however, other park improvements have not proceeded and the park is underutilized by neighborhood residents.

While large regional parks can serve some needs, the neighborhood needs additional neighborhood park space that is more easily claimed and secured by residents. The northeast and southeast parts of the study area have less greenspace than other areas, especially the areas east of 35th Street and west of the railroad tracks. The planning process identified the block directly north of West Side Academy I as a potential greenspace site in combination with infill development/redevelopment. The block has a concentration of vacant lots, nine of ten already owned by the City, and a number of boarded and homes in need of major repair. The project is mapped on the District C Concept Plan and is further explored as a catalytic project.

The Plan also identifies the 30th Street railroad viaduct as a potential greenway with a recreational trail. The railroad has very sparse traffic, however is unlikely to be abandoned, and the best approach may be to seek an easement for construction of a trail on part of the viaduct. A trail could link to the Hank Aaron Trail, a short distance south in the Menomonee Valley and other bicycle lanes through Washington Park and on Highland Boulevard. Open space uses are also proposed for parcels along the railroad viaduct, particularly where parcels are too shallow for development and as an approach to land with known soil contamination.

## Park and Open Space Use Policies

- Encourage public spaces within a comfortable walking distance of every residential home.

- Locate public plazas or spaces in the most intensely planned/developed districts and corridors.
- Allow conversion of environmentally remediated or unremediated sites as neighborhood open space, provided that they have been certified as safe for all residents.

### **Park and Open Space Form Policies**

- Include parks or plazas that meet the needs of area residents, visitors, and workers as part of the site design for new construction and/or renovation.
- Maintain and improve visibility between parks and surrounding properties.
- Create pedestrian and bike paths through park space that connect to the surrounding street and block system.
- Encourage identity signage, landscape, art sculptures, and wayfinding elements to create community gateways at appropriate locations.
- Ensure institutional public spaces (such as school recreational areas) are green and visibly accessible to the public. Fencing should be minimal in height.

### **Park and Open Space Redevelopment Strategies**

- Support and encourage Milwaukee County to implement the Washington Park renovation plan.
- Include significant greenspace within any major residential development/redevelopment projects.
- Enter into discussions with representatives of Canadian Pacific Railway and the 30th Street Industrial Corridor Association about creation of a shared railroad and recreational greenway in the 30th Street railroad viaduct.
- Encourage developers of new multi-family housing to provide secure, on-site playgrounds and courtyards.
- Public open space is not appropriate unless a formal administration and financing structure can be created to support maintenance of such space.
- Use open space to create value and add value to districts and corridors.
- Use open space to add balance to densely developed blocks.

# Transportation and Infrastructure

## Overall Goals

To provide for efficient and safe travel along local streets and arterial roadways in Washington Park. Upgrade transit facilities, especially at major transit transfer points, maintain facilities for pedestrians, and plan for new bicycle lanes and trails. Improve streetscapes along major arterials.

## Policy Context

Until recent changes, City policy had recommended continuation of the parkway boulevard treatment found on Lisbon Avenue east of the 30th Street railroad viaduct to the west. Creation of this boulevard, with landscaped medians, would have required new right of way and to create this space the City required deeper than normal building setbacks along Lisbon Avenue in Washington Park, which reduced the viability of already shallow parcels. City policy no longer recommends extension of the parkway boulevard and required setbacks along Lisbon Avenue are again standard. However, Lisbon Avenue remains a busy thoroughfare connecting from the City's west side to downtown, and issues remain regarding the right of way. Specifically, it is difficult to discern whether the road is meant to be driven as four lanes or two lanes, with few cars parked along the street. Speeding is an issue, given that there is only one traffic signal between 40th Street and 27th Street, at 35th Street, and the lack of fronting development creates an impression of neglect. The level of service at Lisbon and 35th Street intersection may warrant turn lanes.

Recent streetscape improvements along North Avenue have improved the pedestrian environment and the overall aesthetics of the commercial area. Similar improvements along Vliet Street and Lisbon Avenue are a potential means of City support to revitalization efforts.

Washington Park is well served by bus transit routes. Major transfer points coincide with commercial nodes along 35th Street, and transit facilities at these locations should support the overall revitalization efforts. Shelters should be provided at major transfer points and should include rider amenities, including route information, with the potential for real-time information on bus arrival times as this technology is developed by Milwaukee County Transit.

The intersection of 40th Street and Vliet Street is under study by Public Works. This study will result in a redesign of the intersection with increased safety for both automobiles and pedestrians.

Upgrades to the streetscape on the bridges crossing over Highway 41 into Washington Park would help to connect Washington Heights to the park.

## **Policies**

City of Milwaukee policies in regard to streets and transportation infrastructure are to:

- Study traffic issues along Lisbon Avenue and recommend methods for controlling traffic movements, including marking drive lanes and parking zones, reducing speeds, and improving the level of service at the intersection with 35th Street.
- Promote and support revitalization efforts along Lisbon Avenue with a set of streetscape elements to be constructed in conjunction with major redevelopment projects.
- Designate commercial nodes at 35th and Lisbon and 35th and Vliet as streetscape improvement areas, with a package of streetscape and transit facility elements to be applied to the four block faces at each intersection.
- Work with Milwaukee County Transit to install bus shelters at major transfer points, especially along 35th Street.
- Maintain sidewalks in the Washington Park neighborhood.
- Designate Lisbon Avenue, 35th Street, as bicycle routes, and stripe bicycle lanes.

## **Transportation and Infrastructure Use Policies**

- On major and minor arterials, create an effective multi-modal public right of way including space for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and mass-transit.
- Maintain the street system based on the one-mile grid, clearly differentiated into major and minor arterials supported by collector and access streets.

## **Transportation and Infrastructure Form Policies**

- Design cross sections and dedicate right-of-way for mass transit, automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians based on the needs, character, and intensity of adjacent land uses.
- Provide pedestrian connections between local neighborhood workplaces, shopping areas, recreational/open space, civic/institutional sites, and other lands.

## **Urban Form: Streetscapes**

The aesthetics of public rights of way are important indicators of the economic vitality of a corridor and its adjoining neighborhood. Maintaining sidewalks, curbs, and gutters in good condition and the presence of pedestrian level street lamps help to sustain private investment. Including special elements, such as decorative banners, trash receptacles, and benches are useful along commercial corridors and nodes. Recent streetscape improvements along North Avenue complement investments in private property.

### **Sidewalks**

On residential streets, the standard five foot sidewalk and grass parkway should be maintained. Wider sidewalks should be provided on the commercial corridors, especially along North Avenue where 10 to 12 foot walks are appropriate.



### **Street Lamps**

The standard Milwaukee “harp” lamp should be installed on all commercial corridors.



### **Banners**

Decorative banners should be used to indicate special commercial districts, such as those installed on North Avenue.

### **Street furniture**

Installation of new street furniture, including transit shelters, benches, and trash receptacles, may be appropriate along North Avenue and at the commercial nodes along 35th Street at Lisbon and Vliet, Lisbon and Sherman, and Lisbon and North.

### **On-street parking**

On-street parallel parking should be provided along the three commercial corridors.

### **Transportation and Infrastructure Redevelopment Strategies**

- Prohibit increasing traffic capacity of right-of-ways if expansion would negatively impact the majority of adjacent land uses. Use scarce infrastructure dollars wisely by prioritizing reinvestment over expansion.
- Emphasize the movement of more people, rather than the movement of more vehicles, when making investment decisions.
- Maintain and promote two-way travel.
- Development or redevelopment should maintain the existing street grid, where present, and restore any disrupted street grid where feasible.
- Encourage all proposed development projects near an existing or planned major transit corridor to incorporate site design measures that enhance access to the transit system.
- Encourage Intelligent Transportation System Technology to be placed in bus stations along key transit routes. This technology includes monitors that identify the time of arrival of the next bus.

# Chapter 4

## District and Corridor Recommendations

### Districts

The Washington Park study area is almost small enough to be considered as a single district for planning purposes, however, the history of development and current designations suggest separate districts to the east and west of 35th Street, and north of the park and east of the park. The park itself also creates an influence on surrounding properties which should be recognized. Therefore, the study area is described as three districts, which though separate have porous boundaries in terms of daily functions of area residents.

Recommendations are provided with an overall vision for each district and corridor, followed by a description of planning concepts, and associated development strategies and projects, which also include a discussion of potential urban forms and development types.



Figure 20: Neighborhood Districts

## **District A: North of the Park**

District A, to the north of Washington Park, is a study in dichotomies, encompassing perhaps the most vital part of Washington Park, with a diversity of commercial and civic uses, and the most challenged, where residential blocks vary greatly in value and physical condition. The North Avenue corridor (addressed in Corridor section) is the main commercial area of the district from 35th Street west to 47th Street. New investment along North Avenue, especially in the corridor from North Avenue up to Meinecke Avenue holds much promise for stabilizing the neighborhood, yet blocks south of North Avenue to Brown Street have the highest concentration of vacant lots in the study area, with accompanying challenges.

### **Overall Vision for District A: North of the Park**

Public and private development efforts will build on the value of views and proximity to Washington Park, the value of a designated historic district along Sherman Boulevard, and recent investment along North Avenue.

### **Concepts and Strategies**

#### **North Avenue Gateway Initiative**

This initiative to sustain redevelopment and reinvestment momentum along North Avenue is discussed in the Corridor section below.

#### **Park View Blocks**

The “Park View Blocks” along Lisbon Avenue facing Washington Park should be considered a prime redevelopment project area. Marginal commercial uses should be relocated and higher value residential uses should be encouraged. Encourage construction of masonry buildings in high value, high traffic locations facing Washington Park, taking design cues from the small number of local examples. Zoning on the blocks should be consolidated by removing the scattered commercial and rezone to multi-family residential. Two existing apartment buildings that face the park—the Glen View Apartments on the 4100 block and the United Methodist building at 40th and Lisbon, are vintage “brownstone” type apartment buildings. Redevelopment efforts should seek to market the park view and build long-term value through an effort to construct masonry multi-unit buildings or stacked flat type structures..

#### **Maintain and Extend Value of Historic District and Washington Heights**

The Sherman Boulevard Historic District should be used as a marketing point for redevelopment on adjacent blocks, specifically at the former Finney Library block of North Avenue, and down Lisbon

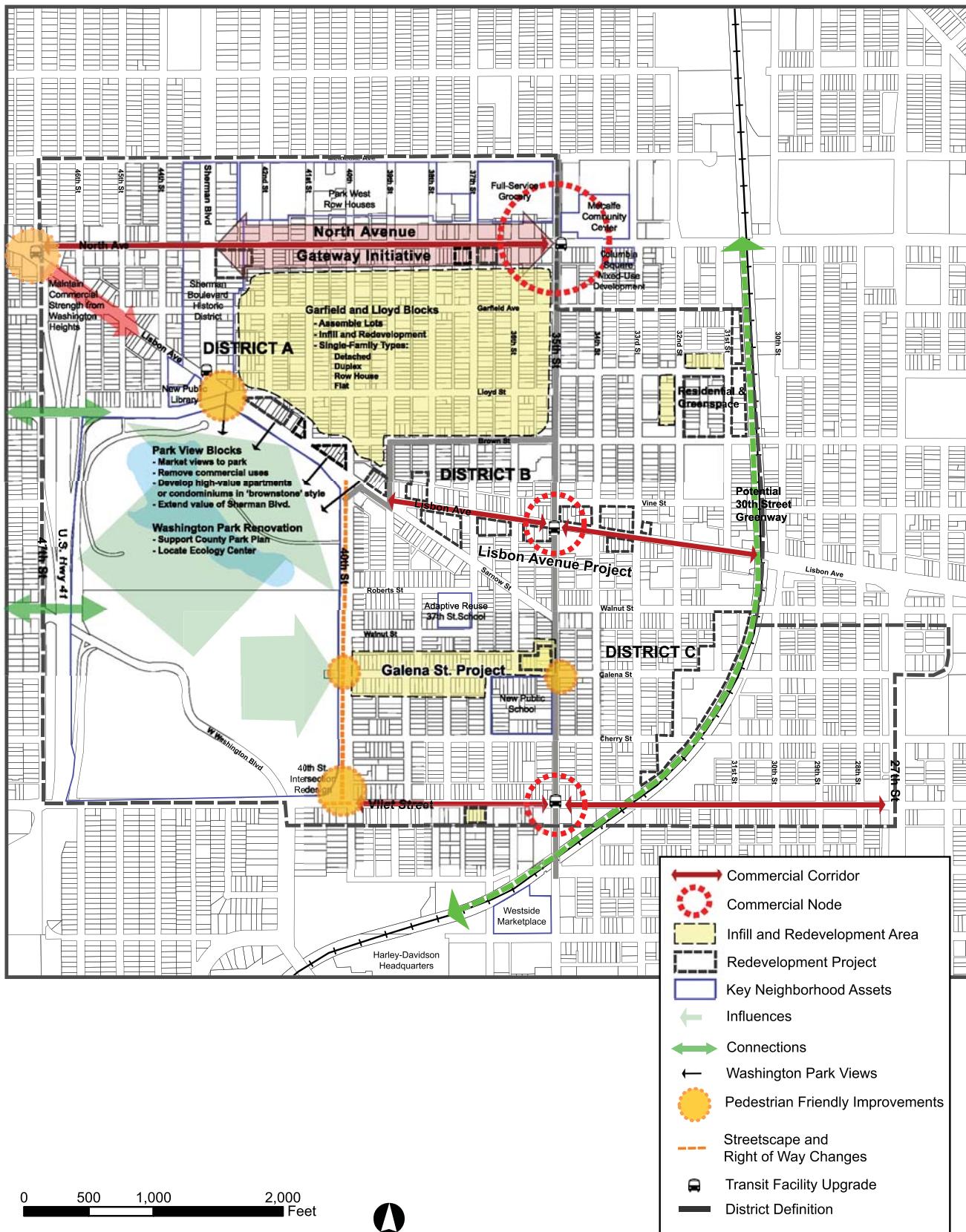


Figure 21: Districts and Corridors Concept Plan

Avenue on the “park view” blocks. Likewise, the North/Lisbon/47th Street commercial node should be maintained to build on strength in Washington Heights and new investments like the District 3 police headquarters. In addition, stronger, aesthetically pleasing connections should be made to the Washington Heights neighborhood across I-41.

#### Garfield and Lloyd Blocks between 35th & 42nd Streets

A sustained infill and redevelopment program should be undertaken to address concentrations of vacant and delinquent properties on blocks met by Garfield Avenue, Lloyd Street, and Brown Street. Vacant lots should be assembled into viable redevelopment areas. Some blocks, such as 38th Street between Garfield and Lloyd have so many vacant, city owned, and tax delinquent lots (see Figure 19), that a strategy of selective acquisition and clearance might be considered, after further investigation of each structure. Developers are looking for a critical mass of new housing that will change perceptions of an area, and this type of large-scale assembly is a viable approach. Row house or townhouse housing types are more economical than building detached houses, so this type of construction should be considered for blocks where little original fabric remains, especially on block ends and corners. With any form of infill housing, owner occupancy should be encouraged.

#### Lisbon and Sherman Blvd. Intersection and Washington Park Entrance

Given the civic uses that surround this intersection and the high pedestrian activity in this neighborhood, a study should be conducted to investigate how this intersection could improve both vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Continued effort should be made to improve access into Washington Park. Design of a grand entry into Washington Park should be pursued.

#### Catalytic Projects in District A:

United Methodist Expansion

Garfield and Lloyd Blocks Residential Redevelopment and Infill

North Avenue Gateway (also see Corridors)

## **District B: East of the Park**

District B includes the southern portion of Washington Park and areas to the east of the park and west of 35th Street. Traveling east, the character of Lisbon Avenue changes at 39th Street as the diagonal alignment straightens relative to the grid and vacant lots become numerous. Yet fewer vacant lots are found on residential blocks than in District A, and values of houses along 40th Street are more stable. A new school at 35th and Galena is a major catalyst for reinvestment.

The block layout in District B is diverse with blocks with varying lengths caused by the diagonal alignment of Lisbon Avenue; blocks aligned in an east-west direction, with houses facing to the north or south, including Galena, Walnut, and Robert streets; square blocks along 35th Street between Galena and Vliet Street; and misaligned north-south streets that jog across Galena Street and a closed intersection at the west end of Sarnow Street where it meets Lisbon.. This layout gives the district an insular feeling, if not an enclave, compared to the rigid but open grid of the surrounding areas.

Main corridors in the district include Lisbon Avenue, Vliet Street, 35th Street, and 40th Street along the east side of the park. Lisbon Avenue and Vliet are both addressed in the Corridors section, as are their commercial nodes at 35th Street.

#### Overall Vision for District B: East of the Park

Recent investments in a new public school and investments in Washington Park by Milwaukee County will spur redevelopment and renovation of housing along Galena Street. Reuse of the old 37th Street School could provide space for job training and other social service organizations or owner-occupied housing, while the mix of commercial, civic, light industrial, and live and work spaces along Vliet Street provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for area residents.

### **Concepts and Strategies**

#### Lisbon Avenue

See Corridors and Catalytic Projects sections for a detailed discussion of Lisbon Avenue.

#### Galena Street Project

With Washington Park to the west and the new Bethune Academy elementary school to the east at 35th Street, an opportunity to revitalize Galena Street should be pursued. The east-west alignment of Galena, with houses facing to the north and south (which does not continue east of 35th Street) creates a distinct environment. At present, however, the atmosphere on the street is created by a combination of derelict housing and illegal activity. A concerted effort should be made to revitalize Galena Street through a coordinated program of housing renovation, select housing removal, and new construction, especially on the blocks immediate to the new school. This project will continue the investment that the City has made in the school and in new housing on adjacent blocks along 35th Street.

#### 37th Street School Reuse

With the construction of the Bethune Academy the future use of the old 37th Street School is still under consideration. The building

is an asset and its reuse a potential catalytic project. The City has considered development proposals that considered a conversion of the very solid masonry building to residential units or using the school space for neighborhood based social service organizations. In either case, the buildings reuse should compliment the surrounding neighborhood and if residential units are pursued, owner occupancy should be encouraged.

#### 40th Street Streetscape and Washington Park

Creation of improved pedestrian amenities and traffic calming along 40th St. should be encouraged. Streetscape amenities should include sidewalks on the park side of the street, pedestrian scale streetlights, and improved pedestrian street crossings. In combination with the Galena Street project, a grander entry to Washington Park should be designed at the terminus of Galena Street.

#### Washington Park Urban Ecology Center

The Urban Ecology Center, a neighborhood-based, non-profit community center, plans to renovate the Washington Park Boathouse to use as an educational facility and environmental laboratory. This use of the park building would greatly increase activity in the park, in addition to serving the several school children in the area through a variety of educational programs.

#### Catalytic Projects in District B:

Lisbon Avenue Infill and Redevelopment

Galena and 35th housing

Reuse of the 37th Street School

## **District C: Walnut Hill**

Walnut Hill is a slightly older section of the study area, including the areas to the east of 35th Street. The District includes a local historic landmark house at 1721 North 34th Street, and other houses that display local carpentry craftsmanship at the end of the 19th century. The area has organized itself as a neighborhood unit under the name, Walnut Hill. The main commercial corridors of Lisbon and Vliet connect across 35th Street, and the North Line railroad viaduct creates an eastern boundary, but the planning study area also includes land to the east of the tracks south of Walnut Street to 27th Street.

#### Overall Vision for District C: Walnut Hill

Walnut Hill will continue steady renovation of its original housing stock and small scale infill housing projects. Residential redevelopment in combination with a small greenspace north of West Side Academy I will spur redevelopment and renovation of housing on facing blocks. The potential to create a greenway and bicycle trail in the North Line railroad viaduct is also explored.

## Concepts and Strategies

### West Side Park and Housing

The eastern side of the study area lacks small scale parks and open space. The planning process identified the block at 32nd and Brown, across from West Side Academy I as a potential park. While the feasibility of redeveloping the entire block as a park is unlikely, incorporating a small public greenspace when redevelopment occurs is a possibility that the City can pursue. This open space is proposed as with a coordinated housing renovation and infill effort on facing blocks, particularly along 31st Street where existing repair shops detract from the value of area. The project is detailed as a Catalytic Project.

### North Line Greenway

The historic North Line railroad viaduct lost its last freight customer north of Vliet Street when Tower Automotive closed in 2005. CP Railway should be engaged in a discussion about the potential to construct a recreational and commuter bicycle trail in the viaduct, while retaining the railroad track for future use. The 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation should also consider the value of a recreational and commuter trail as an amenity to adjacent properties, and a means of connecting jobs to local residents.

Similar rails to trails project can be found in urban neighborhoods, including the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis, which includes a section with a combined active railroad track and adjacent recreational trail. Fencing between the trail and track will protect both trail users and the railroad. Given that parcels along the viaduct, such as the blocks south of Galena and Cherry streets, are not viable as industrial sites, and given known soil contamination and the higher costs of remediation for residential uses, the plan recommends including some of the former industrial parcels along the viaduct in the greenway system if redevelopment of these parcels is not feasible.

### Catalytic Projects in District C:

Residential and Greenspace redevelopment north of West Side Academy I along 30th Street Industrial Corridor

### Lisbon Avenue Infill and Redevelopment

### 30th Street Industrial Corridor Industrial re-use sites

# Corridors

## North Avenue Corridor

North Avenue is the primary commercial corridor in Washington Park. Over the last decade a number of projects have coalesced around the node at 35th Street into a group of new projects that have changed the face of that section of North Avenue. These projects include: a new Jewel/Osco grocery and drug store, the Metcalfe Community Center, Columbia Square mixed-use building, and Gateway Plaza's renovation of the mixed-use building on the southwest corner of 35th and North and construction of adjacent townhouses. North Avenue CDC and New Covenant Housing Corporation, with the assistance of City programs and financing, have lead the way on North Avenue revitalization, and both groups plan further renovation projects and major new construction, which are outlined below.

### Concepts and Strategies

#### North Avenue Gateway Initiative

The Gateway District Initiative can be thought of as the umbrella concept that covers all of the private sector and public sector efforts under way to improve North Avenue in Washington Park. The efforts on the public side include a TIF district and CDBC grants that brings financial support to projects, along with recent public works improvements to the streetscape, including new street lamps and banners. The Plan supports the whole Gateway Initiative with projects outlined below.

#### Mixed Use Development

The Plan recommends continuing the trend toward new mixed use buildings and renovation of older mixed-use buildings along North Avenue. The Columbia Square project on the 3300 block and Toussaint Square on the 3400 block, just east of the study area, show that this type of development project is viable, and that there is a market for new rental apartment units in Washington Park. The level of new investment along North Avenue is reaching a point where the environment on the street is one of renewal and reinvestment, with many new and renovated buildings. The Plan supports this strategy, in general and with details on specific projects in the Catalytic Projects section.

#### 35th Street Transit Improvements

With so many improvements happening at the intersection of 35th Street and North Avenue, the Plan recommends inclusion of transit facilities in support of riders and redevelopment. Routes 21, 4H and 35 intersect at the corner, allowing riders to transfer. A transit shelter should be installed on one of more of the corners, along with other rider amenities and transit information kiosks.

### Lisbon and North Intersection Improvements

The intersection of North and Lisbon Avenues is very highly trafficed. Given traffic counts, the proximity to the freeway on ramp, and high speeds in the area, increase pedestrian amenities should be included in streetscape improvements. This intersection should be examined in greater detail in the ‘West Side’ Area Planning process.

### Catalytic Projects along North Avenue:

Finney Library site

Toussaint Square

Food Court

## **Lisbon Avenue Corridor**

Lisbon Avenue between 40th Street and the railroad viaduct is the most challenged part of Washington Park. The Plan recommends a change to City policy in regard to future land use, zoning, and development strategy. Lisbon Avenue can no longer support the amount of commercial space that it once did. Future land use policy is to seek multi-family uses or focused mixed-use or commercial development on blocks at the 35th Street intersection. Certain blocks have a preponderance of vacant land, much of it owned by the City or Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development (LAND), a local group working on revitalization projects. LAND worked to bring the Lisbon Avenue Health Clinic to a vacant bank building on the 3500 block of Lisbon, and this clinic has since expanded in size.

Taking a cue from redevelopment strategies along North Avenue, the amount of vacant land along Lisbon can be considered an opportunity to assemble whole block ends for new development.

## **Concepts and Strategies**

### Rezone and Incentives

Blocks along Lisbon Avenue should be rezoned from Commercial Service, to an appropriate multi-family district. A City program should be identified to assist with development of multi-family apartment projects, or townhouse projects.

### Block End Assembly and Infill Development

Taking a cue from successful redevelopment strategies along North Avenue, the amount of vacant land along Lisbon can be considered an opportunity to assemble whole block ends for new development. Because the City or other non-profit organizations already own

many of these parcels, the blocks could be relatively easy to assemble with only a limited number of strategic acquisitions.

Blocks that should be assembled and marketed for new construction include:

3300 block, north and south sides

3400 block, north side at the 35th Street intersection

3500 block, south side excluding the Kehr Chocolate building.

3600 block, with only one existing structure and vacant land owned by LAND.

3800 block, north side, excluding the mixed-use masonry building at the west end.

#### Public Facility

A public facility could also be a welcome project on vacant land along Lisbon Avenue. City departments should consider the potential for locating City facilities on City-owned land.

#### Lisbon and 35th Street Node

The intersection of 35th and Lisbon has lost much of its commercial strength. The former St. Andrew's Church is located on the southeast corner, and the Lisbon Avenue Health Center is on the northwest corner, along with the long serving Lisbon Avenue Dental Clinic. Two of the four corners are institutional uses rather than commercial uses. The Plan proposes redevelopment of the northeast corner to a new commercial use, retail or hospitality. Strategies for the southwest corner could be to relocate the small grocery store on the northeast corner to a new building, and infill around an existing building in mid-block, or removal of the existing building, excluding the Kehr Chocolate building, and redevelopment to a commercial or mixed use. However, with a new full service grocery and drug store at 35th and North, and the Westside Marketplace on 35th south of Vliet, the market for any commercial space along Lisbon will remain weak.

#### Lisbon Avenue Health Center and West Side Academy II

LAND worked to bring the Lisbon Avenue Health Clinic to a vacant bank building on the 3500 block of Lisbon, and this clinic has since expanded in size. The clinic has expressed a need for additional off-street parking and has sought to negotiate with West Side Academy II for use of their parking lot immediately north. The school would also like to redesign a portion of its site for improved play areas and parking. In addition, the school district owns the vacant church to the north. Currently the school is not using the building and is seeking alternative uses for the building. The Plan recommends continued effort by the City to assist both parties to find the needed space for play areas and parking.

## **Vliet Street Corridor**

Vliet Street in Washington Park is a classic Milwaukee mixeduse corridor. It has single-family houses, small mixed use buildings and the odd larger structure, such as the historic theater, now owned and used by the Hmong American Friendship Association. The commercial node at 35th Street shows signs of strength and retains some handsome brick buildings, next to franchise fast food restaurants, yet much of the rest of the corridor struggles with vacant and board storefronts, and apartments in need of renovation. Like Lisbon Avenue, the potential to support commercial uses is weak, and a recent proposal to construct new row houses where a vacant mixed use building recent stood on the 3700 block suggests an overall strategy that favors new residential construction.

The Near West Side comprehensive plan addresses Vliet Street from 35th Street to 40th Street as a corridor, recommending a mix of uses with commercial nodes and areas.

## **Concepts and Strategies**

### **Infill and Redevelopment**

The Plan supports new infill development, especially that of new row house or townhouse developments.

### **Vliet and 35th Street Node**

The Plan supports small-scale commercial infill development that complements the historic fabric at the intersection of 35th Street, especially on the northwest corner, but retaining the existing building. A transit shelter should be installed at the transfer point between Routes 11, 4H and 35.

### **Hmong-American Friendship Association**

Efforts should be made to encourage the Hmong-American community, which is concentrated on residential blocks around Vliet Street, to open businesses along Vliet Street. The area might lend itself to specialty retail such as a cultural center. The development of businesses that celebrate Hmong culture and share Hmong food and crafts and arts with the greater Milwaukee community would foster economic development and cross-cultural understanding.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Catalytic Projects**

### **North Avenue Gateway**

Finney Library site reuse  
Toussaint Square  
Food Court

### **Residential Infill Redevelopment**

(“Garfield and Lloyd Blocks” in District A)

### **United Methodist Expansion**

### **Lisbon Avenue, 3300 to 3700 Blocks**

### **Galena and 35th Housing**

### **Reuse of 37th Street School**

### **Vliet Street Infill on 3700 Block and 35th Street Node**

### **30th Street Industrial Corridor Regeneration**

North of Lisbon Ave.  
South of Lisbon Ave.

## North Avenue Gateway Initiative

### Catalytic Project Boundaries

All of the North Avenue corridor in the study area, from 35th Street to Sherman Boulevard.

### Rationale

North Avenue is the dynamic economic development engine in Washington Park. Its continued revitalization is essential to further renewal in the neighborhood. Recent projects along North Avenue, such as the mixed-use Columbia Square development, show the potential for infill projects that meet the needs for new housing types while maintaining the retail commercial nature of the corridor. The catalytic project encompasses improvements to the public realm and facilities and three specific private development projects:

- Toussaint Square
- North Avenue Food Court
- Finney Library reuse and south side of the 4200 Block

### Development Goal

Continue infill development on available sites along North Avenue, with a focus on mixed-use projects that construct new ground level retail and upper level residential units.

### Recommendations

Support the development efforts of North Avenue CDC, including Toussaint Square and the proposed Food Court.

Work with selected developer to reuse the Finney Library and redevelop the adjacent block along North Avenue.

Maintain a consistent build-to line with storefronts meeting the sidewalk.

Install bus shelters at the intersection of North Avenue and 35th Street.

Maximize the use of available development incentive programs and districts along North Avenue.

### Project Partners and Responsible Parties

North Avenue Community Development Corporation

New Covenant Housing Corporation

Milwaukee Transit Authority

City of Milwaukee



## **Residential Infill Redevelopment (“Garfield and Lloyd Blocks” in District A)**

### **Catalytic Project Boundaries**

North 35th Street, North 42nd Street, North Ave. and Brown Street.

### **Rationale**

The blocks south of North Avenue, between Sherman Boulevard and 35th Street have a concentration of vacant lots, derelict houses, and tax delinquent properties (see Figure 19) and the disinvestment that go along with unattended property. This vacant land presents an opportunity to assemble a number of properties on the block and cluster new housing, most likely affordable townhouses or single family detached homes. Owner occupancy must be encouraged. Attention to the area by the City and nonprofit developers will help support economic development projects on North Avenue.

### **Development Goals**

Strengthen the housing stock in this area by infill development and renovation of existing stock. Increase homeownership.

### **Recommendations**

Work with property owners to acquire tax delinquent and unmaintained property.

Renovate houses deemed worthy of new investment, if any.

Work with local developers to construct new housing.

Consider financing mechanisms to offer grants or low interest loans for home improvements in this area.

### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

City of Milwaukee

Property owners

Local housing developers

## **United Methodist Expansion**

### **Catalytic Project Boundaries**

Five parcels on the northwest corner of the intersection of Lisbon Avenue and North 39th Street

### **Rationale**

United Methodist Children's Services, located at the corner of Lisbon Avenue and 40th Street serves low income children and families. Their Transitional Living Program provides housing to 17 families in their building on Lisbon Avenue. The demand for services continues to grow, with assistance to 15,000 individuals in 2002 and 18,000 in 2005. The building at 3940 Lisbon Avenue is one of a handful of garden-style, brick apartment buildings in the neighborhood, but the group of four frame houses immediately adjacent to the east are obsolete. The project recommends assembly of these properties and one vacant lot to create a site to expand United Methodist's housing. Construction of new housing next to United Methodist's building could act as a true catalyst to additional housing on sites along Lisbon Avenue (see pages 84-85).

### **Development Goals**

Expand the number of units that United Methodist is able to offer to as part of their Transitional Living Program.

### **Recommendations**

Assemble five parcels at the corner of Lisbon Avenue and 39th Street and construct a new apartment building for use by United Methodist. The building should be of high quality design and similar in size and scale to the existing Transitional Living building.

### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

United Methodist

Washington Park Partners

City of Milwaukee



## **Lisbon Avenue Infill and Redevelopment**

### **Catalytic Project Boundary**

Blocks along Lisbon Avenue from 32nd Street to Sherman Boulevard with specific emphasis between 33rd and 37th Streets.

### **Rationale**

Lisbon Avenue is poised for revitalization through land use change. While the market for commercial uses is no longer strong enough to sustain retail on every block, development of a market for new multi-family housing should be encouraged. Construction of new housing on any one of the available sites along Lisbon Avenue would greatly improve the environment on the street, and has the potential to gain momentum for wholesale recreation of the street as part of the residential neighborhood. The intersection with 35th Street has good visibility and should remain a commercial and institutional node.

### **Development Goals**

Revitalize Lisbon Avenue with new uses, shared solutions for parking and high quality design.

### **Recommendations**

Create a redevelopment plan for the area between 33rd and 37th Streets. This detailed plan should include West Side Academy II and the church that is owned by MPS on Brown St.

Work with all property owners to come up with mutually beneficial solutions for parking, safety and operational needs.

Figure 24 is an illustration from the Washington Park Partners ‘Planning for Hope’ quality of life plan. It illustrates one way in which the street could be redeveloped. In the development of a more detailed redevelopment plan, care should be taken to incorporate parking areas that are accessed via an alley, rather than Lisbon Ave. Restoring as much of the former builing enclosure as possible should be encouraged.

### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development (LAND)

Property owners

Washington Park Partners

City of Milwaukee

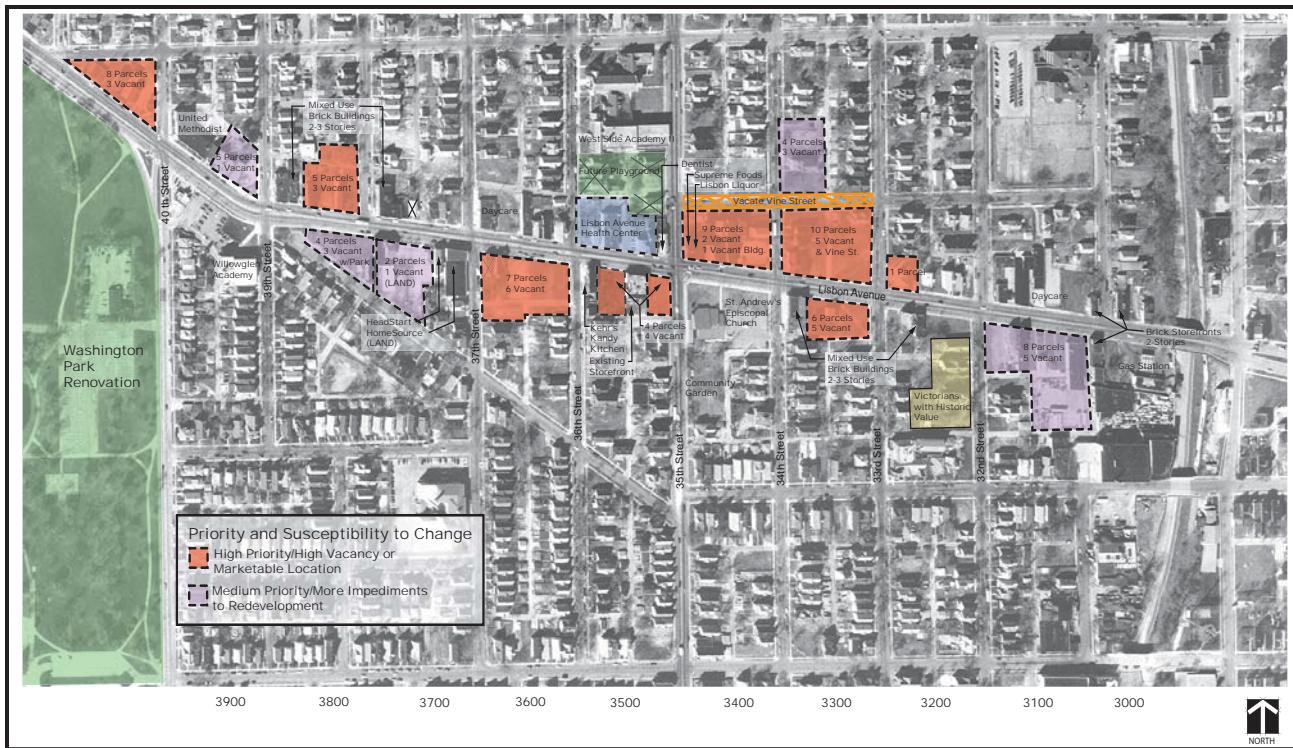


Figure 22: Lisbon Avenue Corridor, Susceptibility to Change Analysis

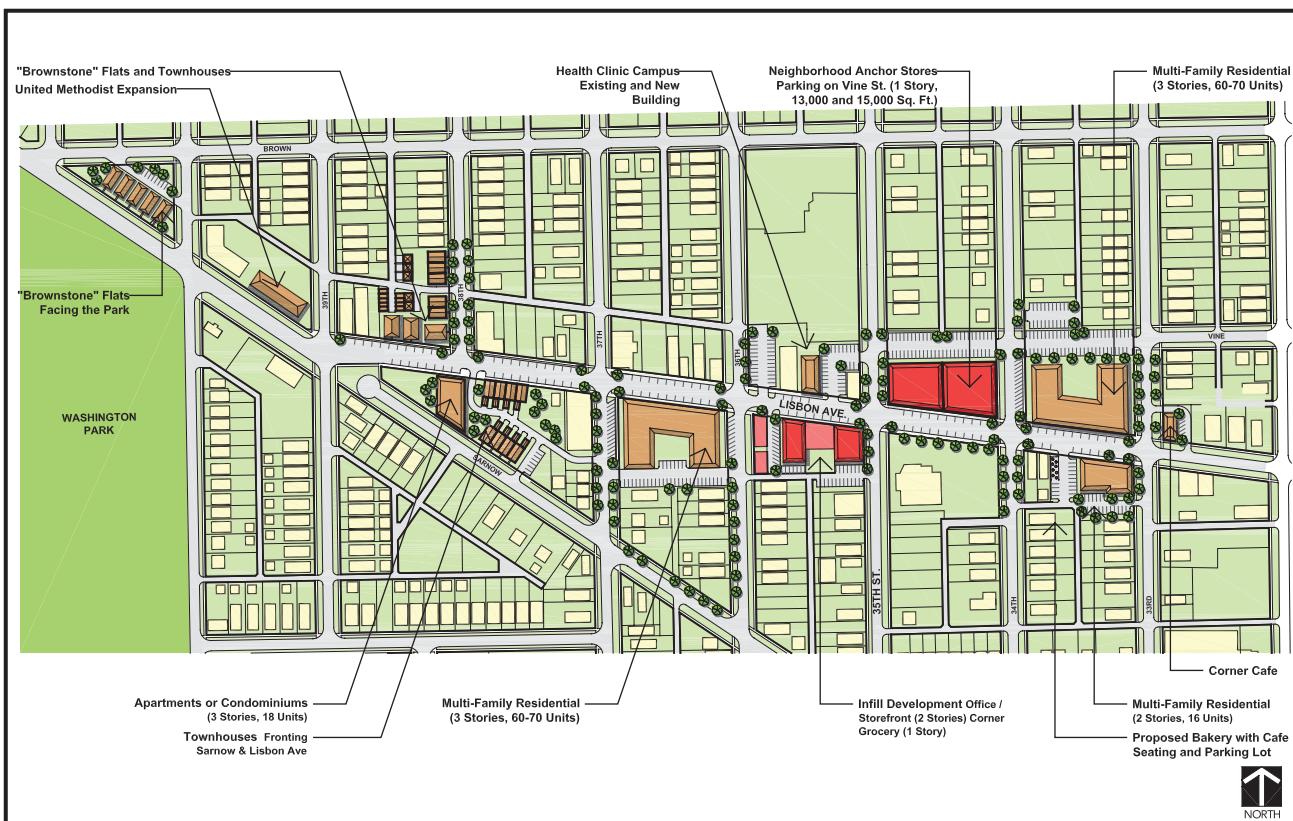


Figure 23: Lisbon Avenue Corridor, Illustrative Infill and Redevelopment Plan

## **Galena Street Housing**

### Catalytic Project Boundary

Galena Street from North 40th Street to North 35th Street.

#### Rationale

Construction of the new school at the corner of 35th and Galena creates an opportunity to reinvest in property along Galena Street from the school to Washington Park. The City of Milwaukee has assembled property on the block directly north of the school and housing developers are working to design and finance a project to construct new townhouses.



#### Development Goals

Secure investment in the new Bethune Academy by rehabilitating housing along Galena Street and creating a strong connection between the school and Washington Park.

#### Recommendations

Work with private developers to construct new townhouses on the north side of Galena Street, between 35th and 36th streets.

Identify funding sources to provide loans and grants to for property owners to rehabilitate old housing.

Install new crosswalk markings and traffic calming devices at 35th Street, 38th Street, and 40th Street.

Improve the entrance to Washington Park at Galena and 40th St.



#### Project Partners and Responsible Parties

Property owners

Washington Park Partners

City of Milwaukee

Milwaukee County



## **Reuse of 37th Street School**

### Catalytic Project Boundary

Milwaukee Public School property fronting 37th Street between Roberts Street and Walnut Street.

### Rationale

With the construction of the new Bethune Academy at 35th and Galena Street, the old 37th Street School has become redundant. However, this building is solid masonry construction in relatively good shape; therefore, the City of Milwaukee has issued to requests for proposals for reusing the building. Interest has been expressed in converting the building to a residential use, as well as reusing the building as a center for providing social services and training programs. If residential uses are considered, owner occupancy should be encouraged.

### Development Goals

Reuse the existing masonry structure in a way that is beneficial to the neighborhood.

Improve the exterior landscape

Maintain main entry on 37th Street for pedestrian access.

### Recommendations

Continue to work with developers to achieve a successful reuse of the building.

### Project Partners and Responsible Parties

City of Milwaukee

Washington Park Partners



## **Vliet Street Infill, 3500 and 3700 Blocks**

### **Catalytic Project Boundary Vliet Street 3500 and 3700 Blocks**



#### **Rationale**

While Vliet was a major commercial corridor at one time, currently it no longer supports an active retail market. Retail should be concentrated at significant intersections such as 35th and Vliet. Other segments of the street should be considered for alternative uses such as housing. Any housing should be of a size and scale appropriate to this high traffic street. Single family attached units would be a more appropriate building form for this location.

#### **Development Goals**

Create a stronger commercial node at 35th and Vliet Streets.  
Add value and owner occupied housing along Vliet Street at 37th Street.

#### **Recommendations**

Continue to work on the development of townhomes on the 3700 block of Vliet Street  
Market the land owned by the City at 35th and Vliet via a request for proposals for mixed use development.

#### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

City of Milwaukee  
Washington Park Partners  
West End Development Corporation

## **30th Street Industrial Corridor, north of Lisbon**

### **Catalytic Project Boundary**

The block bounded by Brown, 32nd, Lloyd, and 30th Street Industrial Corridor.

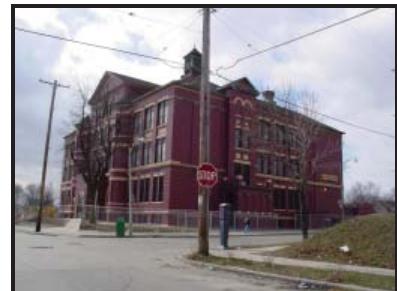
### **Rationale**

The Washington Park neighborhood needs more developed open space. The Plan recommends that as new infill development occurs in this area that public open space should be incorporated into the overall site plan. Ten parcels on this block are now vacant, nine of them owned by the City. Other houses on the block are boarded, and many require major rehabilitation. The open space could be directly north of Westside Academy I, and could be used for organized play. Property on surrounding blocks would become more valuable across from a new park, specifically property on the east side of 31st Street to the railroad viaduct, which should be redeveloped to new housing.



### **Development Goals**

Create infill residential development to include a public amenity. Encourage land use change along 31st Street from small repair shops to new residential.



### **Recommendations**

Prohibit construction of new housing on any lots on the project block until a critical mass of parcels can be redeveloped at once to include some greenspace.

### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

Private Developers

Washington Park Partners

City of Milwaukee

Milwaukee Public Schools

## **30th Street Industrial Corridor, south of Lisbon**

### **Catalytic Project Boundary**

Lisbon Avenue to Cherry Street along the 30th Street Industrial Corridor.

### **Rationale**

In the Washington Park planning area, the 30th Street Industrial Corridor consists of small, industrial parcels. Many of the parcels no longer support industrial uses and are vacant. Reuse for industrial purposes is unlikely and would detract from the surrounding residential uses.



### **Development Goals**

Create infill residential development to include public amenities.

Reuse existing quality masonry buildings when possible for loft style units.



### **Recommendations**

Prohibit reuse of these parcels for industrial uses.

Assess the amount of site contamination and determine which sites are best for redevelopment

Seek funding sources to remediate any contamination concerns before redevelopment occurs.

### **Project Partners and Responsible Parties**

Property Owners

Private Developers

Washington Park Partners

City of Milwaukee