



## AGENDA

### Economic Development Commission Meeting **In-Person / Electronic Meeting**

**New Brighton City Hall; 803 Old Hwy 8 NW  
Upper Level Conference Room  
March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022 | 7:30 a.m.**

- **Attend the meeting in Person:** Members of the public and the Economic Development Commission may attend the meeting in person. Attendees required to wear masks and comply with social distancing parameters regardless of vaccination status.
- **Watch the meeting electronically:** To observe the meeting electronically, visit [the City website](#) or tune into CTV Channel 8023 (CenturyLink) or Channel 16 (Comcast).
- **Join the meeting electronically:** Members of the Economic Development Commission may attend the meeting remotely pursuant to MN Statutes 13D.021. If you would like to interact with our public officials or staff but are not comfortable attending the meeting in person, you may join the meeting electronically. Visit: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82196592215?pwd=VGVZZE9DU2xiMUtVQlViRGNKVTA1dz09> (no app needed) or use your Zoom app to join by entering: Meeting ID: 821 9659 2215 and Passcode: 672150

#### I. Call to Order

#### II. Roll Call\*

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Chair Harry Carter           | ▪ Commissioner Max Nundahl     |
| ▪ Commissioner Bob Benke       | ▪ Commissioner Anthony Pledger |
| ▪ Commissioner Bret Fyneweaver | ▪ Commissioner Jacqui Sauter   |
| ▪ Commissioner Mike Murlowski  | ▪ Commissioner Paul Zisla      |

#### III. Approval of Agenda

#### IV. Approval of Minutes

1. February 2, 2021

#### V. Report from City Council Liaison

#### VI. Business Items

*\* A quorum of the City Council may be present.*

1. Updates from Commissioners on Business Outreach
2. Year in Review/ Remaining To Do Items/ General Updates
3. 2022/2023 Work Plan Visioning
4. Recommendations for Chair & Vice Chair for 2022-2023

## **VII. Adjournment**



**MINUTES**  
**New Brighton Economic Development Commission**  
**Regular Meeting – February 2, 2022**  
**7:30 a.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Carter called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was hybrid allowing for remote participation.

**II. Roll Call**

Members Present.....Chair Harry Carter, Commissioners Bob Benke, Bret Fyneweaver, Max Nundahl, Anthony Pledger, and Paul Zisla

Members Absent.....Commissioners Mike Murlowski and Jacqui Sauter

Also Present .....Ben Gozola- Assistant Director of Community Assets & Development & Jillian Cady- DCAD Technician

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Zisla, seconded by Commissioner Benke to approve the agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was taken. Approved 6-0

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Benke, seconded by Commissioner Zisla to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2022 meeting.

A roll call vote was taken. Approved 6-0

**V. Report from Council Liaison**

There was no report from the City Council.

## **VI. Business Items**

### **A. Updates from Open to Business**

Gozola stated Noah Her, the City's Open To Business representative, was present to provide the EDC with an overview of their activities during 2021, to discuss ways OTB has been helping businesses through the pandemic, and to answer any questions the Commission may have about the program moving forward.

Noah Her, Open to Business representative, thanked the Commission for their time. He commented on the COVID relief grants that were offered in the first quarter of 2021 to local business. He stated in the second and third quarter he worked on the OTB referral network. He discussed how OTB helped businesses to pursue free money opportunities. He noted the outlook for 2022 was positive and more and more businesses return to normal. He explained he was looking forward to continuing to serve and returning to regular office hours in New Brighton.

Rick Howden, Ramsey County representative, introduced himself to the Commission and stated he was available to answer questions from the group.

Discussion included:

- It was noted OTB spent 66 hours providing direct assistance to eight different New Brighton businesses.
- The nature of the consulting work provided by OTB was further discussed.
- The County's efforts to assist businesses was described, along with the amount of CARES and DEED relief that was offered to local businesses.
- OTB client demographics were reviewed.
- The Commission was pleased with the services being provided by OTB to the City of New Brighton.

### **B. Taking Advantage of Local Events**

Gozola reported the EDC has spent several sessions in the past year discussing business outreach and event tourism. He explained the Council would like the EDC to continue this work by having a discussion to identify and suggest ways to get ahead of events like Ice Castles and Stockyard Days. Specifically, Council would like the Commission to share their thoughts on:

1. What can the City can do to help our businesses take advantage of large events at Long Lake Park (Burma-Shave signs?, banners?, work to allow business to runs their own concessions in some other area?).
2. How much do you believe we should do (i.e. what is your take on the cost/benefit for these efforts)?



3. If possible, develop a general template process for the City to follow in anticipation of large events to allow our businesses to capitalize off of traffic flow to the community.

Discussion included:

- The Commission believed it was unfortunate that not all event sponsors want to work with the City or local businesses to coordinate efforts.
- The Commission discussed how the City could work to bridge the gap between sponsors and local businesses.
- The Commission believed it would also benefit local businesses to advocate and collaborate in order to draw patrons that are visiting the City for events.
- The Commission stated a “convention bureau” would typically coordinate these efforts.
- Commissioner Zisla agreed to speak with the North Metro Chamber of Commerce and Chair Carter agreed to speak to Adagio’s.

## VII. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Benke, seconded by Commissioner Zisla to adjourn the meeting.

A roll call vote was taken. Approved 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 am

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Gozola". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "B" and a cursive "G".

Ben Gozola  
Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development



<b>Agenda Section:</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Report Date:</b>	<b>2/24/22</b>
<b>Commission Meeting Date:</b>	<b>03/02/22</b>

## REQUEST FOR COMMISISON CONSIDERATION

<b>ITEM DESCRIPTION:</b>	Business Outreach Update
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>No comments to supplement this report</b>	<b>Comments attached</b>

**15.99 Deadline:** None

**Recommendations:** Discuss latest business outreach efforts on behalf of the City and the business outreach program

**Summary:** Last month, Commissioner Zisla agreed to reach out to North Metro Chamber of commerce to discuss event tourism in light of recent issues between local Businesses and the Ice Castles operation. Additionally, Commissioner Carter volunteered to contact the owner of Adagio's Pizza to learn more about the breakdown that occurred with their Ice Castles marketing operation. The Commission can discuss the results of these efforts, and also review outreach updates from Commissioner Sauter.

- Requested Action:**
- Receive updates on latest business outreach activities, and continue the discussion on best ways to approach event tourism and business outreach in the future.
  - Identify next action steps for other business outreach efforts

**Attachments:** none

Ben Gozola, AICP  
*Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development*



<b>Agenda Section:</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Report Date:</b>	<b>02/24/21</b>
<b>Commission Meeting Date:</b>	<b>03/03/21</b>

## REQUEST FOR COMMISISON CONSIDERATION

<b>ITEM DESCRIPTION:</b>	Year in Review / Remaining To-Do's / General Updates
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>No comments to supplement this report</b>	<b>Comments attached</b>

- Recommendations:**
- Listen to staff set the stage for the day's discussion
  - Enjoy a donut and some coffee

- History:**
- On a yearly basis, staff will work with the Commission to prepare a generalized work plan for the coming service year (April through March). Prior to that discussion, we will give a brief overview of the previous year's accomplishments, identify any to-do items still on the table due to the pandemic, and provide general updates on Council initiatives and recently approved projects.

- Financial Impact:**
- n/a

- Summary:**
- The final EDC meeting of the year is traditionally a meeting for commission members to examine what was accomplished over the previous year, acknowledge what remains to be done, and plan for the year ahead. Following the business outreach discussion, staff will present the Commission with an overview of where we've been over the past year which will then lead into a commission-led discussion on the 2022/23 Work Plan.

- Attachments:**
- *Current EDC Work Plan (2021/22)*

Ben Gozola, AICP

Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development

## COMMISSION'S OVERARCHING FOCAL POINTS (as identified with Council on 3/18/15, and as last reaffirmed on 8/7/19)

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- A. Business Retention & Expansion
- B. Housing Programs
- C. Place-making Initiatives (*i.e., Establishing a sense of place within the community*)
- D. Physical Redevelopment Opportunities (*New Brighton Exchange, New Brighton Elementary, etc.*)

## IDENTIFIED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING 2020-2021

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Items to examine any time:

1. Ramsey county economic development partnership – provide information on their ED and COVID-19 recovery programs
2. TIF educational session
3. Event/Identity Tourism (i.e. Pickle Ball Capital of MN)
4. City's business outreach program and efforts
5. Zoning code update/feedback
6. New Housing initiatives
7. Continued work on entry monuments/sense of place

## PROPOSED CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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Meeting Date	Task/Project	Proposed Action/Outcome
<b>April 7, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDC Member Orientation / Yearly Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission meets all new members</li> <li>• Commission understands their role in City Government</li> <li>• Commission finalizes and adopts 2020/2021 work plan</li> </ul>

Meeting Date	Task/Project	Proposed Action/Outcome
May 5, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint Council / EDC / Planning Commission meeting</li> <li>Complexes</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission gets an opportunity to meet our new Council and hear their goals and aspirations</li> <li>Commission informed on metro market trends, affordable housing needs, and ways local regulations can impact development</li> </ul>
June 2, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt Final 2021/2022 work plan</li> <li>Housing Market, Trends, and Initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss progress on Pulte development and potential for new housing complexes</li> </ul>
July 7, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit business outreach initiative, new web page, and results from survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the results from business outreach survey and next steps</li> <li>Go through EDC web page and ask for feedback</li> </ul>
August 4, 2021	Summer Break – no meeting unless deemed necessary (TBD)	
September 1, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place-making session</li> <li>Public art opportunities/ grants being pursued</li> <li>Physical redevelopment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite a guest speaker to discuss funding opportunities</li> <li>Brainstorm areas in the community to target for public art and organizations to partner with</li> </ul>
October 6, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place-making session #2</li> <li>Re-launch of Event tourism discussion (bike marathon? Pickle ball? Frisbee golf? Nordic skiing? Night market? Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued discussion and decisions from September's outcomes</li> <li>Identify event target(s) and plan of action to make it happen</li> </ul>
November 3, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Code and Zoning Code Updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full Commission updated on status of City Code and Zoning Code updates</li> </ul>
December 1, 2021	Holiday Break – no meeting unless deemed necessary (TBD)	

Meeting Date	Task/Project	Proposed Action/Outcome
January 5, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open To Business 2021 Year-End Report</li> <li>Baker Tilly 2021 TIF Management Plan/Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission learns how successful Open to Business was in 2021</li> <li>Commission understands current status of all active TIF districts</li> </ul>
February 2, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up on most pertinent/active topic(s) from 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing item(s) to conclusion or ensuring progress is being made</li> </ul>
March 2, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Year's Accomplishments &amp; Outstanding To-do Items</li> <li>2022/2023 work plan visioning</li> <li>Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission and staff review accomplishments, and identify ways to improve moving forward</li> <li>Commission provides direction on the coming year's tasks</li> <li>Commission nominates its leadership for the coming year</li> </ul>

2022/2023 WORK PLAN BEGINS		
April 6, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDC Member Orientation / Yearly Training</li> <li>Review final 2022/2023 work plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission meets all new members</li> <li>Commission understands their role in City Government</li> <li>Commission agrees upon target items for the coming year</li> </ul>



<b>Agenda Section:</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>Item:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Report Date:</b>	<b>2/24/22</b>
<b>Commission Meeting Date:</b>	<b>03/02/22</b>

## REQUEST FOR COMMISISON CONSIDERATION

<b>ITEM DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>2022/23 Work Plan Discussion &amp; Visioning</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:</b>	
<b>No comments to supplement this report</b>	<b>Comments attached</b>

- Recommendations:**
- Fill in the proposed work plan for the 2022/2023 EDC year
  - Staff will bring a finalized work plan forward in April for review and approval following new Commissioner training.

- Legislative History:**
- On a yearly basis, staff will work with the Commission to prepare a generalized work plan for the coming service year (April through March)

- Financial Impact:**
- None. While the eventual actions of the Commission on individual items are sure to have financial impact on the community, adoption of a generalized yearly work plan does not alone drive specific impacts

- Summary:**
- The attached draft work plan (largely blank given this is the 1st draft) identifies potential topics of discussion for each meeting between April 2022 and March 2023. Proposed actions & outcomes are (or will be) identified for each meeting.
  - Current entries follow the traditional schedule for tasks at various points in the year (training/orientation in April, Baker Tilly TIF training and current districts review, work plan setting in March, etc)
  - Traditional breaks in summer and over the holidays are reflected in the draft schedule.
  - Keep in mind that staff and the commission always have the right to deviate from the generalized work plan as circumstances in the community dictate. The work plan is a guide and is not set in stone.

- Unlike other meetings during the year where staff leads the discussion, this meeting should largely be led by Commissioners. As a starting point, information is provided herein on each of the four economic development focal points reaffirmed by the Commission in recent years. Commissioners are encouraged to bring their own information to the meeting on 3/2/22 to share with your colleagues in support of areas you'd like to focus on in the coming year.
- Council may ultimately add to or amend the draft work plan, but this is your opportunity to set the stage on what you would like to focus on in the coming year. We look forward to your thoughts!

**Attachments:** 1) 2022/2023 Work Plan Worksheet

2) NEW Brainstorming Material on Commission Focal Points

a) Business Retention & Expansion information

- *Business Retention and Expansion Examples*
- *Economic Gardening Takes Root*

b) Housing Program Information

- *Itasca Project Housing Affordability Recommendations*
- *2021 Minnesota/Twin Cities Housing Stats*

c) Placemaking Initiatives Information

- *Embedding equity into Placemaking (Milwaukee case study)*

d) Physical Redevelopment Opportunities Information

- *HKGi Work Program*



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Ben Gozola, AICP

*Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development*



**COMMISSION'S OVERARCHING FOCAL POINTS** (as identified with Council on 3/18/15, and as last reaffirmed on 8/7/19)

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- B. Housing Programs
- C. Place-making Initiatives (*i.e., Establishing a sense of place within the community*)
- D. Physical Redevelopment Opportunities (*New Brighton Exchange, New Brighton Elementary, etc.*)

**IDENTIFIED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING 2022-2023**

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Items to examine any time:

- Tbd
- Tbd
- Tbd
- Tbd
- Tbd
- Tbd
- Tbd

**PROPOSED CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

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<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Task/Project</b>	<b>Proposed Action/Outcome</b>
<b>May 4, 2022</b>	•	•
<b>June 1, 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIF Overview with Baker Tilley</li> <li>• Baker Tilly 2022 TIF Management Plan/Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Refresher on TIF and latest developments</i></li> <li>• <i>Commission understands current status of all active TIF districts</i></li> </ul>
<b>July 6, 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Meeting with Parks Commission on Placemaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Align place making vision and approach between the two commissions</i></li> </ul>
<b>August 3, 2022</b>	Summer Break – no meeting unless deemed necessary (TBD)	
<b>September 7, 2022</b>	•	•
<b>October 5, 2022</b>	•	•
<b>November 2, 2022</b>	•	•
<b>December 7, 2022</b>	Holiday Break – no meeting unless deemed necessary (TBD)	
<b>January 4, 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open To Business 2021 Year-End Report</li> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Commission learns how successful Open to Business was in 2022</i></li> </ul>
<b>February 1, 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up on most pertinent/active topic(s) from 2022</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bringing on-going item(s) to conclusion and/or setting them up for continuation in 2023/24</i></li> </ul>
<b>March 1, 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Year's Accomplishments &amp; Outstanding To-do Items</li> <li>• 2023/2024 work plan visioning</li> <li>• Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Commission and staff review accomplishments, and identify ways to improve moving forward</i></li> <li>• <i>Commission provides direction on the coming year's tasks</i></li> <li>• <i>Commission nominates its leadership for the coming year</i></li> </ul>

## 2022/2023 WORK PLAN BEGINS

<b>April 5, 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EDC Member Orientation / Yearly Training</li><li>• Review final 2023/2024 work plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Commission meets all new members</i></li><li>• <i>Commission understands their role in City Government</i></li><li>• <i>Commission agrees upon target items for the coming year</i></li></ul>
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A) Business Retention & Expansion information

- *Business Retention and Expansion Approach*  
*Example – Murrieta, CA report*
- *Economic Gardening Takes Root (Article)*

2020

# BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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CONNECTED BY BUSINESS

# DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Since its incorporation 30 years ago, the City of Murrieta has been filled with opportunities and advantages that many other places cannot claim, such as a having a top performing school district, nationally ranked public safety, a central location in Southern California, access to wine country and major regional recreational activities, and having two major freeways converging at its center. As a City that grew rapidly in the last decade, there were many challenges to overcome, such as the pains of an accelerated population expansion, a national recession that led to high unemployment rates, a second recession due to a worldwide pandemic and the general struggles associated with being a relatively new city that is trying to find its identity. The ability of the City of Murrieta to respond to such challenges has come from the strength of the relationships that it has with our business community and the knowledge that their growth and success is truly shared by all of us. Small businesses account for 61.8% of net new jobs according to the U.S. Small Business Administration and account for 99.7% of total business. For this reason, any local economy that seeks to flourish must make retaining and expanding their businesses a top priority.

One of the crucial assets of Murrieta has been its ability to maintain a small-town feel, even when our population surged to over 116,000 residents. This familiarity that we have with not only one another, but also from business to business, has led us to our new city tag line, "Connected by Community." Whether dining in our downtown, playing at one of our parks or shopping in any of our retail centers, Murrieta's personality has always been warm and welcoming. This communal feel and the friendliness that exists here is the foundation of our City and creates an atmosphere that makes this a great place to live, work and play.

If COVID-19 has had any effect, it has reminded us how connected we truly are, even when physically separated. Our businesses adapted to changes that they never could have anticipated or planned for and did so with creativity and alacrity. The City became a hub for resources, creating a "Murrieta Business Newsletter" each day to keep our companies informed about changes and resources available. We delivered PPE to businesses and medical institutions, created reopening kits for small business, we funded "Back to Business" grants to help owners keep their staff employed during the pandemic, told the stories of how businesses adapted to the changing landscape in the "Murrieta Pivots" series, maintained a video series called the "Murrieta Microscope" to showcase new companies, and when indoor services were closed, we promptly created outdoor programs to allow owners to shift their operations outside without time delays or additional permitting.

# DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Murrieta came out of these difficult times as a stronger and more resilient community. Regional sales numbers and unemployment numbers are already beginning to rebound and hope is in sight that we can maintain both a safe and successful local economy. Our concentration on becoming the healthcare hub of the region has led us to many valuable resources during this time and the value of our health service providers has never been more evident. In spite of the challenges associated with COVID-19 and its effect on business, new developments are continuing to come to Murrieta, with retail, office, industrial, and hospitality projects still filling our pipeline. While there is still much work to do to raise our economy and provide competitive jobs for our highly skilled workforce, the foundation in Murrieta is very strong and continuing to grow.

While we responded to the pandemic and offered much needed services to our business community, the City of Murrieta's Economic Development Strategic Plan never contemplated this type of challenge. It has become clear that there is a need for a codified plan for Business Retention and Expansion that focuses on needs for small business sustainability, disaster preparedness, access to capital and business resources. The Economic Development Department is focused on the expansion of employment, entrepreneurship, fiscal resources, community amenities, and overall quality of life for all of the residents and businesses of Murrieta. The efforts put forth by the department should extend to home-based businesses, startups and small business, as well as to our largest employers. It is the goal of this department to facilitate connections with business, investors, developers, and community partners that share the goal of positively impacting the growth of Murrieta.

# AMBITION & MISSION STATEMENT

## **Ambition Statement**

To enhance the quality of life and well-being of all Murrieta residents through the growth of our local economy.

## **Mission Statement**

To cultivate new and existing industries in order to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment.



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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

## Demographics

Murrieta is the largest city in Southwest Riverside County with a population of 116,781 and is estimated to grow by 11.8% over the next 5 years. Average household income in the City of Murrieta has grown to \$113,084 and continues to be much higher than the county average. In addition, there are 496,701 people within a 20-minute drive of the city. These factors result in a larger than average consumer base, with considerable expendable income to support the local economy. When looking for employees, businesses do not have to look far as the labor force is 52,394 strong within the city and 67.1% of our residents have some college or more.

Given the city's strong focus on public safety and access to top quality primary education, it is no surprise that Murrieta is a family community with high-skill workers. The top consumer behavior represented in the City is "Kids & Cul-de-Sacs," followed by "Winner's Circle" and "Middleburg Managers." These lifestyle segments are indicative of families with heads of households that have degrees and white-collar jobs. In fact, 65% of Murrieta works in white-collar jobs, which is higher than both the County and State averages and the median age in Murrieta is 34.2, which coincides with the younger, family demographic.

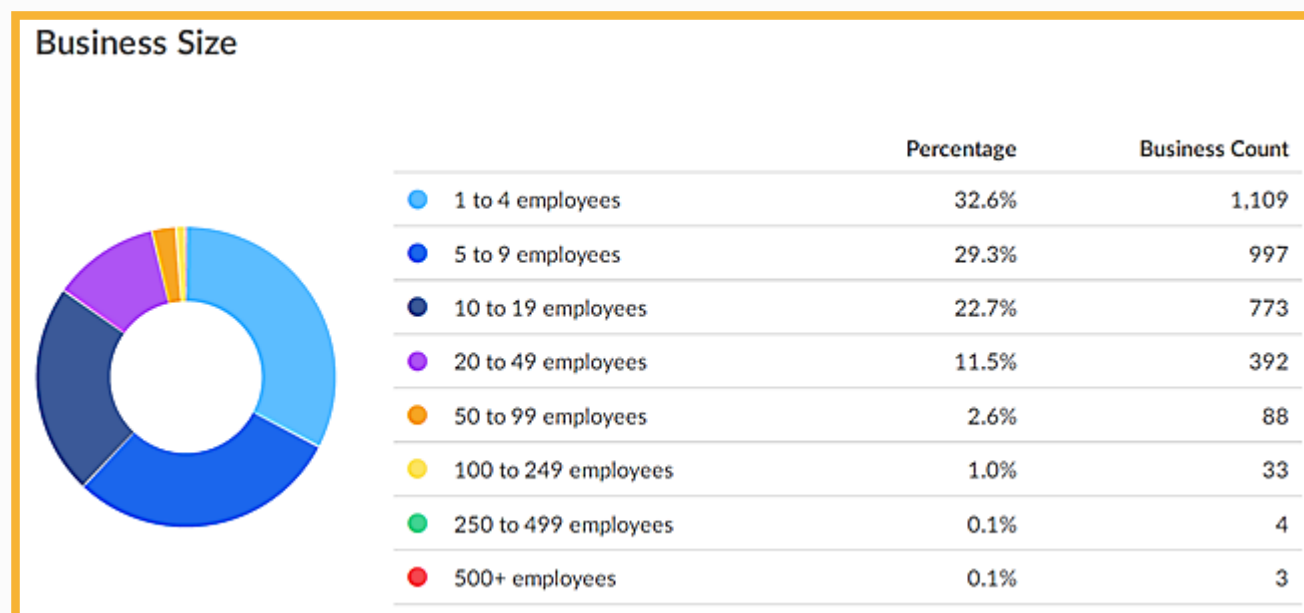
## City Highlights

The residents of Murrieta prioritize safety, education, and quality of life, and the results have been magnificent. The City of Murrieta consistently ranks in the top ten as one of the safest cities with a population over 100,000 in the country in terms of lowest violent crime rates. Murrieta is the first city in Southwest Riverside County to have its own Police and Fire Department, not relying on services provided by the county. The strength of our Police and Fire Departments come from a high percentage of our team living in the community, making the protection and welfare of our residents personal to them. Murrieta Fire and Rescue recently became one of only twenty-two fire departments in the entire State of California to receive accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. Murrieta Valley Unified School District is one of the best in the state, proven by being named a 2018 Exemplary School District over all other 23 school districts in Riverside County along with only 22 others in the State of California. The City is centrally located between two major universities that help provide a well-educated workforce, The University of California Riverside and California State University San Marcos, each within an approximately 45-minute drive of Murrieta.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Outdoor recreation is a main focus for our residents, with 52 parks in the City and quick access to the 7,500-acre Santa Rosa Plateau ecological reserve providing valuable amenities to those that enjoy the outdoors. The City has been named the #1 Place to Live in Southwest Riverside County by the Press-Enterprise for three years in a row. Murrieta continues to be a great place to live, work and play.

The City of Murrieta strives to create a business friendly environment through programs and services intended to assist business, facilitate connections, offer educational programming and provide access to capital services. The City has a heavy concentration of small businesses and sees their retention and growth as a key to the success of the City as a whole. The graph of Murrieta business size below shows that nearly 1/3 of our companies fall into the lowest staff count of 1 to 4 employees and over 60% have 1-9 employees. This exemplifies how important small business and its growth is to our community. Many of the larger size businesses in the city were not recruited here, but grew from within. This is why it is vital that we continue to execute startup programs that assist innovators and entrepreneurs in commercializing their businesses and we focus on biotech startups through our small business incubator, the Murrieta Innovation Center.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

## Challenges

The City of Murrieta has some exceptional qualities, which help make it a favorable destination for business, but that does not come without some challenges. For instance, Murrieta is 45 minutes to the north or south of a major higher educational institution. This means that innovation has to be recruited into the City from outside regions and proper resources have to be procured. This can further be illustrated by the difficulty that Southwest Riverside County has had in our work to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The creation of a startup ecosystem is a long and difficult process that the City and our partners have been working on for years and there are still needs for greater intellectual property investment in our region along with more mentorship and educational opportunities. It is not enough that we work together to build partnerships, we have to have available resources that are attainable and valuable for our new companies. Further challenges fall on the development side, as high scale development is more likely to gravitate towards the well-known and vetted coastal communities and far less likely to come inland. We are just beginning to see some interest in larger developments that are unique and show greater risk for the builder, but also potentially greater reward.

## **Economic Impact on Murrieta**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major economic impact on all regions throughout the U.S. and Murrieta is no different. When the last major economic downturn occurred, Murrieta was deleteriously impacted with major business closures and unemployment rates that rivaled some of the highest in the country. With the growth and diversification of our economic base in the decade since then, Murrieta has shown itself to be more resilient to recession than it was in the past. While the effect of the pandemic has been harmful to many businesses, the breadth of the challenge in an economic sense has not been as severe.

While shopping trends initially dropped by 22% during the first month of closures, they were less intense than in other markets, which saw 40 – 50% decreases. Dining experienced a 41% decrease, which was offset by an increase in grocery, which was up 30%. Since that time, many industries have regained their original positions. Unemployment was at 2.9% before the pandemic in the City of Murrieta, which was historically low. Once the first round of layoffs occurred, it shot to 14.9% within two reporting periods. In the 3 months since then, it has dropped back down below 7% and looks to continue its decline as businesses reopen and re-staff.

City revenues were impacted across the board, with General Fund revenues decreasing by \$2.2M in FY 2020 and projected to decrease by \$2.5M in FY 2021. While the loss of revenue is challenging, the City was fortunate to have appropriate reserves in place for such exigent financial situations. Businesses have not shown a significant volume of closures since the pandemic began. Since March 2020, there have only been seven reported business closeouts to business licensing in the City of Murrieta and a total of 45 net fewer business licenses for businesses based in Murrieta overall. Even with very difficult challenges presented to the City, to our residents, and particularly to local businesses, the region has responded with determination and perseverance. In mitigating the challenges of a widespread pandemic and its financial effects, the region has shown itself to be economically strong and resistant to recession.



## **What We've Done So Far**

The federal, state, and local government have all taken steps to mitigate damages experienced by businesses due to Covid-19. The federal government's main form of assistance has been through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act stimulus package, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. This authorized the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan program which will provide 2.5 times a business's average monthly payroll costs up to \$10 million to cover payroll, mortgage, and utilities for 8 weeks. This loan program included sole proprietors and independent contractors, and 100% of the loan can be forgiven if 75% is used for payroll. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) was introduced to provide economic relief to businesses that experienced a loss of revenue and issued up to \$2 million to cover health care costs, rent, utilities, and fixed debt payments. The Small Business Association also provided debt relief to pay 6 months of principal, interest, and other fees for businesses' 7(a), 504, and Microloans. The IRS also extended the tax filing date in 2020 to July 15.

The California State Department also took its own measures to help businesses. It provided \$50 million to the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank to secure loans for small businesses that don't qualify for federal funds, including low wealth communities. The California Capital Access Program (CALCap), which is a loan loss reserve program, was designed to cover 100% on losses as a result of certain loan defaults limited to a maximum of \$2.5 million over a 3-year period. Multiple other grants were implemented such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, grants available through the Small Business Administration and Governor's Office of Business Services (GOBiz), the CA Jump Start Loan Program, and the State Compensation Insurance Fund. Along with grants, the state has also assisted through the Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) to help businesses figure out which loans are best, develop resiliency strategies, and find other resources to utilize. There was also a 60-day extension to file and deposit state payroll taxes without penalties or interest. A Work Sharing program was implemented to minimize/eliminate the need for layoffs, keep trained employees, avoid the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training employees while allowing employees to keep their job while receiving unemployment benefits. The 60-day requirement under the WARN act was also suspended for certain conditions to help businesses keep their employees and businesses safe.

Riverside County has also acted at the local level to mitigate financial damages for businesses. The county has provided \$46.5 million in small business grants, \$5 million in non-profit grants, 2 million masks to businesses, and 12 business ambassadors to help identify ways for business to operate safely at no cost to the business. The Local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides free assistance with business planning, marketing, funding, and management. The UC Riverside Epic Small Business Development Center provides individualized support, specialized consulting, training programs, workshops, access to capital, and SBIR/SBTR assistance to early stage tech entrepreneurs and companies in the Inland Empire for free. The Riverside County Business Services provides resources, programs, and services to help expand, relocate, and grow businesses in Riverside County. The Riverside County Workforce Development Center specializes in helping businesses fill their workforce need to run more effectively and efficiently. Businesses are encouraged to utilize these sources to gain an advantage during and after these difficult times.

The City of Murrieta was particularly responsive to COVID-19 and our business's needs. We deferred the collection of all business-licensing fees as well as deferring our Transient Occupancy Tax payment for hotels for the initial three months of business closures, and then created a Back to Business Grant Program that offers \$10,000 grants to small businesses in peril due to the pandemic. In addition, the City began offering daily Economic Development Newsletters that featured available resources for small business and participated in regional podcasts and business briefings to keep the community informed about programs that can assist them. We even created Covid-19 specific web pages to highlight programs and resources for our local businesses.

The City collaborated with the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce in dispersing Back to Business Supply Kits when closures were first lifted. These featured free products that were designed to get businesses opened safely and quickly, such as face shields, face masks, hand sanitizer, floor markers for spacing, window decals and much more. Later, the City and Chamber provided Safety Kits for businesses that were also free of charge. Another partnership for distribution included the City, Chamber of Commerce and the County Medical Association where we provided State of California PPE to all of our regional hospitals and medical centers.

When indoor closures began, the City created programs to assist business in reopening outdoors. We began with a Temporary Outdoor Dining Program that allowed our restaurants the ability to move their indoor seating that was lost due to closure to an outside space.

We then followed up with programs for Hair and Barbershops, Nail Salons and an Outdoor Gym and Fitness Center Program. All of these allowed our businesses to move their operations outside immediately, with no additional city permitting required as long as they followed a specific set of guidelines.

The City acted quickly and decisively during these times, but the lack of a codified plan was a hindrance to organization and execution. The next step in our course is to be better prepared to deal with future crisis by creating this document, a Business Retention and Expansion Plan.



## **Planning for Future Crises**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have learned many things, and we should use this knowledge in preparation of future challenges. Information in these types of situations is crucial to understand what is happening in order to make proper decisions in a timely manner for both government officials and businesses. We will work to reduce the number of intermediaries between the primary source of information and businesses to decrease the chance of confusion. This will be assisted by the City's Public Information Officer, a position that has been critical in sharing information and resources during the current pandemic. We will include business owners when making decisions, clarify inbound information, and explain rationale for any decision made to ensure a clear understanding between all parties involved. The City will continue to offer a newsletter, website, social media, and site selector website to disperse information in as many channels as possible.

We typically work with the assumption that business will always proceed as usual, but we cannot do this anymore. We need to assist businesses with creating business plans that reflect the post-COVID-19 economy and include strategies for irregular operating procedures. These will include a better use of technology with industry specific details that will take advantage of the resources in and around Murrieta. Partners available to our business community include the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce, the UC Riverside EPIC Small Business Development Center, Riverside County Business Services, Workforce Development Board, SCORE and The Small Business Administration.

The demand of business resources was unnerving for many people during this pandemic, and we will do our best to mitigate this in the future. We will create action plans and post resource lists to the City website that include things like sources of funding and equipment for businesses. During these past 6 months it has been inspiring to see the private and public sector work together to keep our local economy healthy, and we will do all that we can to maintain these positive relationships.

## **Business Retention**

Business Retention will be built on nine core actions:

- Site visits
- Surveys
- Data Analysis
- Bi-Annual SWOT Analysis
- 1 on 1 counseling sessions
- Education, mentoring & workshops
- Facilitation of connections
- Small business promotion
- Access to workforce

The City of Murrieta is committed to helping maintain and expanding the local businesses that provide the backbone of our economy. One of the first steps in doing this is the collection of information about the companies that are already located here, the industries they serve, their success in our market and their challenges. This will be done by using site visits and surveys to gather data that helps to understand our firms. When available, site visits will be an important tool to connect with business, learn basic information about their needs, and to offer city services and facilitate connections with economic development partners. When unavailable, digital surveys may instead be utilized as a means of data collection. By using financial reports and asking questions such as if they have kept pace with initial sales projections, if there have been changes in full-time employment, if they have had any problems overall, etc., the city can determine the firm's satisfaction with us and learn to predict future actions (expansion, closure, relocation). Data can then be kept on record as a benchmark to determine long-term trends. The city will use this information to highlight early warning signs that a firm will potentially close or relocate such as declining sales or employment, ownership changes, mergers/buyouts, a struggle with recruitment, plans to expand in other communities, concerns regarding regulation, etc. We will also keep track of how the most prevalent industries are doing when compared to the national average to predict any challenges or opportunities that our local firms might face in the future. This influx of information will require us to create databases and other internal systems for data management and analysis. With this additional information, we will also be able to determine root causes of any company issues that they might not be aware of if they do not have a similar data management system. Bringing value like this is one of the ways that the City of Murrieta will help to ensure that businesses stay here and expand here.

# GOING FORWARD

A key component is to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). A Strategic Planning session is scheduled for every two years with stakeholders from business, non-profits, investment, development, and startups to stay connected to the community and its understanding of the value of our resources and tools. In a response to the immediate need for business retention, this document is being created in lieu of this year's strategic planning session in order to focus solely on Business Retention and Expansion. The program should resume next year as data is anticipated to return to levels that are more predictable. The City has long been a proponent of business mentorship, education and training, through the Small Business Administration and programs like SCORE and the Small Business Development Center and through small business workshops. The City has recently brought in an experienced former SCORE mentor as an in house business counselor and offers free service to Murrieta small businesses. The City will utilize free business education, mentoring opportunities and a series of workshops in order to provide valuable business information to our local companies. This service assists the businesses in learning core competencies and new resources that they may be unaware of. By providing these opportunities free of charge, it helps the City to connect with our businesses, learn their needs, and develop valuable relationships that help the business to thrive and the City to become more valuable a partner to the business.

Economic Development is primarily focused on the facilitation of key connections and the linking of resources to businesses in need. This will always be a component of business retention as providing access to resources and partners to help our small businesses in their planning, execution, funding and operations. Another principal duty will be the marketing, promotion and announcements of small businesses to the community. Utilizing tools like the Murrieta Business Newsletter, More Murrieta, City social media sites, the Murrieta Microscope video series, articles like Murrieta Pivots, and press releases, Murrieta will continue to promote and assist our small businesses to help introduce them to the community and establish a presence in our City. Utilizing the strong partnership that the City of Murrieta has with the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce, the City will continue the successful Work Local/Hire Local Job Fair series. These events have brought in thousands of local workers and connected them to hundreds of local businesses. This allows our companies to fill the vacancies they have with local workers in a fast and simple format. The City will also partner with organizations like the Riverside County Workforce Development Board for access to Employee Training Programs and hiring opportunities to help new businesses ramp up and to help existing businesses to maintain necessary staffing levels.

## **Business Expansion**

Business Expansion will be built on seven core actions:

- Communication
- Engagement
- Industry Groups
- Site Visits
- Site Selection
- Workforce Development
- Educational Pipelines

The growth of existing business is the key to expanding our economy and our job base. In spite of national and regional economic challenges, Murrieta is witnessing the expansion of multiple companies in a variety of verticals right now. In healthcare, Kaiser Permanente, Rancho Springs Medical Center, Loma Linda University Healthcare, the Heart and Vascular Wellness Center, and New Smile Prosthodontics are all working on expansion projects right now. Restaurants are expanding with 8Bit Brewing enlarging their manufacturing and bottling process, The Chef's Grille is doubling their existing space by adding a new suite; new outdoor patios are in discussion for Sidelines, Denny's, 8Bit, Garage Brewing and more. West Coast Exotic Cars is undergoing a major development by purchasing an eighty thousand square foot building in our auto mall and redeveloping it to house two new car dealerships and an exotic car line. This type of progress is the foundational element of building a balanced economy.

Economic Development should focus on Educational Resources, along with Communication and Engagement as principal activities of business expansion. Partnering with local educational institutions, connecting them to the business community and making sure that timely information is shared to assist in creating pipeline programs that meet existing local needs, are necessary elements to a foundation of meaningful workforce assistance. It is economic development through educational promotion and is a key to creating a workforce that fills local voids and is self-sustaining. In order to accomplish this, it is indispensable to understand our existing businesses, their needs of scaling operations, along with hiring and site expansion requirements, and this cannot be without staying in constant communication. This can be executed in a variety of ways:

- Direct site visits, that engage the business leadership and appreciate the challenges that they have in growth.

# GOING FORWARD

- Follow up and dialogue with business owners to ensure that we are offering all services available to assist them.
- Networking through all local channels such as the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce, the Murrieta Rotary, the Economic Development Coalition and other local groups and non-profits that allow Economic Development the means to connect with our business community and learn about their needs.
- Maintaining Valuable Business Resources through the City Website and the Murrieta Business Newsletter.
- For certain core industries, group meetings that bring major business leaders together can be hosted by the City. This has been done successfully with the Medical Leaders Luncheon series, the annual Physician's Social and the Manufacturers Group Meetings along with the annual Manufacturers Day.

Site selection is an important aspect of business expansion as many businesses either begin planning for more space too late or are not sure of their upcoming needs. Providing site selection services on a one-on-one basis is made available through the Economic Development Division at no cost. In addition, the City will maintain a data driven Site Selector Website to encourage both outside attraction efforts and interior expansion efforts that is available at any time for the convenience of our business partners.

Without a properly skilled workforce, business growth becomes stunted. Regional partners in workforce training are the Riverside County Workforce Development Board, Murrieta Valley Unified School District, Mt. San Jacinto College, California State University San Marcos, University of California Riverside, along with a network of trade and skills certification groups. Connections and communications with these partners ensure that we are representing our local business staffing needs to the education community. In addition, the City can assist with individual business hiring events, promotions, staffing announcements and by hosting larger scale job fairs to encourage local hiring by multiple businesses at once.

## City Partnerships

- California Business Portal
- SCORE
- InSoCal Connect
- California Manufacturing Technology Council
- U.S. Department of Commerce Southern California District Export Council
- Export Import Bank
- Riverside County Economic Development Agency
- Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce
- Riverside County Workforce Development
- Economic Development Coalition
- Entrepreneurial Proof of Concept and Innovation Center
- Murrieta Valley Unified School District
- Mt. San Jacinto College
- University of California Riverside



## **Teamwork**

Knowing that we cannot do all of this alone, we are looking forward to working with both internal and external partners to help support Murrieta businesses in achieving their goals. We are proud to have a strong relationship with the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce and will work even closer with them to connect our businesses with the necessary resources to succeed. The City of Murrieta wants businesses to know that they are an important part of the city and that they are appreciated. With Murrieta Valley Unified School District recognized as a top district in Riverside County and many expanding employers, we will continue to facilitate a relationship between the education and employment in order to establish a strong local workforce base that no longer needs to rely on commuting to employment outside of Murrieta. We will also be working on creating symbiotic partnerships with organizations outside of the city. For example the Small Business Development Center, a product of the combined efforts of UC Riverside and Riverside County, is producing a strong small business environment with access to top notch consulting, resources, and networking that we can use to help our companies here in Murrieta.

## **Concluding Statement**

In recognition of the fact that new challenges will present themselves in the future and the prediction of what they will look like and when they will occur is not likely, the City of Murrieta must keep its focus on Economic Development, the need to support local small business, the necessity of retaining local companies and assisting them when they are ready to expand. Keeping in contact with our entrepreneurs, analyzing and understanding regional data points, maintaining a steady supply of resource partners that can help businesses through challenging times, communicating business resources and opportunities in a timely fashion, and being ready to assist companies on a one-on-one basis when needed are all components of keeping a connected business community. This initial platform of ideas is intended to serve as a guide for retaining businesses in our community and for assisting those that need to expand.

"Connected by Community,"

Scott Agajanian

Economic Development Department of Murrieta

## B) Housing Program Information

- *Minnesota Housing Partnership Data*
  - i.. 2021 Minnesota/Twin Cities Housing Stats*
  - ii.. Ramsey County Housing Profile*
  - iii.. Twin Cities Regional Summary*
  - iv.. State of the State's Housing Top 5 Takeaways*
- *Itasca Project Housing Affordability Recommendations & Next Steps*



Affordable Housing Continuum Minnesota



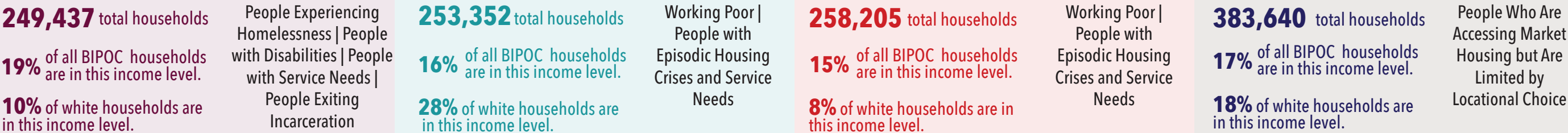
Housing Type



Income

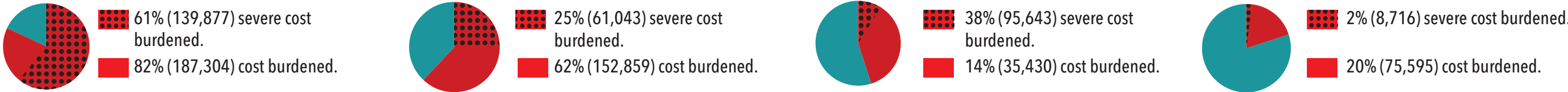
\$20,000 and below      \$20,000 to \$34,999      \$35,000 to 49,999      \$50,000 to \$74,999

Population

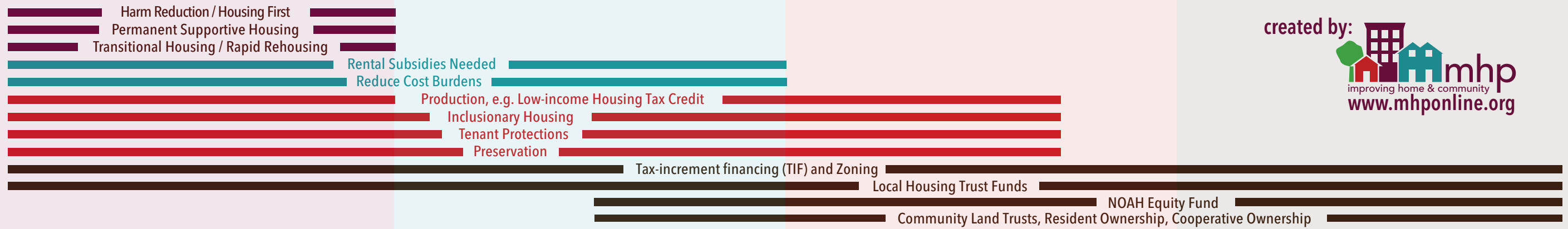


Housing Cost Burden

Cost burden occurs when households pay >30% of income on housing. Severe cost burden occurs when households pay >50% of income on housing.



Strategies



created by:    
improving home & community   
www.mhponline.org

Partners



Funders

Capital Funders: Cities, counties, MN Housing Finance Agency (MN Housing), U.S. Dept of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), Metropolitan Council, low-income housing tax credits, equity investors, Federal Home Loan Bank | SERVICE Funders: Counties, Dept of Human Services (DHS), foundations | Rental Assistance and Operating Funders: Public Housing Authorities, DHS, counties, MN Housing

Capital Funders: Private banking systems, equity investors, MN Housing (homeownership)

Population and cost burden data for renter & owner households in Minnesota, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

Affordable Housing Continuum Twin Cities



Housing Type



Income

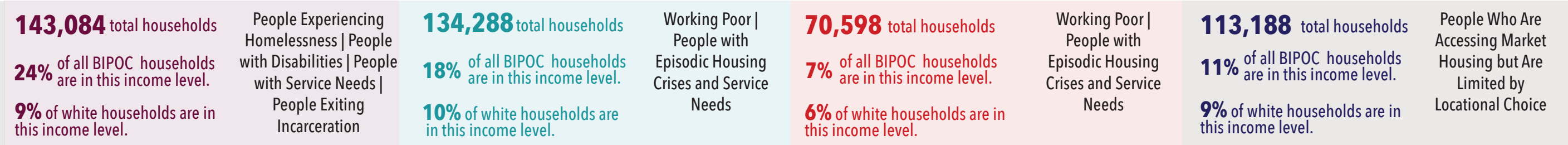
Less than 30% AMI  
\$31,450 and below

31% to 50% AMI  
\$31,451 - \$52,450

51%-60% AMI  
\$52,451 - \$62,950

60-80% AMI  
\$62,951 - \$79,900

Population

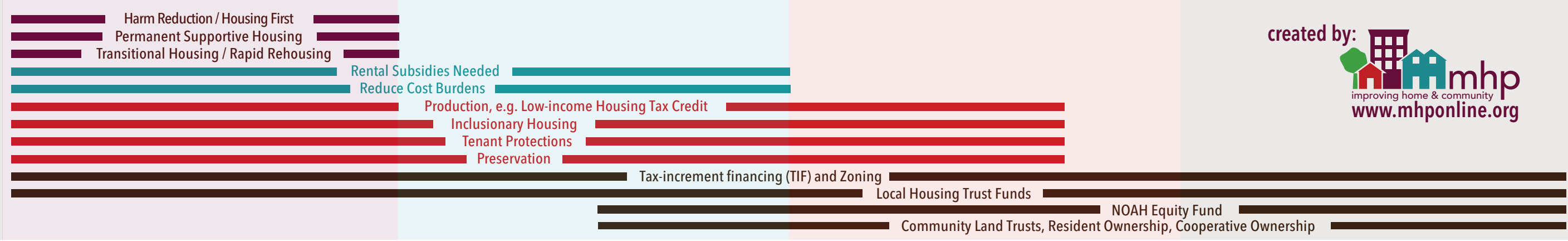


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Strategies



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Capital Funders: Private banking systems, equity investors, MN Housing (homeownership)

Population and cost burden data for renter & owner households in the Twin Cities Region, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

# Ramsey County

TWIN CITIES REGION | 208,504 HOUSEHOLDS



## RENTER HOUSEHOLDS

84,782 | 41% of households



## OWNER HOUSEHOLDS

123,722 | 59% of households

### Many Minnesotans cannot afford a home.

Rent and home values continue to rise while incomes decline or remain stagnant, putting a modest apartment or homeownership out of reach.

**\$934** Median rent 2017

**\$861** Median rent 2000

**9%  
RENT**



**20%  
VALUE**

2017 median home value

**\$208,700**

2000 median home value

**\$174,376**



**\$38,836** Median renter income 2000

**\$34,890** Median renter income 2017

**INCOME**

**-10%**



**INCOME**

**-1%**

2000 median owner income

**\$84,565**

2017 median owner income

**\$83,833**

**29,850** Extremely low-income (ELI) households

**10,770** Available units affordable to ELI



% white households that are homeowners **75%**

% people of color households that are homeowners\* **39%**

**2839** **EVICTIONS IN 2017**

3010 Evictions in 2015



**FORECLOSURES IN 2017 452**

Foreclosures in 2015 705

### Many Minnesotans are experiencing cost burden.

When housing costs require more than 30 percent of a household's income each month, families are more likely to have insufficient resources to pay for basic needs, like food and medicine. Yet more than 572,000 Minnesota households are cost burdened.

RENTER households

**40,825**

TOTAL cost-burdened households

**66,219**

OWNER households

**25,394**

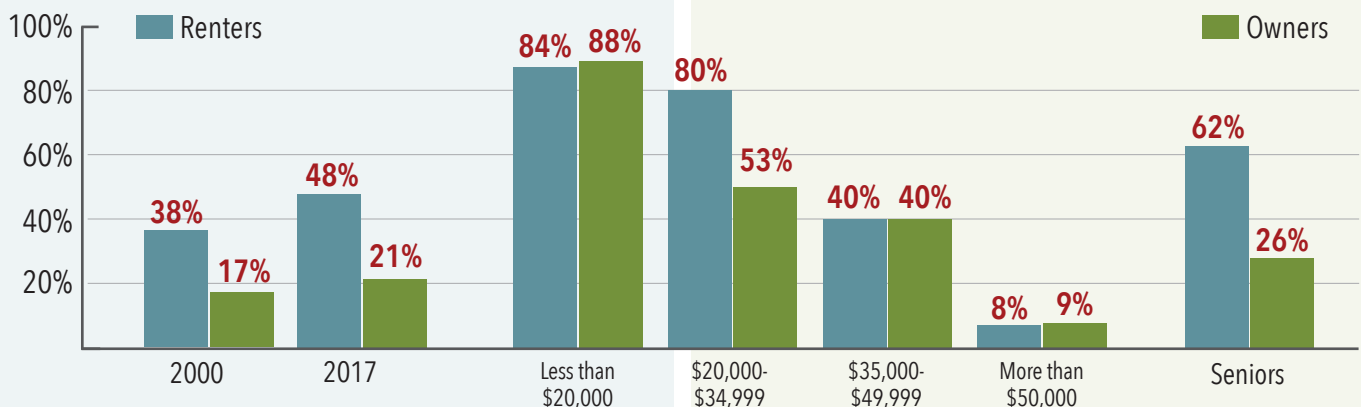
**8,066** Cost burdened SENIOR renter households

**21,005** SEVERELY cost burdened renter households



Cost burdened SENIOR owner households **8,627**

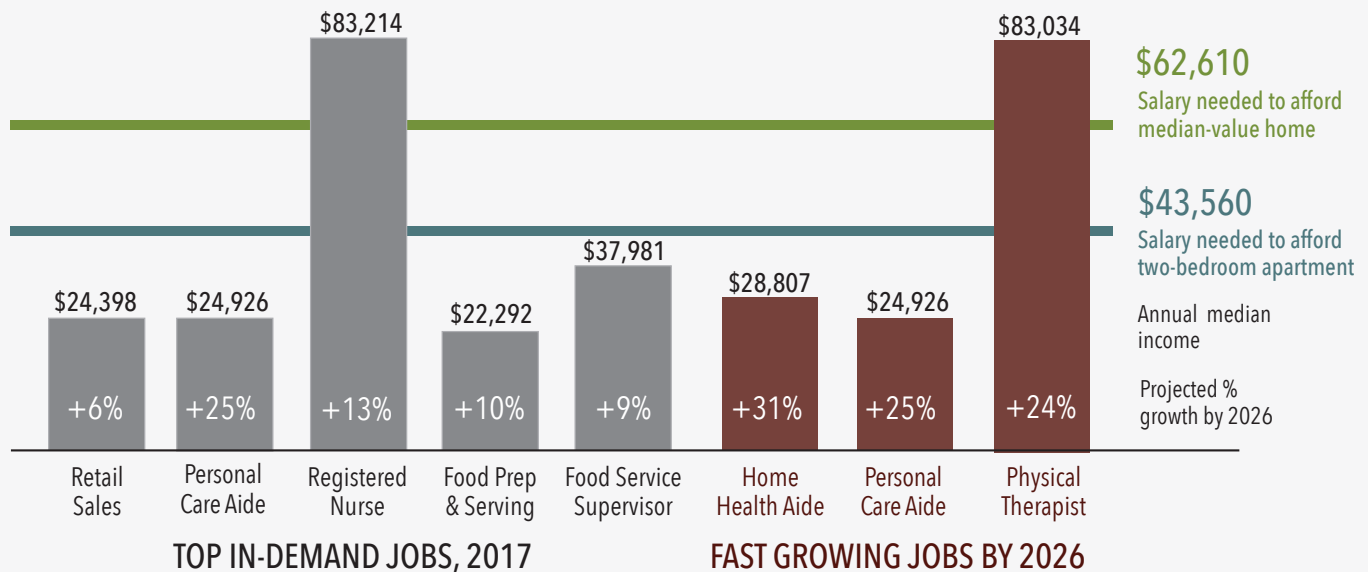
SEVERELY cost burdened owner households **9,210**



## In-demand jobs don't cover housing costs.

The median earnings for most of the top in-demand and high-growth jobs throughout Minnesota do not cover housing costs for a two-bedroom apartment or the mortgage for a median-value home.

### WAGES & HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN RAMSEY COUNTY



Hours per week minimum wage employee must work to afford 1-bedroom apartment **69**



% of employees who live in county of workplace **55%**



New job openings by 2026 **127,949**

## Our housing stock won't meet the needs of a growing Minnesota.

Housing production is not keeping up with demand, undermining the economic development and prosperity of many communities, and worsening housing disparities for seniors and households of color.

**97,858** Total population growth by 2035

**47%** Growth in # of people of color (POCI)\*

**35%** POCI % of overall population in 2035



Total senior population by 2035 **103,724**

Growth in # of seniors by 2035 **45%**

Senior % of overall population in 2035 **16%**



**36%** % rental units built before 1960

**425** Multi-family units permitted in 2017

**1025** Multi-family units permitted in 2015



% single family homes built before 1960 **52%**

Single-family units permitted in 2017 **222**

Single-family units permitted in 2015 **277**



**SOURCES** – Renter households: Rent and income adjusted for inflation. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017, 5 year estimates | Owner households: Home value and income adjusted for inflation. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017, 5 year estimates | Cost burden: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017, 5 year estimates | Evictions: Minnesota State Court Administrator, Monthly Unlawful Detainers by County | Foreclosures: Minnesota Homeownership Center, County Sheriff's Data 2017 | ELI Units and Renters: MHP Analysis of HUD's CHAS Portal Data using the NLIHC methodology | Wages: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED), Occupations in Demand, July 2017; Employment Outlook, MN DEED | Housing Stock: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017, 5 year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey, 2018 | Seniors / Population growth: Minnesota County Population Projections by Age and Gender, Minnesota State Demographic Center, March 2017 |

\*Homeownership rates and growth estimates for POCI are regional

# Twin Cities Region

With nearly 1.2 million households, the Twin Cities region comprises the majority of the state's total household population. In the Twin Cities, large percentages of renters and seniors pay more than they can afford for housing — and racial disparities in homeownership are among the highest in the nation. At \$64,000 for a family of three<sup>1</sup>, the cost of living is the highest of any region in the state with 21 percent of income going to housing costs

## Top 5 Facts



Only 39 percent of people of color and Indigenous households are homeowners, compared to 75 percent of white households. The 36 percent gap is the widest in the state compared to the 25 largest metro areas in the nation.



The Twin Cities region has the highest overall gross rent in the state, with all seven counties ranking in the top 10 and Washington County leading the state at \$1,246 in 2017.



While there are 109,300 extremely low-income renter households in the region, there are just 36,905 units that are affordable and available to those households – a deficit of 72,395 units.



Of the 1,336 units of affordable housing constructed in the Twin Cities in 2017, only 164 units were affordable to households earning 30 percent or less of area median income.



Four of the top five in-demand jobs do not earn a median salary that is adequate to afford the rent for a modest two-bedroom apartment in any county in the Twin Cities region.

<sup>1</sup> Estimate for one full time, one part time worker and one child

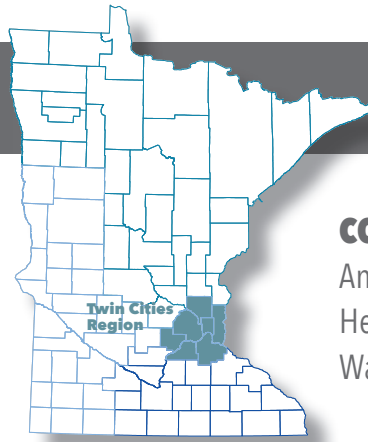
# TWIN CITIES REGION

## Rental Housing

With nearly one-third of all households living in rental units, the Twin Cities region has the highest percentage of renter households of any region in the state, growing from 29 percent of all households in 2000 to 32 percent in 2017.

More than 60 percent of the state's rental households reside in the Twin Cities. Hennepin and Ramsey Counties contain the largest percentage of renter households, at 38 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Outside of Hennepin and Ramsey, the proportion of renter households declines, ranging from 17 percent in Scott County to 26 percent in Dakota County.

The Twin Cities region has the highest overall gross rent in the state, with all seven counties ranking in the top 10 and Washington County leading the state at \$1,246 in 2017. Renter income has fallen in four of the seven counties in the region since 2000. Meanwhile rent has increased in every county — by as little as 4 percent in Dakota County to 26 percent in Washington County.



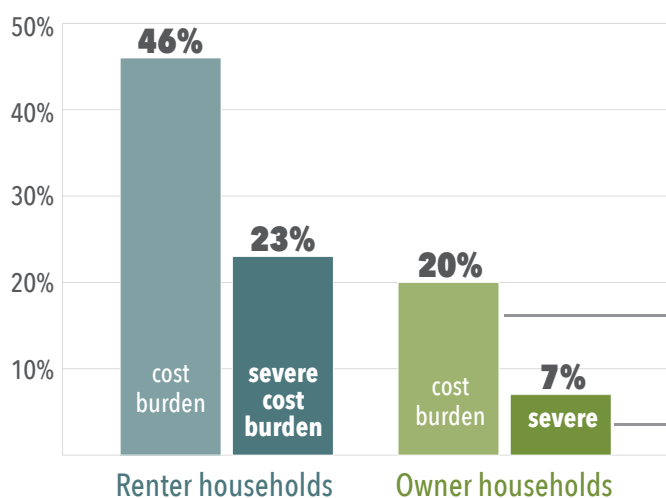
### COUNTIES:

Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

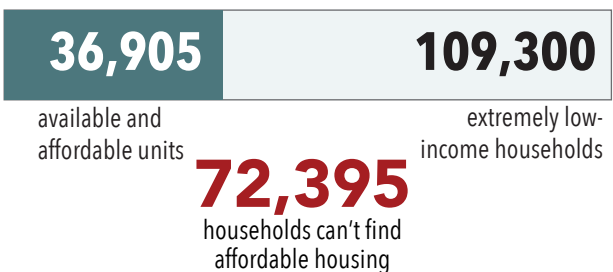
Ramsey County contains the highest percentage of cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened renters in the region, with 48 percent of renters spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, and a quarter of renters spending more than half of their income on housing. Overall, from 2000 to 2017, the percent of cost burdened renters in the region increased from 36 percent to 46 percent.

The Twin Cities region contains 60 percent of the state's population of extremely low-income renters (ELI), or renter households that earn less than 30 percent of area median income (AMI). While there are 109,300 ELI renter households in the region, there are only 36,905 units that are affordable and occupied by ELI renter households.

### Cost-burdened renter and owner households



### Gap in affordable rental units for ELI households



**Cost burden:** Paying more than 30% of household income on housing

**Severe cost burden:** Paying more than 50% of household income on housing



## CITY SPOTLIGHT: Bloomington

The city of Bloomington is the third most populous city in the Twin Cities region, after Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The city currently is home to just over 36,220 households, 32 percent of whom are renters. Bloomington's median rent is \$1,075, and 41 percent of renter households experience cost burden. Additionally, both owner and renter income has declined since 2000, falling by 7 percent for both tenures.

### Homeownership

The Twin Cities region includes more than 797,430 homeowner households, accounting for just over half of the state's owner household population. While Hennepin and Ramsey counties have the lowest rates of homeownership in the state, with 62 percent and 59 percent of households in owner-occupied units, they account for nearly 30 percent of Minnesota's total owner household population. In contrast, suburban counties see much higher percentages of homeowners ranging from 74 percent (Dakota County) to 83 percent (Scott County). The region has the second highest rate of homeowner cost burden in the state, with 20 percent of owner households paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

**Owner income declined or saw very little growth in all counties of the region from 2000 to 2017.**

The Twin Cities region has the most significant homeownership gap in the state, which is particularly striking due to the larger population of people of color and Indigenous (POCI) households in the region. While the region accounts for 76 percent of POCI households in the state, only 39 percent POCI households are homeowners, compared to 75 percent of white households — a 36 percent gap. This gap isn't just the highest in the state; it's the largest of the 25 largest metro areas in the country.

The discrepancy between POCI and white homeownership widens even further in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. In these counties, the homeownership rate for POCI households falls from 39 percent to 33 percent. For black homeownership the rate decreases even further to 22 percent and 19 percent in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

People of color are projected to grow in population by 47 percent and account for 35 percent of the total population in the seven-county metro area by 2035.



The region has the **second highest rate of homeowner cost burden** in the state, with 20 percent paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

### Homeownership disparity in the Twin Cities

White households	75%
POCI households	39%

## Twin Cities Spotlight: Closing the homeownership gap

It's widely known that Minnesota ranks almost dead last in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership, commonly called the homeownership gap. While 77 percent of all white households own their home, 57 percent of Asian, 46 percent of Native American, 45 percent of Hispanic and just 24 percent of black households own their homes. Nationally, the homeownership gap is 25 percent. In Minnesota, it is far wider at 36 percent.

Since 1976, PRG has worked to close that gap.

Serving the seven-county metro region, PRG provided homeownership coaching and education, or refinance and foreclosure prevention services to over 775 families and individuals in 2018. Seventy-seven percent of those clients were households of color. And, since 2010, PRG produced 100 new or renovated homes with 72 percent sold to homeowners of color.

Portia Jackson, PRG Program Manager for Homeownership Advising Services, says closing the homeownership gap matters because people should have access to opportunities to build wealth and community, regardless of race. Owning an affordable home is one way to do that.

"People of color are so far behind because of previous injustices," Jackson says. "It's time for us, especially black people, to start building wealth for future generations. The way that 99 percent of us do that is through real estate."

Myria, a PRG client, is about to close on a condo in the western suburbs. She wants to ensure she can build wealth for herself and her daughter. "In the black community, you don't see a lot of people owning their own homes," Myria says. "I'm fortunate. My grandmother owned a home, my mother



owned a home, so I'm the next generation. I want people to know that it's possible, regardless of your age or race."

To address homeownership disparities, PRG prioritizes relationship building, cultural competency, and communicating with people in their preferred language, intentionally hiring advisors that speak Spanish, Somali, and English. PRG Homeownership Advisor Luis Mendoza says that in many cases, simply making information available and accessible can help address the gap and promote intergenerational wealth building.

"When it comes to the Latino community, there's a lot of lack of communication and information," Mendoza says. "It's important to fix that because it should be equal for everyone. We should have the same rights. Affordable housing is the most important thing. But building intergenerational wealth is also important."

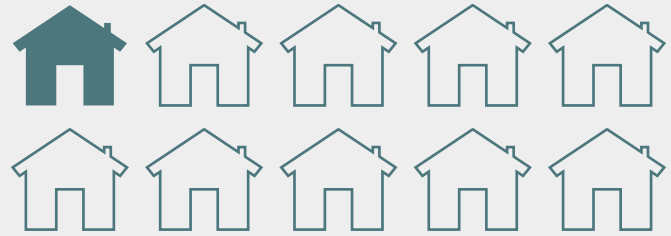
Jackson was a PRG client herself before joining the staff. "Housing has always been a big part of my life — even as a kid," Portia says. "Experiencing homelessness and living in a shelter, I learned how important it is to have a foundation. Without that, how can you do anything else?"

*Photo: Portia Jackson*





By 2035, the population of **people of color** will grow by 47 percent and the population of **seniors** will rise by 71 percent.



Of the **1,336 units** of affordable housing constructed in the Twin Cities in 2017, **only 164 units** were affordable to households earning 30% of AMI.

## Senior Housing

The Twin Cities region has the largest number of seniors (age 65 and older), accounting for more than half of all senior renters in the state, and 47 percent of all senior homeowners in the state. The region also has the highest rates of both senior owner and renter cost burden. Approximately 61 percent, or 34,830 senior renters, were cost burdened in 2017, with an additional 26 percent or 49,000 senior owners experiencing cost burden. Washington and Dakota counties have the highest rates of senior renter cost burden in the region, affecting 69 percent and 65 percent of senior renters. Hennepin County also hosts the most striking proportion of senior owners who are paying more than they can afford for housing, affecting 29 percent of that population.

The number of seniors is expected to rise dramatically over the next 20 years. By 2035, the number of seniors is anticipated to grow by 71 percent, gaining an additional 272,200

individuals in this age bracket. These trends stand to exacerbate current senior housing issues unless the region adds more affordable senior housing.

## Housing Development and Subsidized Housing

In the Twin Cities region, 27 percent of renter-occupied and 30 percent of owner-occupied units were built prior to 1960. In 2017, 6,170 multifamily units and 6,371 single-family homes were permitted for construction, which accounted for 74 percent of multifamily and 47 percent of single-family new construction in the state.

Additionally, there were an estimated 50,880 subsidized units in the region in 2017, which provided housing to approximately 112,171 total people. In 2017, 1,336 units were produced in the region that were affordable to 60 percent of AMI; 164 of those units were affordable to 30 percent of AMI.

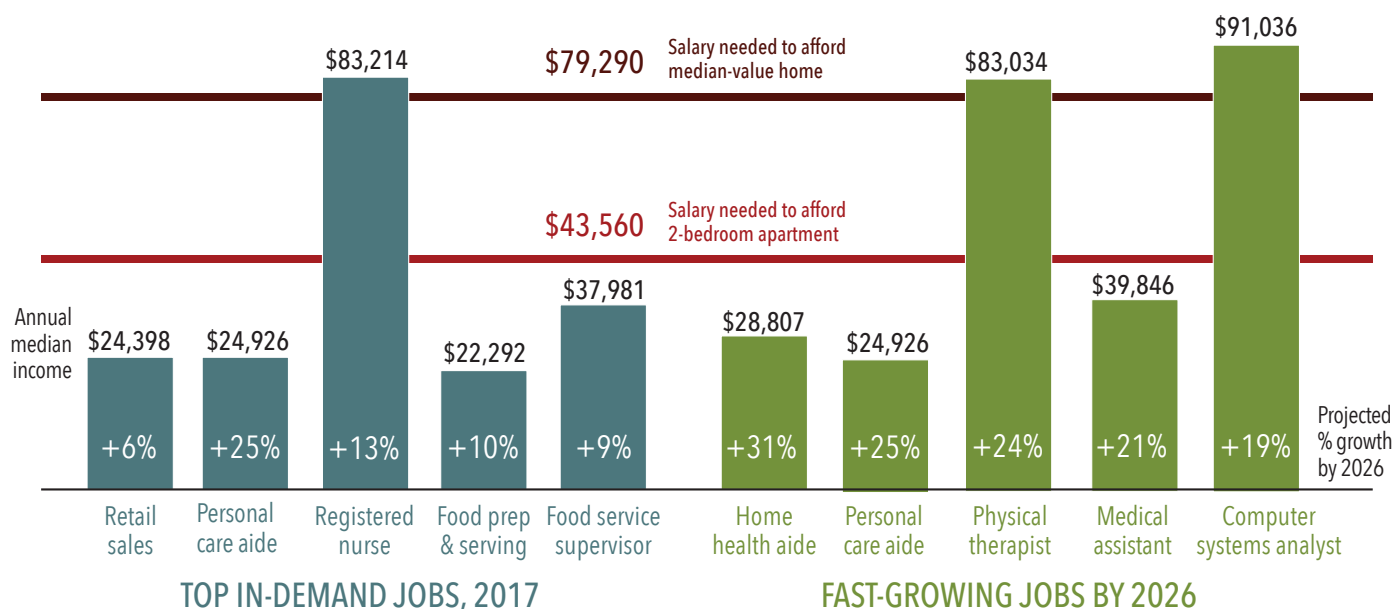
## Housing Affordability by Occupation

In the Twin Cities region, median rent is out of reach for the majority of median-income renter households. While median gross rent ranges from \$934 in Ramsey County to \$1,246 in Washington County, the median-income renter can only afford a range of \$872 in Ramsey County to \$1,246 in Washington County.

In the region, the top five in-demand occupations include retail salespersons, personal care aides, registered nurses, food preparation and serving workers, and supervisors of food preparation. By 2026, these occupations are expected grow by 463,580 positions. The median annual incomes for these top occupations range

from \$22,292 (food preparation and serving worker) to \$83,214 (registered nurse), leaving employees between \$557 and \$2,080 to put toward housing without spending more than 30 percent of their income. Yet, an annual salary of \$37,360 (Ramsey) to \$49,840 (Washington) is needed to afford median rent in these counties. Effectively, four of the top five in-demand jobs do not earn a salary that can afford the rent for a modest two-bedroom apartment in any county in the Twin Cities region. In the region, an annual salary of \$61,500 to \$86,160 is needed to own a median value home; meaning, only registered nurses can afford homeownership — and even they are priced out of a median-value home in Carver County. The region will see the largest growth of new jobs by 2026, and is expected to grow overall by a rate of 6.8%.

## WAGES AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY



# State of the State's Housing 2019

*a biennial report of the Minnesota Housing Partnership*

When everyone has a path to prosperity – regardless of income, race, or age – Minnesota will be stronger. But more and more families are struggling due to our growing lack of affordable homes. *State of the State's Housing* shows that from cost burden to racial disparities, many trends are going in the wrong direction.

## TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS



**More than 1 in 4 – or 572,133 – households in Minnesota pay more than they can afford for housing**, making it likely that they cut back on necessities like food, education and medicine simply to pay their rent or mortgage. That number grew by nearly 26,000 households from 2015 to 2017.



**The gap between housing costs and incomes is growing.** From 2000 to 2017, median rent has risen 13 percent, while median renter income has fallen 5 percent. There are more than 179,400 extremely low-income renter households in Minnesota; yet, there are only 68,104 affordable and available units at this income level across the state.



**Racial disparities persist.** Cost burden disparately impacts households of color in Minnesota: 40 percent experience cost burden compared to 23 percent of white households. Minnesota continues to be ranked among the states with the worst racial disparities in homeownership in the country. Nationally, the homeownership gap is 25 percent. In Minnesota, it is far wider at 36 percent.



**Minnesota's top in-demand jobs don't pay enough to afford housing.** Only one of the seven top in-demand jobs in Minnesota pays enough to afford a median-value home. Only two of these jobs pay enough to afford a two-bedroom apartment.



**High housing costs continue to put Minnesota seniors at risk.** Fifty-seven percent of all senior renters and more than a quarter of all senior homeowners pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing. By 2035, more than 1 in 5 Minnesotans will be 65 or older, a 64 percent increase from 2017.

Download the full report at [mhponline.org](http://mhponline.org).

# TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE CHANGE.

Minnesotans are already stepping up to address housing needs in their communities. But more resources are needed, and we need your voice.

## Minnesota Affordable #HousingTaxCredit

HF 1156 | SF 404

Leverages private donations by providing a tax credit to community members and businesses who contribute to affordable housing development. A similar program in North Dakota helped create more than 2,500 homes.

## Local Housing Trust Fund State Match

HF 1402 | SF 1961

Helps cities, counties, or regions attract investments and community support as they set aside a fund to address local housing needs.

## Homes for All MN 2019/20 Legislative Agenda

Bold investments and policy changes to prevent homelessness, create and preserve affordable rental homes, and support homeownership. Learn more at [homesforallmn.org](http://homesforallmn.org).

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## With three steps, you can make a difference.

1. Find your state legislators at [bit.ly/MyRepsMN19](http://bit.ly/MyRepsMN19)
2. Call or email them using the script below
3. Stay in-the-loop at [mhponline.org/mhp-sign-up](http://mhponline.org/mhp-sign-up)

### Legislator contact script:

*Hello <Representative/Senator NAME>, my name is <NAME>, and I live at <ADDRESS>.*

*More than a quarter of all Minnesotans pay more than they can afford for a home; yet, only 2 percent of our state budget supports housing needs for Minnesotans. I'm asking you to make affordable homes a priority this legislative session. Please support the #HousingTaxCredit, Local Housing Trust Funds, and the Homes for All agenda. We need the state to be a reliable partner for affordable homes in Minnesota! Thank you!*

**Questions?** Contact Andy Birkey, Director of Communications & Research at [andy.birkey@mhponline.org](mailto:andy.birkey@mhponline.org) or 651.925.5544.



Minnesotans are already stepping up. From top: PRG, Inc. is tackling the homeownership gap in the Twin Cities. The Koochiching County Housing Collaborative is developing affordable homes in the Northland. Leaders in the Northwest and Southwest are building housing with services such as Conifer Estates (Bemidji) and Solace Apartments (St. Peter) (bottom) to prevent homelessness.





# ITASCA*project*

## **Housing affordability recommendations and next steps**

Presentation to ULI Regional Housing Policy Work Group

January 25, 2021



# About the Itasca Project's purpose and how we work

## WHY

Vibrant communities require **cross-sector collaboration** to create new opportunities and solve persistent problems.

## WHAT

The Itasca Project seeks to increase regional economic competitiveness, improve quality of life and expand prosperity for all.

## HOW

We are **employer-led** and **fact-driven leaders** who identify near-term actions our participants can take to address long-term challenges. Timely CEO engagement and impact is critical to our effectiveness. Our core functions include

- **Convening:** Bringing influential people together across sectors to create consensus on key challenges and solution paths
- **Thought leadership:** Identifying and framing the most important long-term challenges along with bold ideas to address them
- **Catalytic action:** Building early-stage partnerships to scope and operationalize the best ideas



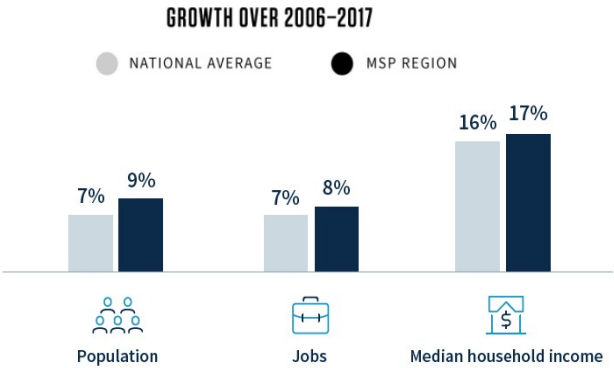
# Itasca's housing affordability task force grew out of the 2018 Minnesota housing task force and its report "More Places to Call Home"

COMMIT TO HOMES AS A PRIORITY	PRESERVE THE HOMES WE HAVE	BUILD MORE HOMES	INCREASE HOME STABILITY	LINK HOMES AND SERVICES	SUPPORT & STRENGTHEN HOME-OWNERSHIP
1.1 Forecast demand, set goals	2.1 Expand rental rehab (multifamily)	3.1 Lead in housing innovation	4.1 Expand rental assistance	5.1 Make funding dependable	6.1 Focus on closing disparities
1.2 Dedicated funding sources	2.2 Incentivize private owners	3.2 Grow build trades workforce	4.2 Stop predatory landlord practices	5.2 Full range of transit. services	6.2 Promote alternative models
1.3 Public ed campaign	2.3 Expand rental rehab tools	3.3 Local gov't capability building	4.3 Strengthen tenant protections	5.3 Improve health partnerships	6.3 Encourage employer help
	2.4 Support rehab for public housing	3.4 Expand range of housing types	4.4 Improve emergency aid	5.4 Gap ID for Housing Supports	6.4 Increase financial ed
		3.5 Regulatory review panel	4.5 Expand navigation	5.5 Expand match programs	6.5 Expand alt mortgage products
			4.6 Incentivize voucher accepts.		6.6 Expand down-payment assist.
			4.7 Heading Home Together		

- Clear leader, current action
- Natural owner, some momentum
- No current leader, strong fit for Itasca
- No current leader

# While the Minneapolis-St Paul (MSP) region is home to many assets, **housing affordability is a key driver to our growth**

The MSP region fortunate to be **home to many assets**



Housing has been a key driver of that strong performance: housing affordability and availability are two of the top three considerations for relocating professionals

- 3 million residents
- World-class universities and colleges
- Renowned parks systems
- Vibrant art and music scene
- 16 Fortune 500 businesses

Over the past decades, partly due to these amenities, **the MSP region has grown faster than the national average**

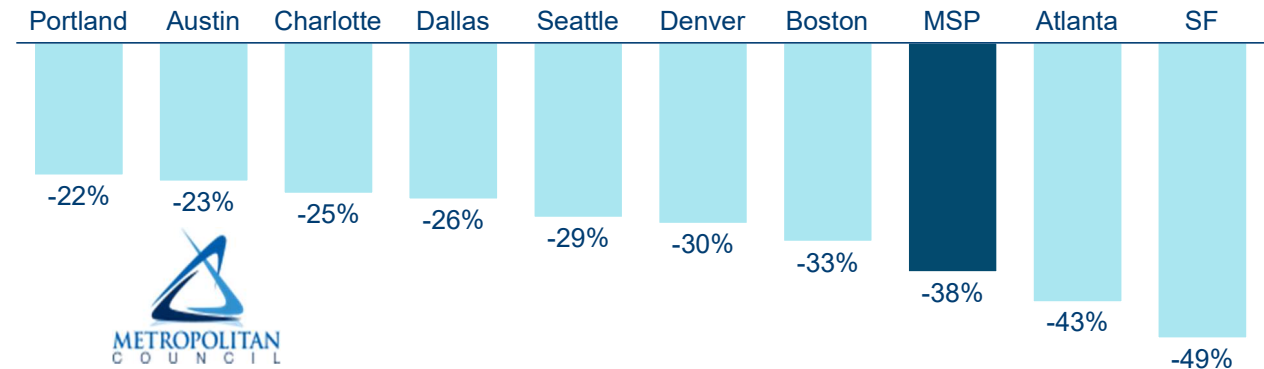




## However, housing affordability is at risk due to a lack of supply

Relative to population growth, **most peer regions are building more home than MSP**

Percentage difference between population and housing unit growth 2010-18



Lack of housing has impacted affordability across all incomes – however, **households making less than \$75,000 are particularly challenged with both a high and rapidly increasing cost burden.**

Examples of jobs earning salaries in this range include **office clerks, truck drivers, surgical technicians and licensed practical nurses.**

**To meet projected future growth and make up for a decade of underbuilding, the MSP region needs to produce 18,000 units annually – a 30% increase over our recent average**

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau population estimates. Population growth rate includes only people in households. Pittsburgh and Chicago were excluded; they lost population; housing growth exceeds population growth.

ITASCAproject



# Itasca will lead on housing affordability in 3 areas

## Three priority efforts for Itasca



### Develop a housing affordability dashboard.

Provide clarity through data on regional housing affordability and how it impacts residents, identify gaps needing action and measure progress against goals



### Design and pilot an innovative, housing-forward benefits package.

Encourage employers to act directly to support workforce via housing-forward benefits package



### Test and learn.

Identify new, innovative actions that private and public entities can take to spur housing production

## Where we want to be by end of 2021

- Regional housing affordability dashboard launched • *Focus today*
- At least **three** employers commit to **pilot** emergency savings accounts
- At **least two** other employers have conducted **analysis** of employees' housing cost burden
- Innovation working group launched, identified innovations to stack; has plan to move forward

Input will be gathered and shared back in three focus phases.



### Insights

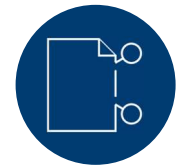
What insights are most valuable to our intended audience?

*Focus today*



### Metrics

Based on desired insights, what metrics are most useful?  
*(may be asked via survey)*



### Review draft

What improvements would you make to a near-final draft of dashboard?  
*(may be asked via survey)*



## Primary audiences for the dashboard are internal to the region; secondary audience is broader

	Audience	Details	Dashboard purpose for given audience
Primary	Policy makers	Elected officials and administrators – state and local levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>To better inform policy and funding decisions</b> made by public leaders to improve housing access for all and increase economic competitiveness of the region</li></ul>
	Industry leaders	Leaders who are part of the housing production pipeline – e.g. builders, architects, financial institutions, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>To better inform the business and resource allocation decisions</b> that increases production in locations and at price-points that is needed most</li></ul>
	Major employers	Non-housing-industry employers in the Twin Cities region from the private, public, and non-profit sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To enable a <b>better understanding</b> of the link between housing production and cost with regional economic competitiveness</li><li>▪ To provide data and insight that <b>motivates advocacy around housing</b> that improves the economic competitiveness of the region</li></ul>
Secondary	Community members	Residents from across the region; general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Raises the level of understanding</b> of the region's current housing situation and housing's importance for the region</li><li>▪ To enable residents to <b>hold leaders accountable</b> for their decision making</li></ul>
	Industry participants	Investors who may wish to invest in our region's housing market or in other areas of the region's economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Helps increase understanding of opportunity</b> of the region's current housing situation</li></ul>



## For discussion: What insights will be most useful to the intended dashboard audience?

### Sample insights

The region is/not meeting **its housing production goals**.

The region is / not **building enough housing to support its job growth**.

Many households in the region **are struggling to afford their housing, with households of color more likely to be burdened by housing cost**.

The housing we are building is/is **not matched to household income distribution [and/or household size]**.

**Housing development is geographically concentrated/distributed.**

Housing affordability is something **many of my employees** may be worried about.

**My employees of color may be struggling with housing affordability.**

### Discussion

1. **Are there insights here that resonate with you?**
2. **Are there insights or data sources you rely on that you would want to see elevated?**
3. We are planning on providing some interpretation and context along with the metrics. What advice would you give about the relative balance between providing context and selecting stand-alone metrics?

# APPENDIX



## We propose organizing the data into three broad areas

	Example data points	Disaggregation
<b>Production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of units built*</li> <li>• Type of units built</li> <li>• Acres of land developed*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakdown units by price point, location (options include center city/suburb; regions of affluence/poverty; transit station areas)</li> </ul>
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median rent, home price*</li> <li>• Rate of increase in median rent, home price</li> <li>• Percent households that are cost burdened*</li> <li>• Evictions and foreclosures*</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost burden by race, own/rent</li> <li>• Homeownership by race</li> <li>• Cost-burden by census tract</li> <li>• Foreclosures and evictions by race</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total population</li> <li>• Household size</li> <li>• Median income, rate of increase in median income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median income (and wealth?) by race</li> <li>• Household size by race (?)</li> </ul>

Interactive maps could be created for the metrics with \*asterisks

### Discussion questions

- What is your **reaction to these broad categories?**
- What types of **information are missing?** Which seem **less needed?**
- **What other kinds of disaggregation should we consider?**
- Which categories are most helpful to have **benchmarked against peer regions?**



# The innovation working group will focus on combining multiple innovations into a single development

**Central question:** By combining 3-5 innovations that have already been used in the region into a single development, could an affordability target be reached with [little/no] public subsidy?

**Hypothesis:** Reviewing the MGI levers (categories below), we identified those most impactful and feasible in our region. We will work with partners to combine most or all of these into a single development and document the affordability benefits.

## Approaches to consider

### Land

- Partner with a public or private land owner to release land at lower price and/or ready land for development
- Build within the MUSA to reduce land prep

### Development

- Use modular construction
- Build in city that allows smaller units, more flexibility with exteriors and/or minimal parking requirements
- Seek partnership with a city to guarantee timing of permits

### O&M

- Build energy efficient units
- Invest in features that lower long-term cost of ownership

### Finance

- TBD which approaches are most promising in our region given changed economic landscape

## Key questions for the working group

- What projects in the region have successfully used some of these approaches?
- What affordability target should we seek?
- Who would live in these homes? What is the market that we are targeting?
- Who are the partners we would need to make this development a reality?

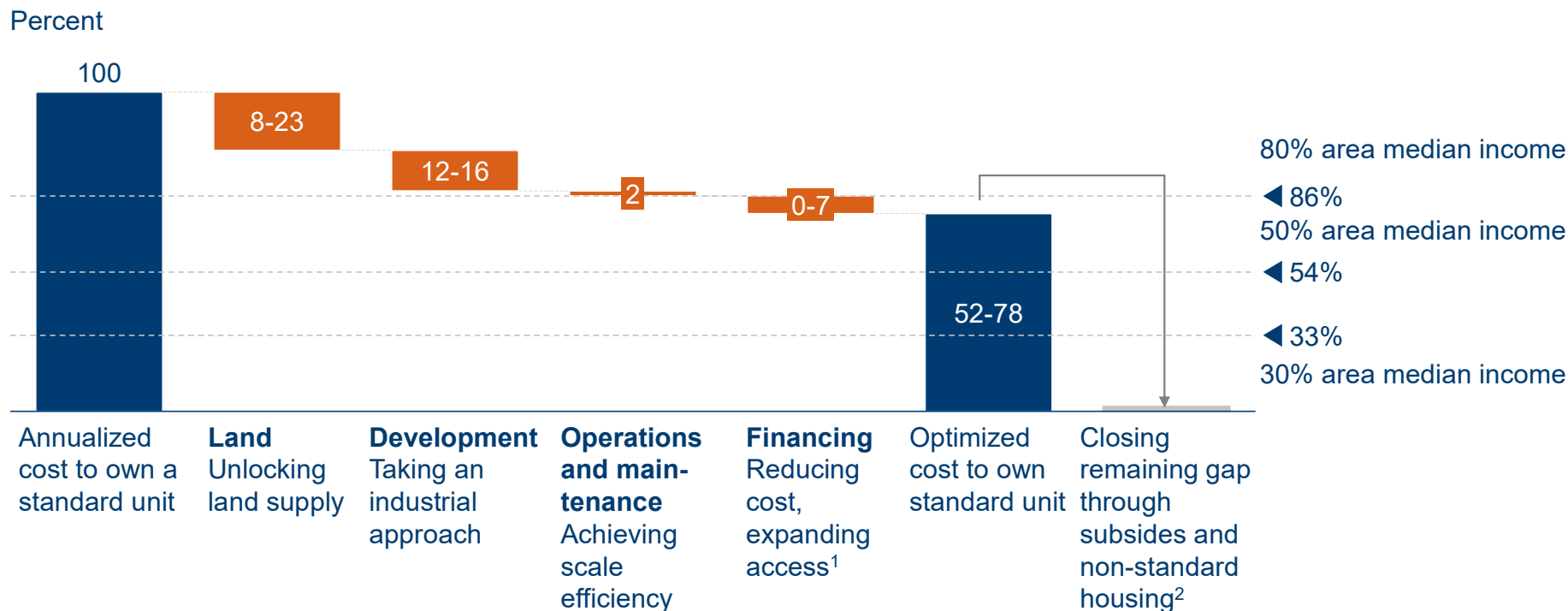




# McKinsey Global Institute identified four levers that can narrow the affordability gap globally

## Four levers can narrow the affordability gap

Impact of levers on cost of standard unit; Indexed to annualized cost of a standard unit



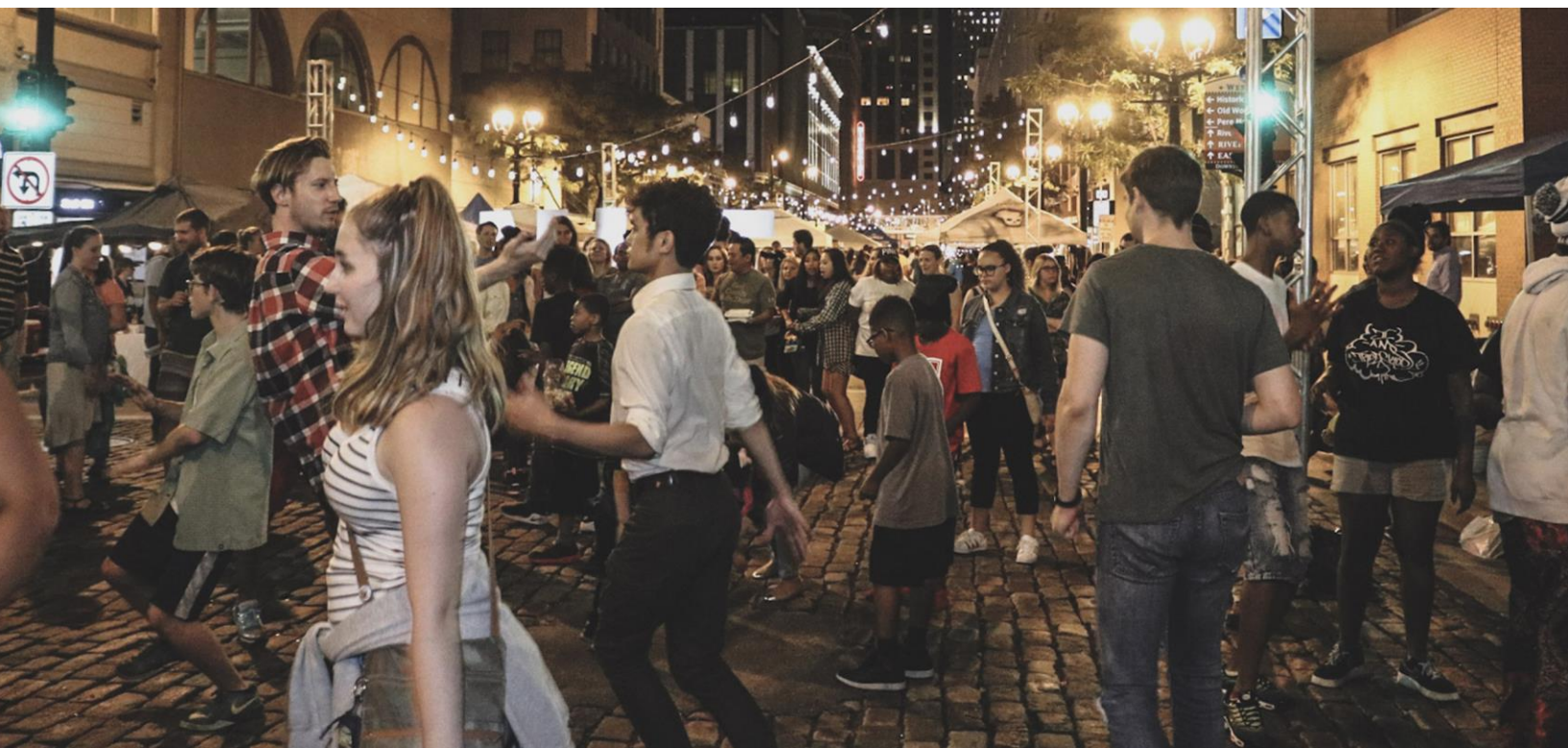
<sup>1</sup> Impact of reduced origination and funding costs is quantified; impact of increased access to financing is not

<sup>2</sup> Transitional use of basic housing (with communal toilets and kitchens, for example) to serve very low-income households

NOTE: Numbers may not sum due to rounding

### C) Placemaking Initiatives Information

- *Embedding equity into Placemaking (Milwaukee case study)*



RESEARCH REPORT

# Embedding Equity into Placemaking

## An Examination of the Milwaukee Method of Creative Placemaking in Practice

Mark Treskon  
May 2021

Kimberly Burrowes

Olivia Arena



## ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is a leading research organization dedicated to developing evidence-based insights that improve people's lives and strengthen communities. For 50 years, Urban has been the trusted source for rigorous analysis of complex social and economic issues; strategic advice to policymakers, philanthropists, and practitioners; and new, promising ideas that expand opportunities for all. Our work inspires effective decisions that advance fairness and enhance the well-being of people and places.

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# Acknowledgments

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The authors would like to thank the key stakeholders in Milwaukee that helped elaborate on the history, goals, and development of the Beerline Trail and the Night Market. Special thanks to Julia Taylor and Melissa Baxter at the Greater Milwaukee Committee, Sara Daleiden of MKE<->LAX, Angela Damiani and Jeremy Fojut at NEWaukee, and Darryl Johnson and Rosalynn Wolfe at Riverworks. We are grateful for their valuable insights and feedback in grounding this research in the local realities.

# Embedding Equity into Placemaking

The racial and economic diversity of cities is an increasingly valued feature when it comes to people feeling connected to where they live, work, and socialize. A thriving community, with social and economic opportunities for all, can foster equitable development and social inclusion. When effective, these places can reflect the priorities of the community and encourage a sense of belonging to improve quality of life.<sup>1</sup> However, these efforts exist within systemic constraints. Resources are limited, and community economic development initiatives focused on the traditional “bottom line” tend to ignore all but the most basic understanding of “impacts” and can lead to displacement, deepen feelings of exclusion, and create barriers to access. To mitigate these effects and build more inclusive processes and equitable outcomes, creative placemaking has emerged as a way to use tools and skills from the arts and culture sector to create a sense of belonging in a space.<sup>2</sup>

Efforts to build equitable creative-placemaking approaches are under way across the country. This report examines one such effort: in Milwaukee, stakeholders are building a creative-placemaking practice to change how people see and experience the places around them and to model a broader approach to place-based investing. This “Milwaukee Method” of creative placemaking (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015) informs and shapes otherwise distinct creative-placemaking projects in the city.

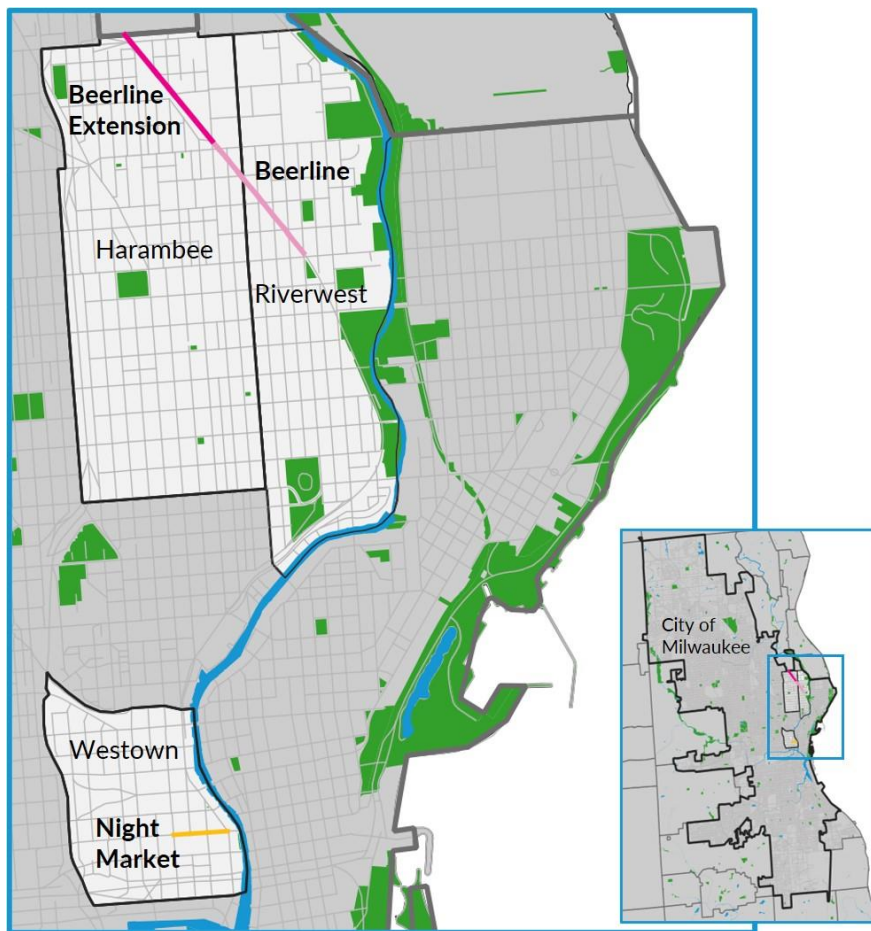
We assess two of these placemaking projects in Milwaukee: the Beerline Trail and the Night Market. We examine both through a lens of inclusive, community-oriented development, with the goal of helping local stakeholders more effectively communicate the benefits and effects of placemaking in their work. We use this lens because studies show that how people feel about where they live, visit, and work affects their feelings of belonging, social cohesion, and identity. It also helps us think about drivers of economic development more broadly—not only as a specific intervention’s return on investment but as a process that can make community change more or less inclusive, more or less equitable.

This research builds on previous Urban Institute work that focused on the Beerline Trail as a driver of community safety in Milwaukee. In a 2018 report, an Urban researcher assessed how the Beerline Trail connected disparate communities (Vásquez-Noriega 2018). The report found that activities such as blight removal, safety audits, lighting, and enhanced activity on the trail led to an increase in the perception of public safety in the neighborhoods surrounding the trail. Elaborating on the initial study, this report uses a broader lens to assess the equitable impact of placemaking and the ways the community can benefit from these investments.

The second project we assess is a downtown market created to bring people to a part of the city with little or no nighttime activity. NEWaukee founded the Night Market in summer 2014, with the goals of creating a safe and interactive place in downtown Milwaukee that draws diverse residents and visitors and changing perceptions of downtown. The Night Market takes place in the summer (typically June to September) along West Wisconsin Avenue and has attracted more than 60,000 attendees every year.<sup>3</sup> We examine how the Night Market as a creative-placemaking initiative affects or drives equity in the investments and development of the downtown area.

Figure 1 shows the locations of the Beerline Trail (both the initial stretch, which opened in 2010, and the more recent extension, which opened in 2015) within the neighborhoods of Harambee and Riverwest and the Night Market along West Wisconsin Avenue within Westtown.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Location of the Beerline Trail and the Night Market in Milwaukee**



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: GIS shapefiles from city of Milwaukee open source GIS data repository.



In addition to using the inclusive, community-oriented development lens, we determine how the lessons from the process and implementation of these projects shape efforts to strengthen equity in the city and region. We aim to capture takeaways to advance the creative-placemaking sector and drive future equitable investments.

Our observations and findings were recorded before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created challenges to observation and analysis (e.g., events such as the Night Market were canceled in 2020). However, the pandemic has highlighted considerations related to how cities value and use public space and has offered an avenue for reflection, in addition to an illustration of the important roles public and inclusive spaces can play in our communities.

## Research Questions

To understand how equity is embedded in placemaking in Milwaukee's creative-placemaking projects, our analysis uses a distinct framing question for each effort.

- **Question 1:** How is the community around the Beerline Trail welcoming placemaking, and to what extent are neighbors (residents and workers) benefiting from the trail's equitable development goals?
- **Question 2:** What role does the Night Market play in spurring development in downtown Milwaukee, and to what extent is the development equitable?

These research questions inform our data collection techniques and the framing for our analysis. This report presents findings and next steps for the Beerline Trail and the Night Market while capturing joint recommendations for the city's approach to creative placemaking.

## Methodology

The Urban Institute collected information for this study between October 2019 and September 2020. We used various tools and approaches to collect quantitative and qualitative data while making longitudinal observations to understand the changes in perceptions of the placemaking efforts and the neighborhoods in which they exist before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. These longitudinal observations are particularly informative because they contribute to the growing recognition that public space is a crucial civic asset.

In October 2019, at the beginning of the research project, we held an in-person convening to understand the landscape of place-based investment in Milwaukee, build trust with the creative-placemaking organizations, and determine a collaborative work plan to advance our research agenda through the following months. We invited the Alameda County sheriff's department in California and the Brownsville Community Justice Center in New York City to participate in the convening as representatives of areas exploring creative-placemaking questions. Box 1 contains additional information about those projects.

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#### BOX 1

##### **Creative Placemaking and Equity Studies**

Building on the Urban Institute's previous work on creative placemaking and community safety (Vásquez-Noriega 2018), we continued our engagement with three groups to examine the effects of their creative-placemaking initiatives on equity in their communities. These projects showcase the range of efforts that communities are making to strengthen their residents' sense of belonging. The three initiatives represent different scales of creative placemaking: community-level, city-level, and county-level. This study (city level) examines the effort to build a consistent and inclusive creative-placemaking approach in Milwaukee ("the Milwaukee Method") that can be implemented in different sites across the city. The others are as follows:

- In Brooklyn, New York, the Brownsville Community Justice Center is working with young people to use creative placemaking to build a more inclusive neighborhood. For this engagement, we worked with the group to design a community safety mapping exercise that can be used for siting and planning its work with young people.
- The Alameda County, California, Sheriff's Office has used creative placemaking to build a more inclusive approach to community policing. In this project, we designed survey and assessment tools that community safety stakeholders in Alameda and other jurisdictions can use to guide conversations about how they can work together to build safer and more equitable communities.

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For our study of creative placemaking in Milwaukee, we conducted 15 phone interviews with local stakeholders who participated in the development or implementation of the Beerline Trail or the Night Market. The interviewees were recommended by key staff members from the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), MKE->LAX, Riverworks, and NEWaukee. Those organizations are members of the Creative Placemaking Committee, which was developed to promote inclusive community development strategies in the city. We have been working closely with them to inform the research process and

ground findings in the local realities. NEWaukee founded the Night Market, Riverworks is a core organizer activating the Beerline Trail, and GMC and MKE<->LAX are involved in the planning and development of both projects.

The people we interviewed in Milwaukee included community leaders, representatives of local art organizations, real estate developers, and staff members from nonprofit partners and city government agencies. We also observed a few stakeholder planning meetings in which COVID-19-related changes for Milwaukee neighborhoods were described. Although these meetings were limited in number, our observations aligned with the findings about ongoing arts-based community development work in Milwaukee that we gathered in interviews.

We also reviewed quarterly reports, memos, grant applications, presentations, and other materials from the Night Market and Beerline Trail files. This included past surveys and other information collected by creative-placemaking staff members that provided insights into the projects' beginnings, as well as quantitative data on the demographics of the neighborhoods that surround the projects, the number of people who use the trail and market, and what users of these amenities think about them.

To capture any changes in the community's perceptions of the Beerline Trail and the Night Market, we conducted a media scan, reviewing the content of local news outlets. We used keywords that focused on the neighborhoods and placemaking efforts of interest to determine how articles and headlines described the projects, the extent to which perceptions of the amenities may have changed over time, and who the main beneficiaries of any physical improvements are.

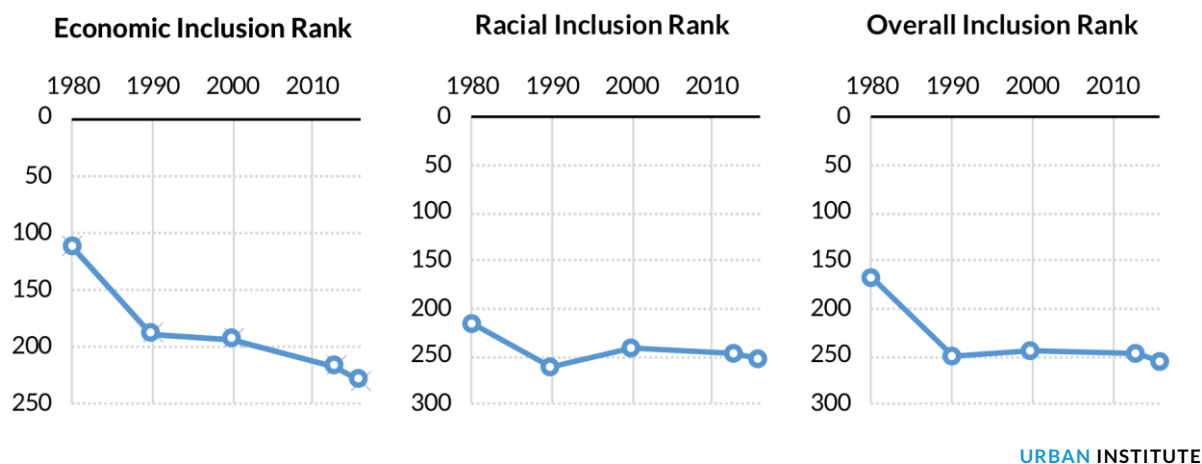
Finally, we conducted a property market analysis that examined historical residential and commercial permit and sales trends in the city using data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.<sup>4</sup>

## Equity and Placemaking in Milwaukee

Milwaukee has distinct social and economic factors that complicate efforts to build equity: its segregation levels are among the highest of all major US cities and regions (Acs et al. 2017), and the prosperity gap between white and Black residents, measured as the difference in well-being and economic opportunity, is the worst among the nation's 50 largest cities (Levine 2020a). These disparities were created by decades of redlining and the displacement and exclusion of Black residents that began in the 1940s when the county imposed restrictive covenants barring Black people from living in 16 of the county's 18 suburbs (Quinn 1979). Today, Milwaukee has one of the lowest rates of Black suburbanization and the highest Black poverty rate among the nation's largest metropolitan areas

(Levine 2020b). According to an Urban Institute analysis of 2016 data, Milwaukee ranked in the bottom half of 274 of the largest US cities in overall inclusion (economic and racial) and 253rd in racial inclusion (figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**FIGURE 2**  
**Measuring Inclusion in Milwaukee**



**Source:** Christina Stacy, Brady Meixell, Ananya Hariharan, Erika Poethig, and Solomon Greene, “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” Urban Institute, last updated September 15, 2020, <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion/?topic=map>.

**Notes:** Milwaukee’s ranks are out of 274 of the largest US cities. Overall inclusion reflects the ability of lower-income residents and people of color to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity. This is measured by combining economic inclusion and racial inclusion. Economic inclusion reflects the ability of residents with lower incomes to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity, as measured by income segregation, housing affordability, the share of working poor residents, and the high school dropout rate. Racial inclusion reflects the ability of residents of color to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity, as measured by the gaps between residents of color and white residents in homeownership, poverty, and educational attainment, as well as the share of the city’s population who are people of color.

Yet despite these disparities, the metropolitan Milwaukee area experienced a net increase in people moving there between April and August 2020 during the pandemic, according to an analysis by LinkedIn Economic Graph Research.<sup>6</sup> The analysis found that Milwaukee was among the five cities in the US with the greatest increases in their inflow-to-outflow ratio (i.e., more people moved there than moved away). The city has been prioritizing approaches and projects to address the historical segregation and poor outcomes for people of color to embrace and benefit from its diversity. The city government, downtown business improvement district, GMC, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and several other key stakeholders have been championing local development projects to enhance the urban landscape in ways that promote equitable place-based resources for all Milwaukeeans.

National and local funders have also aligned their commitments to producing opportunities that engage residents in a collaborative process to help achieve the community changes that residents want.

In 2016, ArtPlace America provided one of the grants that catalyzed arts programming on the Beerline Trail, and it partnered with the Urban Institute for a scan of the public safety and arts and culture field (Ross 2016). Local foundations have also been involved in and supported this work, with Bader Philanthropies and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation both taking an interest in understanding how spaces can be activated to confront and address the city's history of segregation and promote equitable development.

Area stakeholders have framed their work within a “Milwaukee Method” to encourage creative placemaking in the city (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015). In 2014, the GMC formed the Creative Placemaking Committee to formalize its commitment to the method and engagement with local communities.<sup>7</sup> According to a document produced by the committee, the Milwaukee Method

- unifies arts and culture with economic and community development;
- accelerates neighborhood development by creating civic gathering places;
- increases density, safety, business creation, the tax base, and property values;
- strengthens public and private alignments; and
- supports artists, makers, and other cultural workers to co-lead neighborhood engagement (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015).

The document notes that the “Milwaukee Method” supports “interweaving cultural and economic diversity as a method of sustainable city development for long-term success of investments” and that “this commitment to a trail system, repurposed industrial space, and neighborhoods fosters ongoing and new alignments” (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015, 7).

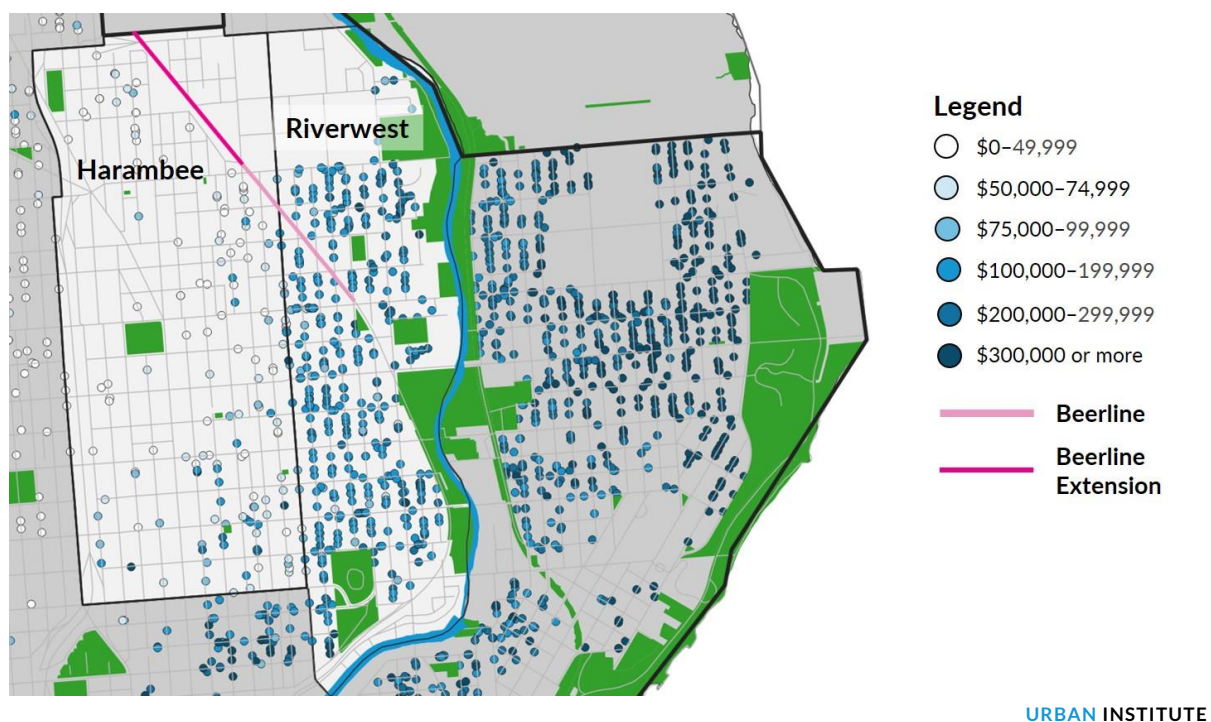
The GMC and its partners work on various projects that invest in public space, encourage local redevelopment, and boost economic growth in neighborhoods. The GMC is demonstrating the Milwaukee Method through three long-term projects, including the Beerline Trail and the Night Market. It also continues to invest in the activation of places and seeks to understand the sustainability of these projects and the equitable development impacts.

## Beerline Trail

Milwaukee's neighborhoods are sharply divided by race and income. On the city's north side, Harambee and Riverwest, two neighborhoods split by Holton Street, illustrate these dynamics. Riverwest to the east is a racially diverse community (60 percent white, 25 percent Black, 8 percent Latinx) and has

relatively low unemployment, stable housing (a median house price of \$150,000), and vibrant commercial corridors (Greater Milwaukee Foundation 2016). Harambee to the west is a majority-Black neighborhood (84 percent) and has more unemployment, lower housing prices (median of \$63,000), a greater share of households who rent, and greater shares of vacant housing and commercial real estate. Figure 3 shows single-family home sales and sale prices between 2015 and 2019, with sales in Riverwest far outpacing those in Harambee. This highlights two dynamics that further exacerbate disparities between the two neighborhoods. First, when they sell, homeowners in Riverwest are making more money on those sales and seeing a greater return on their investments. Second, because homeownership rates tend to be higher in Riverwest than Harambee, sales of single-family homes in Harambee are more likely to involve households who rent: so not only are the investment benefits not going directly to the family living in the house, but the sale may actually signal impending displacement depending on the new owner's plans. In other words, these disparities exacerbate differences in both wealth creation and residential stability.

**FIGURE 3**  
Single-Family Home Sales in the Milwaukee Neighborhoods of Harambee and Riverwest, 2015–19



**Source:** Authors' analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.

Within this context, an abandoned freight rail line that had previously served local breweries provided an opportunity to build a public asset across the communities in the form of a linear park. The space's initial redevelopment was a build-out of a trail between Burleigh Street to the south and Keefe

Avenue to the North. This segment, named the Beerline Trail in acknowledgment of its past use, opened in 2010 and linked up with a riverfront trail that continued south to the city center. A northern extension, initially called the ARTery, was first envisioned in 2012 and opened in 2015 (for a more detailed timeline, see Vásquez-Noriega 2018).<sup>8</sup> This segment provided both opportunities and challenges for stakeholders and designers: it extended the line farther into Harambee proper, but as this northern segment was behind larger industrial buildings and warehouses, it had limited access points for the community, in contrast to the original trail, which had numerous access points as it crossed city streets. The trail currently ends at a former railroad bridge that crosses Capitol Drive, and the city of Milwaukee has acquired some of the corridor north of Capitol for future trail expansion and possible connection to an in-development trail network.

As the trail and the vision for the trail have expanded, local stakeholders have envisioned it as a space that not only physically connects neighborhoods but also builds social connections between Harambee and Riverwest. To make this happen, various local activists and organizations have designed an inclusive planning and implementation process to site, design, and activate the Beerline Trail. This has meant a concerted effort to conduct outreach and build inclusive planning and outreach structures to the surrounding communities.

For a long-term endeavor like the Beerline Trail effort, figuring out how best to incorporate community voice and stakeholders is complicated: funding from ArtPlace America and the Kresge Foundation helped support a robust engagement process, especially between 2014 and 2017, during which time the trail extension opened with robust pilot programming activities. More recently, the project's core organizations have focused on building a permanent design and a programmatic vision and acquiring funds to turn the short-term gains into a permanent social feature of the city's landscape. Public engagement has also continued: the Hood Design Studio, based in California, was selected to build a permanent vision for the space and led on-site community engagement activities in 2017 and early 2019. In practice, this has resulted in a three-part structure that involves varying levels of engagement depending on the need for more or less regular consultation (for more discussion, see Vásquez-Noriega 2018):

- **Core organizations** meet regularly to guide trail development and activation. They are Riverworks Development Corporation, which coordinates maintenance and programming; the GMC; MKE<-> LAX; the city of Milwaukee; and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.
- **Advisory organizations** support the decisionmaking process. They are Bader Philanthropies, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Rail-to-Trails Conservancy, and the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation.



- The “**guiding lenses**” group is made up of local organizations, stakeholders, and people involved in youth engagement, civic art, and neighborhood safety, as well as other local groups. It is part of the advisory group and creates a direct channel to get input from community members on the Beerline Trail planning processes.

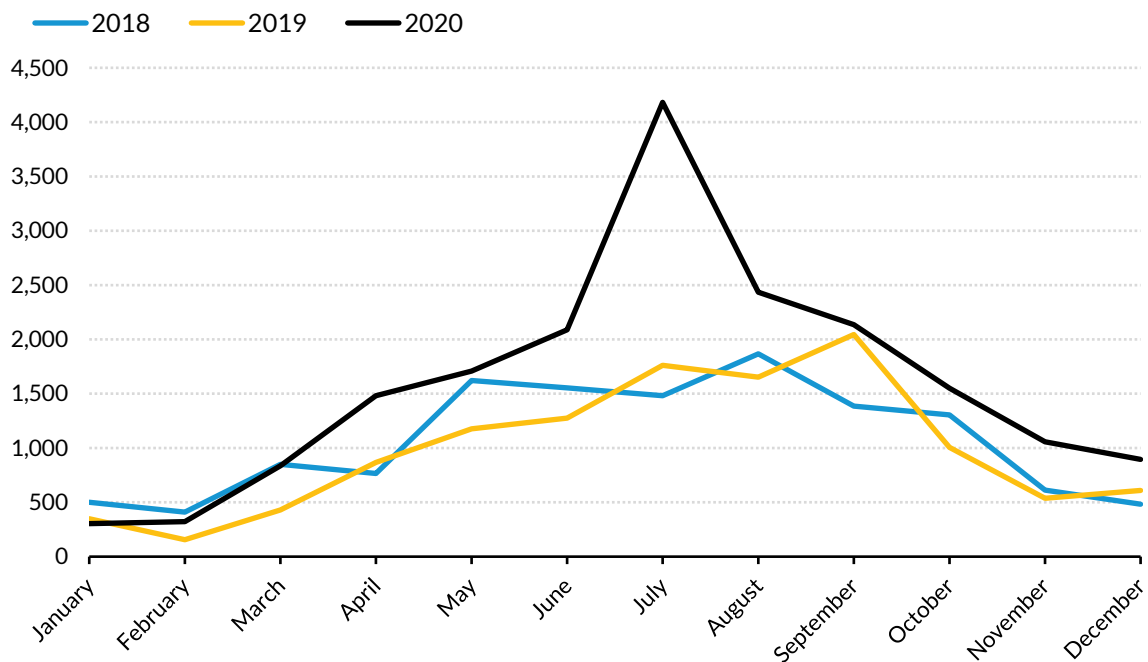
The Beerline Trail partner organizations, including the three groups just described, are working together on the Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project. It is a creative-placemaking collaboration that centers equity in the development of the Beerline Trail by engaging residents in the process and ensuring that the green space best serves the needs of the community. The 2019 Equitable Implementation Plan (GRAEF 2019) and the Lifeways Plan (Hood Design Studio 2019) provide strategic visioning, goals, and priorities for the next phases of the trail’s development. The Lifeways Plan envisions a community design process for the Beerline Trail between Capitol Drive and North Richards Street and provides recommendations for implementing community priorities for the space. The 2019 Equitable Implementation Plan is the broader plan for Beerline Trail extension and accessibility, programming and maintenance, and entrepreneurship and sustainability that aligns with the goals of the Lifeways Plan to improve the lives of residents in Riverwest and Harambee. Both plans not only identify the potential of the Beerline Trail to reduce blight and bring activity to a once-disused area but also seek opportunities to encourage cultural exchange and increased diversity among the trail’s users. The plans envision using the space to foster a sense of belonging among residents of the surrounding communities, to increase stewardship of the land, and to promote sustainability. These stakeholders have created an ongoing partnership throughout the development of these plans, the early design of the trail, and fundraising and sustainability efforts.

When the trail was first developed, the focus was on piloting programming that would appeal to community members and spotlight the organizations located along the trail and in the community. Stakeholder meetings were used to coordinate performances, murals, youth activities, and other events to increase use of the space, and those less familiar with the trail were encouraged to use it. Since then, the focus has shifted to sustaining programming and fundraising for expansions to the trail that would increase its connection to other parts of the city, as well as for operations and maintenance. This process was also disrupted by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic: formal, in-person public programming was put on hold, and the release of the Lifeways Plan was delayed. It was eventually released in January 2021. This meant that the design activities of Hood Design Studio during its visit in April 2019 were one of the last opportunities for engagement for some stakeholders and community members.

However, the pandemic has also reinforced the value of local public spaces, and despite a lack of formal programming, trail use increased substantially. The number of Beerline Trail users rose from

11,868 in 2019 to 19,000 in 2020, a 60 percent increase. For all months between April and December, the monthly 2020 count exceeded the number of users that frequented the trail in the same month in 2018 and 2019 (figure 4).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Beerline Trail Monthly User Counts**



URBAN INSTITUTE

**Source:** Analysis based on data from Eco-Visio dashboard, accessed March 5, 2021, <https://www.eco-visio.net/v5/#dashboard-site::site=100040919>.

**Note:** Counts are from a location on the trail just south of East Albert Place.

Although trail use has increased significantly, counts of users are not sufficient to determine who the users are and where they are coming from. Going forward, the physical trail can only promote use to a certain extent. Intentional engagement, education, and encouragement will remain essential to ensuring that community members are part of the Beerline Trail development and activation process and see themselves as the primary stakeholders.

Institutionally, one challenge has been keeping the broader community involved and up-to-date on the trail's progress while the core stakeholder group focuses on needed fundraising and planning. Physically and programmatically, key challenges have been promoting access, use, and a sense of belonging for a space that is, especially in its northern sections, on the periphery of multiple neighborhoods and hidden behind warehouses. Equitably, the key question is how the space can be

used to draw together two distinct communities and as a springboard for inclusive community development.

## Findings

Over the past 10 years, significant investment has been made along the Beerline Trail. Organizations that include the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation, Bader Philanthropies, and Running Rebels have relocated their headquarters to the broader area (or immediately to the south) and have been active users and programmers of the trail. Groups such as Safe & Sound and Running Rebels have engaged artists and creators to use the space and engage the community, particularly young people. The space has hosted concerts and events that have attracted new users to the trail. One organization that works to activate the trail became involved in the creative-placemaking effort because it saw the trail as a way to catalyze equity and greening. Many stakeholders see it as important civic infrastructure.

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*We did a lot of education around the history and hope for the trail. For us, it’s a huge asset as a green space beside our building and for the young people we serve.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Although programming and community engagement have been done and resources have gone into the trail, we learned in stakeholder interviews that some residents are unaware of the trail’s existence within walking distance of their homes—in some cases, behind their backyards. Although efforts to bring attention to and activate the space accelerated after the trail opened in 2010, more work can be done to encourage use, especially by Black residents, who, according to some interviewees, are less likely than white residents to be aware of or visit the trail. As one interviewee noted, “When I think about Harambee...I don’t know if there is the awareness around the Beerline Trail...If they [people of color] don’t see themselves represented in a space, then they don’t use the space. I don’t think that means that people of color and African Americans can’t use it, [there’s] not a muscle built up around it.”

Efforts have been made since the trail’s opening to improve safety along it and to encourage residents to use the space. Before it was the Beerline Trail, the dimly lit space was the site of illegal dumping. To combat negative perceptions of the space, the city, Riverworks Development Corporation,

and other neighborhood organizations conducted safety audits; increased surveillance by installing cameras, lighting, and other safety measures; and used art to make the space vibrant and welcoming. As one stakeholder put it, “The graffiti and loneliness of the trail make people think it’s not as safe...Work to paint murals and activate the trail is to combat some of that perception.”

The Beerline Trail work has been going on for the past decade, with continued buy-in from community leaders, city agencies, funders, and the business community because it aligns with the strategic urban planning priorities of the region. We learned from many stakeholders that they moved into the surrounding community in the past five years to demonstrate an interest in and to invest in the Beerline Trail.

Several local government agencies and other stakeholders are involved in and interested in the planning of the trail, and this can lead to challenges in navigating how to invest in development and operations and maintenance. These challenges go beyond just local city government and groups: among other plans, the Beerline Trail is part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy’s Route of the Badger initiative to build a 700-mile regional trail system.<sup>9</sup> As one stakeholder put it, “Navigating the politics of different municipalities can be challenging,” citing the city of Milwaukee, the city of Glendale, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The presence of these stakeholders has increased attention to the trail and led to additional resources, but working with political interests that are not always aligned has led to frustration and approval delays that have slowed down the work. One interviewee noted that “there was a huge delay for approval to start the actual work” and said that “was frustrating for us, that the politics came in the way of programming the use and activities along the trail.”

The trail was designed to promote green space equity. Before the trail existed, only 8 percent of Milwaukee residents lived within 2 miles of a trail. After the development of the Beerline Trail and the regional system that includes other work on the Route of the Badger initiative, 66 percent of Milwaukee residents have access (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy 2017).

But equity is more than physical access. Some stakeholders we interviewed said that adding entrance points to the trail would encourage use. They want the trail to be seen as a destination as well as a throughway to other parts of the city and have noted that scheduled programming such as concerts have drawn in people who otherwise would not have visited. The creative-placemaking organizations have been working to ensure the trail is welcoming and accessible and offers programming for a diversity of people, including young people, residents of color, people with lower incomes, older adults, and other groups that might not typically use public spaces (Trust for Public Land 2020). For instance, to foster an environment with which users would identify, some programming organizations focused on

displaying graffiti as an art form, rather than treating it as a public safety concern. This drew more artists to the trail and allowed for art programming for young people to create murals along the trail.

Neighborhood empowerment and community engagement were key to the early success of the trail and will be important moving forward. The planning and initial activation phases involved concerted efforts to include residents, collaboratively work to improve the trail and the surrounding areas, and engage artists and entrepreneurs in creating the space. Stakeholders noted that engagement was central to the Beerline Trail planning process—which involved working with residents, local businesses, artpreneurs, and entrepreneurs—and had garnered “lots of interest” and “great involvement.” This collaborative approach, formalized in 2014 with the formation of the guiding lenses group, would continue as the Hood Design Studio began a collaborative community engagement process the following year.

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*We advocate for the voices of our residents to be elevated. People need to be consulted and their decisions included in the planning process.*

*—Stakeholder*

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After the Hood Design Studio–led community engagement activities in April 2019, the local core stakeholders focused on the fundraising and planning that would be necessary to make the design vision a reality. This made ongoing, broader engagement more difficult and required a different set of stakeholders, leaving out some earlier participants. In interviews, we learned that some organizations felt excluded from the decisionmaking and wanted more involvement in trail programming. Some interviewees also said collaboration had been limited at some points, with less flexibility to allow different groups to participate. One interviewee recommended “better collaboration and inclusion among the partners” and specific ways to continue building trust among young people and people of color living in the neighborhood. The trail provided an ongoing opportunity for residents to build a coalition around the neighborhood asset, and stakeholders wanted that continuity in engagement.

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*We want to have a sense of ownership for the public space and its continued use. We'd love to see the space activated more, maybe even similar to the Night Market, drawing people to the trail. [We would like to] encourage community ambassadors and engage residents to have ownership—for example, [through] trash cleanup and graffiti removal.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Interviewees noted that the Beerline Trail is more than just a physical space, that it has the potential to bring different types of people together. Some organizations have focused especially on the important role that young people can play and have used the trail to reach out to and engage youths, many of whom have never been to the trail, in building a shared community vision. This facilitates conversations around how the young people can plug in, create a safe space for themselves to share challenges they experience, and discuss how they can connect with their community through art. But building trust takes time, and these youth-focused organizations had to facilitate deliberate programming to advance civic engagement among young people. As one interviewee noted, “There’s always some hesitation because [young people] think it’s people from the outside coming to take over and leaving them out of the process. If young people are part of the process from planning, they are more interested and react positively.”

Similarly, encouraging buy-in and ownership among residents of color requires time and flexibility. The trail visioning and development process was the first time some were being asked to engage in shaping their community and determining how space would be used. Even after fostering buy-in, getting residents to participate was challenging, and more people from Riverwest than Harambee attended Beerline Trail planning meetings. Guided by the recommendations of residents and young people who live close to the trail, the creative-placemaking organizations used various events to engage community members. A key point made in the interviews was that shifting meeting locations to different access points along the trail could be more inclusive. If meeting attendance differs by location, that could help demonstrate how users were experiencing the Beerline Trail.

The COVID-19 pandemic upended several carefully designed plans, especially around community outreach, for the Beerline Trail. Community engagement has started again in 2021, and core stakeholders and project leaders will need to grapple with a planning process that, for people who have not been centrally involved, has seemed to be on pause for more than a year. However, the pandemic has also created opportunities to increase the use and perceived value of public spaces like the Beerline Trail. Even without trail programming, trail use increased in 2020. With many Milwaukee residents

facing financial hardships, the trail offered mental and physical health benefits and created a place for socially distanced social engagement.

In the years ahead, even though neighborhood shifts and developments cannot be attributed solely or directly to the trail, its impacts will ripple through the community. As its use increases, so too will its value as a civic asset. As the Milwaukee creative-placemaking organizations continue to focus on this asset, it will be important to ensure that community members, particularly young people and people of color, are at the table when decisions about development and programming are made. Finding creative ways to connect with residents and ensuring they are key beneficiaries of the Beerline Trail are crucial.

## Next Steps

The Beerline Trail's ability to drive equity and inclusion creates an important opportunity for the city, but using the trail to center the priorities of residents and drive community engagement is also a challenge. It will take ongoing effort to ensure the space is more than just a physical trail and becomes a truly inclusive and active site of engagement between diverse groups. We recommend four approaches that stakeholders can take to continue monitoring progress and examining concrete change.

First, assessments to better understand and track stakeholder engagement should happen on an ongoing basis. As we found in our interviews, some people or groups will be more or less involved at different times, but understanding the reasons that people engage (or do not engage) would help the core planning team monitor their progress in building and maintaining an inclusive process. This could involve tools to collect regular feedback from stakeholders to ensure they are informed, engaged, and empowered to reflect their priorities. For example, a short survey could be administered to determine stakeholders' participation status and level of interest (with questions such as, "are you involved in planning meetings?" and "do you have recommendations for improvement?"). Another option would be to conduct a more detailed annual "stakeholder visioning survey" that assesses people's involvement with the project and their knowledge of its status and next steps and asks respondents what trail programming and features they would like to see.

Second, data on trail use and neighborhood change can help frame the implementation of the effort and its potential effects on nearby communities. For the trail itself, the usage counter (a machine that counts visitors at one point on the trail and was the source for the counts in figure 4) could be supplemented with counters at other access points, to improve our understanding of how the entire trail is being used. Meanwhile, qualitative data, collected through interviews or minisurveys distributed at events, could deepen our understanding of the trail's base of users and their patterns. More broadly, tracking community change could involve monitoring community development trends by reviewing



property sales and permits or media coverage and social media posts related to the Beerline Trail, as well as Harambee and Riverwest more generally.

Third, understanding community buy-in will require a sense of how the trail is perceived and used, and helping the community feel ownership of the space may involve shifting cultures around belonging and identity in the built environment. For instance, communities of color are less likely to use park space even if they live nearby. If the Beerline Trail is envisioned as a catalyst of equity, all residents, especially residents of color, will need to feel ownership over the space and programming decisions. Data collection could involve assessing engagement with or use of the Beerline Trail and knowledge of its role in the community. This could involve mental and asset mapping exercises to understand how residents perceive the Beerline Trail, events in which residents review and comment on ongoing assessments and data collected on the Beerline Trail, or surveys targeted to either trail users or community members more broadly. Including more community members, in particular those with broad and diverse sets of community ties, in the core stakeholder group might also increase collective efficacy around the use and programming of the space and ensure that it reflects residents' priorities.

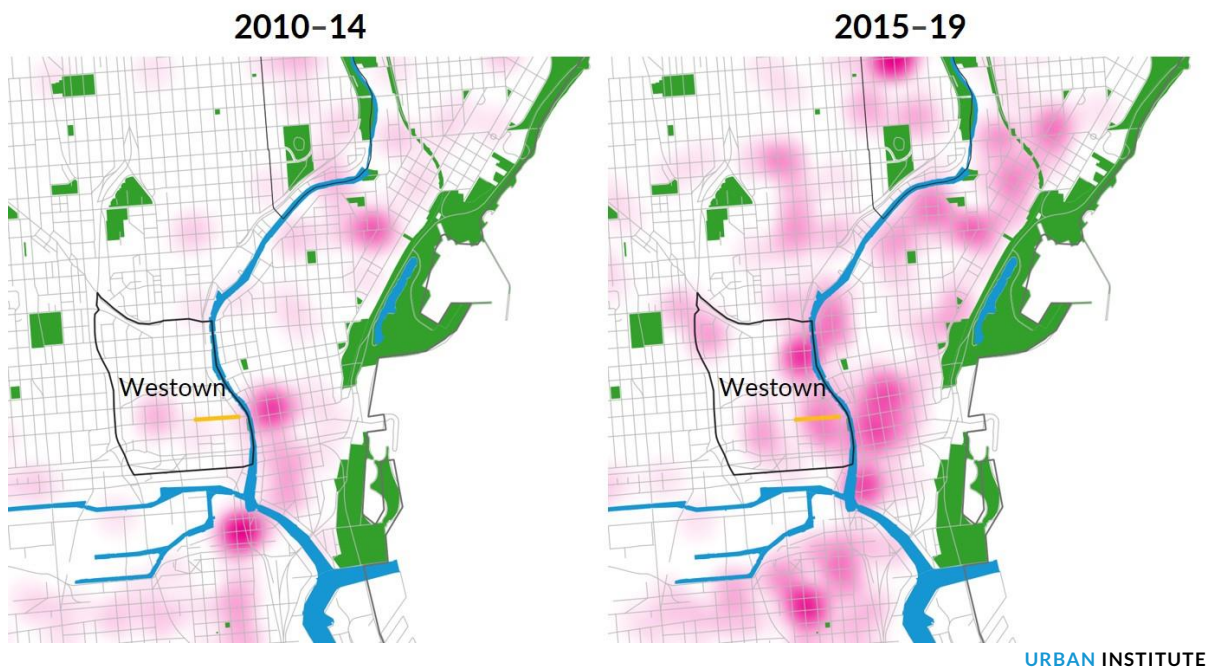
Fourth, without resources for ongoing outreach, staffing, and capacity building, stakeholders and community members may not feel included in the trail's development. Earlier, when the project had resources for pilot programming and trail design, people felt empowered to participate. As funding dwindles, however, finding a balance between paying for physical aspects of the trail (e.g., access point creation, trail extensions, and operations and maintenance) and paying for programming and engagement is a challenge. The latter is harder to evaluate and often lacks tangible results, but it is equally important for creative placemaking that drives equity.

## Night Market

Like downtowns in many other US cities, Milwaukee's downtown has undergone significant change in recent years after chasing previous redevelopment trends, from conventions centers to malls (box 2), in an attempt to compete with increasingly suburban consumption patterns. Although the part of downtown east of the Milwaukee River has long seen regular commercial sales and redevelopment, substantial activity west of the river is relatively new and is part of a recent downtown-wide increase in commercial sales (figure 5). The residential population of downtown has also grown into districts that were previously only commercial—Westtown, for example, had seven residential sales in four buildings between 2002 and 2009, 58 residential sales in five buildings between 2010 and 2014, and 128 sales in 11 buildings between 2015 and 2019.<sup>10</sup>

FIGURE 5

Commercial Sales in Downtown Milwaukee and Surrounding Neighborhoods



Source: Authors' analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.

Notes: The Night Market's location is highlighted in yellow. The darker the magenta, the higher the density of commercial sales.

The NEWaukee Night Market is a free outdoor event that is held at night several times a year and showcases local vendors, performers, and artists. It first took place in 2014 along a stretch of West Wisconsin Avenue that faces what had been the Shops of Grand Avenue (originally named the Grand Avenue Mall). The neighborhood was on the cusp of change but was saddled with negative perceptions about its vitality and safety. The goals of the Night Market were not just to bring people downtown and activate a previously moribund space, but also to bring together a mix of people from across the city and region and create a diverse and welcoming space for activity and engagement. As Angela Damiani, NEWaukee's CEO, put it, the goal was "to create a totally unique experience downtown that's safe and attractive for families to come and experience a part of downtown that, perhaps, they haven't experienced at night."<sup>11</sup>

NEWaukee and other organizations rooted in enhancing spaces for residents to thrive have been crucial to establishing the Night Market as a placemaking effort in Milwaukee. During the Night Market's development and activation, these founding organizations considered who would use the space and how they might want to use it to determine the market's activities and features. When the organizers conceived of the Night Market, they decided its success would not be measured by attendance figures alone, but also by its role in changing perceptions of the neighborhood and the area's trajectory. Between

increased interest from commercial property developers and a burgeoning residential community, this stretch of West Wisconsin had the chance to reemerge as a vital corridor, but questions of how, to what end, and for whom would guide the efforts of those behind the development and implementation of the Night Market. A lengthy process was undertaken to combat perceived public safety concerns, to attract diverse groups, and to program inclusively. The Night Market has continued to play an essential role in activating the once-empty blocks of downtown Milwaukee.

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## BOX 2

### Revitalizing Downtown Milwaukee: The Struggle to Rethink Space

Milwaukee's downtown core had always competed with neighborhood-oriented commercial areas and retail corridors throughout the city. After World War II, as suburbanization took off and many wealthier and mostly white families left the city, the downtown core increasingly struggled to compete with suburban office opportunities and the rise of the automobile-focused suburban shopping malls.

To compete, in 1982, the Shops of Grand Avenue were built along three city blocks in downtown Milwaukee. The mall featured more than 80 stores and the largest food court in Wisconsin. The stores were positioned to attract people to the downtown area and to spur growth in businesses and retail. After about a decade, the mall lost its anchor tenants, and the number of visitors and spending went down. Some stores, like the T.J. Maxx, had access points outside the mall, reducing the need for shoppers to go inside. These design elements created "dead storefronts" in the mall's interior that further dissuaded visitors from entering.

To revitalize downtown, the city has promoted efforts such as the Night Market, the daytime farmers' market, and the River Rhythms concert series. This signaled an evolution of commercial space, which also reimagined how the city could attract economic activity to an abandoned area. In alignment with this transformation, the mall was sold and is being rebranded as "The Avenue," with office space, housing, and a new food hall. The 3rd Street Market Hall is being designed with an open concept, mirroring that of the Night Market and other outdoor activities. It draws from lessons learned about downtown's evolution during urban renewal and aims to foster a dynamic environment that will be activated to draw people.

**Sources:** Alexis Stephens, "Goodbye, Urban Indoor Mall. Hello, Downtown Outlet Center!" *Next City*, June 10, 2015, <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/city-indoor-malls-new-downtown-outlet-centers>; Bobby Tanzilo, "8 images of Downtown's Old Grand Avenue Mall," *OnMilwaukee*, May 18, 2020, <https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/grand-avenue-mall-vintage-photos>; Paul Gores and Guy Boulton, "Shops of Grand Avenue Sold to Milwaukee Investors for \$24.6 million," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 18, 2015, <https://archive.jsonline.com/business/shops-of-grand-avenue-sold-to-milwaukee-investors-for-246-million-b99637069z1-362998851.html/>; Sean Ryan, "Grand Avenue Owners Buying Nearby Properties, Attracting More Office Tenants," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/2019/11/11/grand-avenue-owners-buying-nearby-properties.html>; Jeffrey Zimmerman, "Downtown," *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/downtown/>.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, NEWaukee canceled Night Market activities in 2020, and planning for 2021 is taking place amid uncertainty. Going forward, the Night Market has the opportunity to bring people together downtown in a shared, diverse, social space.

## Findings

We collected our data both before and during the pandemic. The resulting insights, based on our interviews with stakeholders and our review of media content and social media posts, reflect the Night Market's role in downtown development and highlight the key themes for sustaining equity when the Night Market can reopen.

The Night Market, while not the only event that catalyzed the area's development, has contributed to bringing people from outside downtown into a neighborhood they typically might not have frequented after work hours. The market increased activity and foot traffic in the downtown area and was aligned with the economic development happening with the River Rhythms concert series, the Shops of Grand Avenue, and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Advertising drew people into the neighborhood at times when the area typically did not have many visitors, and this, along with the other activities, encouraged people to stay.<sup>12</sup> Together, the Night Market and River Rhythms have drawn people to downtown Milwaukee on Wednesdays. The Night Market, in particular, maintained attention and energy each year it was held. The Night Market demonstrates how blocks can be transformed and bring together diverse groups with a range of activities.

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*The way in which the Night Market uses the public space and the street is special and may not have been as well-used many years ago, but now it makes people use a space they don't often spend time in.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Although the Night Market's structure is largely similar to that of other urban festival events and fairs, it introduced a new way to be active in Milwaukee's downtown by giving access to people who might not have seen themselves there before. Although visitor surveys were not extensively collected, the responses indicated that people traveled from all over the city and even other states. For example, young adults visited downtown for a pop-up of the Milwaukee Public Library at the Night Market, and simultaneously, River Rhythms, held a few blocks away, often attracted a crowd of adults 40 or older.

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*The Night Market was one of the most diverse experiences in the city. It may not be a catalyst for investment on West Wisconsin, but they get credit for spurring diversity.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Evidence from our interviews, our media analysis, and the visitor survey<sup>13</sup> suggests that the Night Market has helped improve negative perceptions of neighborhood safety that were largely related to the physical length of the blocks and the lack of retail—both of which made the area uninviting. The Night Market’s activities helped reimagine a space once considered unappealing, unsafe, and inactive and empowered people to think differently about visiting downtown at night. Multiple stakeholders noted that the Night Market had prompted people to reassess their views of the neighborhood. Media stories that mentioned West Wisconsin or Westtown went from focusing on vacancies, especially in the case of the Shops of Grand Avenue, in the early 2010s to highlighting the area’s activities and portraying the neighborhood as an increasingly vibrant destination in the latter part of the decade. The limited data from visitor surveys show this potential—they indicate an increase, albeit small, in the “perception of safety” in the neighborhood. People’s attitudes about downtown began to change, and they attributed this to the activation by placemaking efforts.

The planning for the Night Market was inclusive and engaging, including multiple sessions that involved a diverse set of stakeholders. As a part of this process, the Night Market planning team consulted local businesses, community leaders, and developers in the area to ensure this development would be inclusive. These equitable planning processes must continue to iterate throughout the market’s development, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the value of public space is heightened. New needs and priorities may emerge, and the market’s success has positioned it to continue being a catalyst for diverse interactions.

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*In summary, you have to try a lot of things and see what works. The Night Market has proven what could work. We tried to do some placemaking on the empty block; it fizzled out.*

*Probably didn’t work because there was not enough of a concentrated effort, but it didn’t work and we need to keep trying.*

*—Stakeholder*

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The Night Market helped shape the trajectory of investment downtown and has a lot of potential to encourage equity-driven placemaking. It has also influenced perceptions of the neighborhood. In addition, the Night Market's organizers have a good relationship with neighborhood developers. However, to ensure that the downtown area does not become inaccessible either because of cost or feel, the Night Market must continue to find ways to connect with the community's core priorities. As new development occurs along West Wisconsin Avenue, the market can center itself as a prime attraction that brings diversity downtown and reinforce that the area is welcoming.

## Next Steps

The work of NEWaukee and collaborators to envision and develop the Night Market concept has clearly followed the precepts of the Milwaukee Method of creative placemaking: it has linked arts and cultural programming with local development and has supported artists and cultural workers, it has built a civic gathering place (even if an occasional one), it has linked public and private interests, and it has been designed to increase perceptions of safety and economic vitality in the area.

Our suggestions for future work, then, focus on how the Night Market can continue building an inclusive community in the context of a rapidly developing neighborhood and can more fully understand its effects on those changes.

As noted above, NEWaukee has designed a visitor survey that contains questions about respondents' reasons for attending the Night Market, their neighborhood or city of residence,<sup>14</sup> their perceptions of the neighborhood's safety, and the likelihood they will return to the market. This is a useful and succinct template for future survey collection. To increase its usefulness, the survey needs to be distributed more systematically during the Night Markets. It could also be shared via online distribution channels: engagement through Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram could be used to monitor perceptions, seek feedback, and build trust. This would help establish a broader baseline for understanding perceptions of the event and the neighborhood and linking them to visitor trends.

More broadly, because a goal of the Night Market is to affect how the neighborhood is perceived, used, and developed even when the Night Market is not taking place, we recommend additional data collection focused on residents, visitors, and other stakeholders (such as property owners). This could include minisurveys of residents of newer buildings, people who work in the neighborhood, or business owners to find out what they think of the neighborhood, what drew them to the area, and what effects they think cultural programming like the Night Market has had. For example, residents might see the Night Market as the impetus for their considering the neighborhood as a place to live, while business

owners might see it as a source of customers. Interviews or ongoing assessments with key public and private organizational stakeholders, like those conducted for this study, will be useful for understanding how they perceive the Night Market's role in the neighborhood.

Finally, continuing to monitor neighborhood development and change will be crucial, both to identify new groups of potential users and stakeholders and to understand how the Night Market can continue playing a role in shaping the neighborhood. As with our recommendations for the Beerline Trail, this may involve ongoing analysis of property records to monitor developments and, on the ground level, collection of data on usage (e.g., how many people are in a given space and when, how people enter or leave the neighborhood, and how public spaces are used when programming is not active).

More broadly, we expect the neighborhood to experience an increase in development in the years ahead, so the Night Market may need to shift from building interest and positive perceptions to maintaining a sense of inclusivity, equity, and belonging. This would require a lot of effort, including ongoing assessments, but it is the best way to ensure that the Night Market can build on its successes.

## Key Takeaways

The Beerline Trail and Night Market are different projects, but both are informed by a desire to build inclusive processes and equitable spaces. Based on our examination of these efforts, we present some key takeaways that stakeholders, both those in Milwaukee and those undertaking creative-placemaking efforts elsewhere, should think about in pursuing their work.

- 1. Funding ongoing collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is key to gaining a comprehensive understanding of how people experience placemaking projects.**

Demonstrating the quantitative impact of placemaking efforts can be challenging and overlook key insights into how people experience a space. The organizations planning and implementing efforts such as the Beerline Trail and the Night Market can benefit tremendously from qualitative feedback on the degree to which residents and visitors feel engaged, consulted, or empowered. These findings can help determine buy-in, equity, and, most importantly, sustainability. However, data that can help determine who is materially benefiting from these efforts is hard to come by. In Milwaukee, the city and local stakeholders are thoughtfully activating spaces using principles of equitable placemaking, but fully tracking outcomes and understanding effects will require a deeper dive into quantitative and qualitative data



measuring attendance, use, and outcomes disaggregated by age, race, and income. Foundations and philanthropists interested in funding the development and continuation of placemaking activities and projects should commission the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to understand how many people are visiting a place and how they feel when they are there. Now that the Beerline Trail and the Night Market have been operational for some time, the coupling of these data can illustrate use, access, social cohesion, and belonging to determine whether the placemaking efforts help produce equitable outcomes.

2. **Neighborhoods at an inflection point of change and opportunity, like the ones we studied in Milwaukee, can allow their economic success to undermine or drive out people of color if equity is not an intentional part of the design and implementation of efforts.** The spaces around the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods and West Wisconsin Avenue downtown were activated for the diverse group of people who live, work, and frequent the areas. The Beerline Trail and the Night Market were planned to explicitly undo the historical physical boundaries that may have barred people of color, Indigenous people, and people with low incomes from accessing some neighborhood amenities. These projects were designed to center equity through community engagement strategies that brought residents to the table to offer input, to collaborate on the development, and to be empowered in decisionmaking. Continuing to incorporate these voices, which are often unheard, will be crucial to who has access and who feels like they belong. This might require regular engagements to understand the quality of people's experiences and how they may differ based on race and economic opportunity. Placemaking organizations should be charged to build this into their implementation plans as they roll out activities.
3. **The physical environment can create barriers that affect how people interact in a space, so incorporating design elements with an equity focus can increase access.** In Milwaukee, streets have historically been used as a racial divider, cutting off services from the predominately Black and lower-income north and west sides. There has been a historical lack of investment in these spaces, and placemaking projects that use the built environment are important because they give back the right of way in a space that may have once been inaccessible. The goal of the Beerline Trail was to increase connectivity among economically and racially diverse communities and offer a sense of safety. The trail offers some of this; however, the two segments of the Beerline Trail are disconnected, and because avenues cut across the trail, people may not realize that the segments are all one trail network. The northern trail is more fully enclosed within an industrial district that has historically been perceived as desolate. The southern half goes on and off streets, and users are unaware that it is continuous. Large streets

are difficult to cross and create physical barriers to using the trail. Efforts have already been made to improve these connections: the city repurposed a rail bridge to extend the trail across Capitol Drive, allowing people on the trail to avoid crossing a large arterial road. Additionally, a new entrance at Vienna Avenue expands access along the trail's northern stretch. Here, new murals (developed in collaboration between the Beerline stakeholders, Hood Design Studio, and local artists) are being painted to welcome community members. Connecting communities helps people better navigate the city, and placemaking partners will need to continue improving access points and visibility so more people will use the trail. Similarly, in the downtown area, the blocks are long, but the Night Market creates a sense of cohesiveness that draws people and connects them with other activities such as River Rhythms and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. To improve its engagement with people of diverse ages and races, the symphony is moving from its older, Brutalism-influenced building to a more classically designed building and adding a glass pavilion that is more open to the street and more welcoming to the community.

4. **The COVID-19 pandemic offers the opportunity to reinforce the value of placemaking activities to create spaces for community while people are distancing.** The city of Milwaukee will need to be nimble and flexible in fostering a sense of community while people are physically distancing. Since the pandemic began, restaurants, stores, businesses, and many other commercial activities, including the Night Market, have been discontinued. The Beerline Trail remains open as a public space that the community can enjoy. This demonstrates the value of trails, green spaces, parks, and other placemaking activations—passive and active—and should further reinforce that these are crucial civic assets. Although the Beerline Trail and the Night Market benefited from intentional activation in the past, even without the mural painting, pop-ups, library giveaways, or outdoor concerts, these spaces are treasured by the community. Funders should recognize the importance of placemaking in this moment of outdoor appreciation and ensure that placemaking is incorporated into efforts to reimagine space.
5. **Continuous stewardship by placemaking organizations and community members, particularly people of color, is needed to ensure that residents are not priced out or displaced as a neighborhood begins to change.** Efforts to coordinate and maintain trust in placemaking can be challenging, but when community members are engaged early and consistently, they become stewards of the projects. The Beerline Trail benefited from the relocation of organizations like Running Rebels, Bader Philanthropies, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, which increased attention and investment in the surrounding neighborhoods. When those resources are aligned with residents' priorities, the trail is more likely to be valued, used, and sustained. The Night Market, meanwhile, has brought attention to the downtown

area as a destination for families seeking entertainment in a space that did not exist years ago. To ensure that the market continues to serve the demand without changing the neighborhood in ways that displace people, the placemaking organizations will need to create routine temperature checks with users and visitors, with intentional representativeness. These placemaking projects have the challenging and ambitious goals of improving equity and closing historical racial and economic gaps. To do this effectively, everyone, especially people of color and residents with low incomes who are often left out of decisionmaking, must feel empowered and participate.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “What Is Placemaking?” Project for Public Spaces, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>.
- <sup>2</sup> See “About ArtPlace,” ArtPlace America, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction>.
- <sup>3</sup> This attendance figure is for 2014 through 2019. When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the US in early 2020, the Night Market was canceled.
- <sup>4</sup> The city’s data portal is available at <https://data.milwaukee.gov/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Christina Stacy, Brady Meixell, Ananya Hariharan, Erika Poethig, and Solomon Greene, “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” Urban Institute, last updated September 15, 2020, <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion/?topic=map>.
- <sup>6</sup> George Anders, “So Long Big City! Handling a Pandemic Often Means Calling the Movers,” LinkedIn, September 23, 2020, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/so-long-big-city-handling-pandemic-often-means-calling-george-anders/>.
- <sup>7</sup> The committee is chaired by Angela Damiani, the CEO of NEWaukee; Brad Pruitt, a filmmaker with Inspired Media; and Elizabeth Brenner, retired president/publisher of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.
- <sup>8</sup> Jeramey Jannene, “Campaign Underway to Improve, Extend Beerline Trail,” Urban Milwaukee, January 22, 2021, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2021/01/22/eyes-on-milwaukee-campaign-underway-to-improve-extend-beerline-trail/>.
- <sup>9</sup> See “Creating Healthier Communities in Wisconsin: Route of the Badger,” Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/trailnation/route-of-the-badger/>.
- <sup>10</sup> Count based on authors’ analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee’s open data portal.
- <sup>11</sup> Scott Wise, “Night Market Opens Wednesday in Downtown Milwaukee,” WUWM, July 16, 2014, <https://www.wuwm.com/post/night-market-opens-wednesday-downtown-milwaukee#stream/0>.
- <sup>12</sup> For example, in a 2016 news release, NEWaukee advertised the downtown programming as Westown Wednesdays, including the farmers’ market from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., River Rhythms from 6:30 to 9 p.m., and the Night Market from 9 to 10 p.m.
- <sup>13</sup> The visitor survey asked six questions: Where do you currently live? Why did you come to the Night Market? What was your perception of safety on West Wisconsin prior to event? How has the market changed your perception of safety on the Avenue? How likely are you to come back to the Avenue after the market? If you could create anything on the lot, what would you want to see?
- <sup>14</sup> We recommend that future NEWaukee surveys capture information on attendees’ zip codes, to keep the data straightforward and easy to compile.

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# About the Authors

**Mark Treskon** is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. His research is on affordable and subsidized housing programs and policies, creative placemaking and equitable community development, regional demographic and economic change, and financial interventions for low-income consumers.

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**Olivia Arena** is a former research assistant in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center.

## STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

The Urban Institute strives to meet the highest standards of integrity and quality in its research and analyses and in the evidence-based policy recommendations offered by its researchers and experts. We believe that operating consistent with the values of independence, rigor, and transparency is essential to maintaining those standards. As an organization, the Urban Institute does not take positions on issues, but it does empower and support its experts in sharing their own evidence-based views and policy recommendations that have been shaped by scholarship. Funders do not determine our research findings or the insights and recommendations of our experts. Urban scholars and experts are expected to be objective and follow the evidence wherever it may lead.





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### C) Physical Redevelopment Opportunities Information

- *2040 Comp Plan Future Land Use Map*
- *Comp Plan Areas of Improvement Map*
- *HKGi Silver Lake Road Corridor Study Work Program*

# Future Land Use - New Brighton Comprehensive Plan



- LDR, Low Density Residential
- MDR, Medium Density Residential
- HDR, High Density Residential
- MU, Neighborhood Node
- MU, City Center Node
- C, Comercial
- MU, Regional Node
- LI, Light Industrial
- HI, Heavy Industrial
- P-QP, Public & Quasi-Public
- P, Park
- ROW, Right Of Way
- RR, Railroad
- Open Water

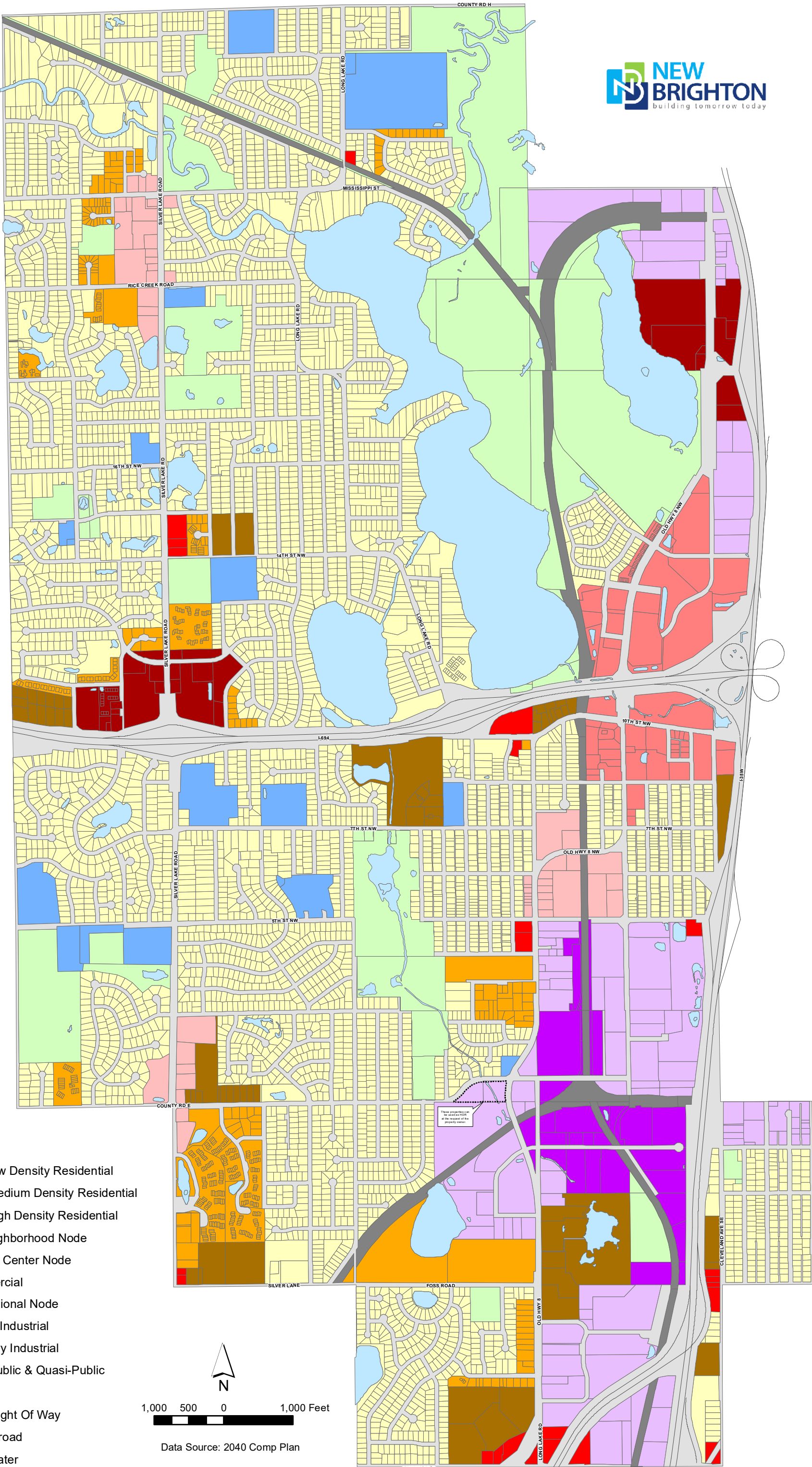
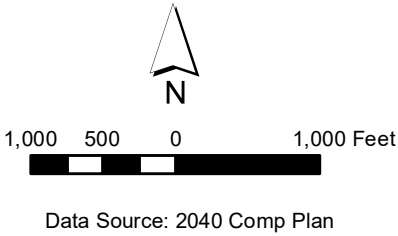
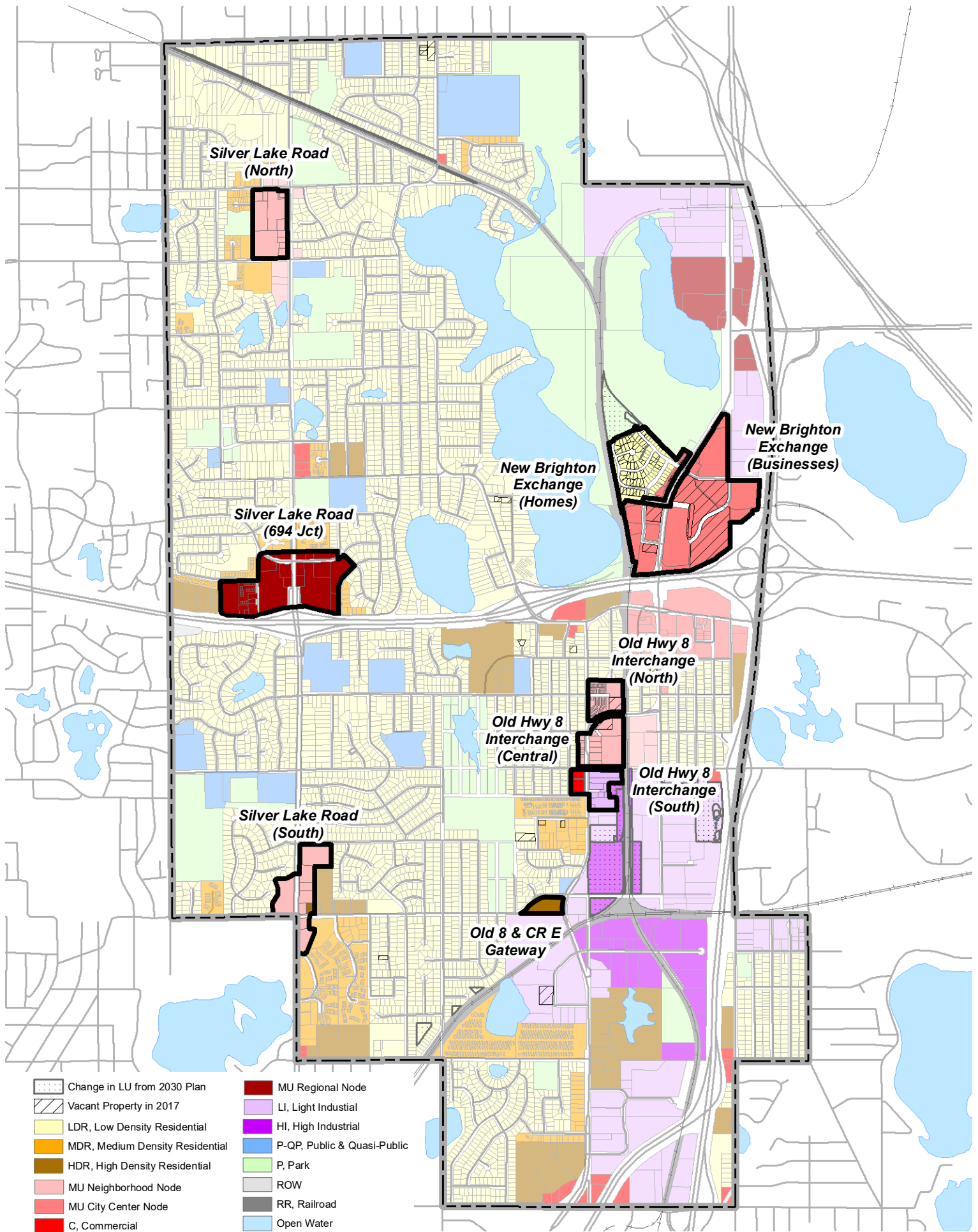


Figure 3-3. Potential Areas of Improvement in New Brighton



## Attachment A

### New Brighton Silver Lake Road Planning – Work Program

#### Project Purpose:

The purpose of the Silver Lake Road Corridor Planning project will be to implement the changes in land use and new approach to redevelopment brought forward in New Brighton 2040: The City's Comprehensive Plan. The emphasis of the process will be on informing stakeholders in the area about the potential for change at three key intersections along Silver Lake Road, and to provide them the opportunity to establish the vision and shape the standards that will guide the corridor as it redevelops. The goal of the project is to identify a community-based vision for these intersections and to establish a set of preferred standards for each area that will be a blueprint for City Staff to use when updating zoning standards for these nodes.

#### Task 1: Inform (1 month)

- The first step of the process will be to adequately inform residents and area stakeholders of the project. The emphasis of this task will be on:
  - Where we are: description of this project, what we're trying to achieve, and the possible impacts on the community
  - What we've already done: summarize what lead to this project, how community involvement with the Comp Plan guided us to the project
  - Where we're going: what are the goals of the project, and what are the desired outcomes of the project
- To ensure we reach as many people as possible as well as considerations of COVID constraints, the vast majority of engagement will be online. Information will be prepared to also facilitate in person engagement where appropriate safety precautions allow. The center of the online engagement will be the project website/landing page, where all educational materials for task 1 will be organized and easy to navigate.
  - All future engagement tasks will be hosted on the website, with possibility for public to sign up for notifications when new elements appear
- In addition to traditional methods of notifying the public about this project (sharing links on City website, social media, newsletters, etc.) we will also want to do some targeted engagement for this project. In particular, we want to identify the stakeholders most familiar with these areas, the business owners, employees, and residents who live and work in these three nodes along Silver Lake Road. We also want to emphasize outreach and engagement voices often left out of the engagement process; this includes communities of color, and vulnerable road users such as youth, seniors, and differently-abled individuals.
  - We will need the assistance of City Staff to identify these stakeholders and how we should engage them in the process. This may include collecting information of Open for Business participants in the area, or identifying non-profits, organizations, and other entities that are active in the area.
  - The approach to outreach will vary based on individual stakeholder group needs.
  - Methods to engage underrepresented populations may include:

- Translated engagement materials
- Targeted engagement of employees of businesses in the area
- Teaming up with school district(s), libraries, and other local institutions to distribute engagement materials to low-income families
- Distributing engagement materials/surveys at local and cultural events (COVID permitting)

### Task 1 Deliverables

- ☐ Project web site
- ☐ Informational print materials and web site content
- ☐ Informational print materials for email blasts, newsletter content, and social media posting

### Task 2: Visioning (2 months)

- To facilitate stakeholder visioning, we will establish vision guidance questions.
  - These may be themed around different topics (transportation, open space, land use and development, urban design character, etc) or possibly around the Comp Plan vision goals.
  - These visioning questions will then be put into a survey format online where stakeholders and residents can participate in an interactive engagement process.
- The depending on the stakeholders identified in Task 1, the same visioning survey/activity may also be translated to stakeholder-specific sessions.
  - These could possibly be “live” sessions online, guided materials for group leaders to facilitate, or self-guided paper materials that will allow for in person engagement with safe social distancing.
  - The key to this engagement will be to make sure we provide enough time and flexibility to engage stakeholders as they need, while also keeping the project moving and at the front of mind for participants.
- Once community members have gone through visioning, we will summarize this input and establish a vision for the corridor, and possibly different objectives for each key node.

### Task 2 Deliverables

- ☐ Updates to project web site
- ☐ Set of visioning questions, print materials, and self-guided tour directions to facilitate vision process
- ☐ Summary of engagement results
- ☐ Draft of vision and objectives



### Task 3: Scenarios (1 month)

- We will take the vision established in Task 2 and use it to create 3D graphic build-out scenarios for each key intersection along Silver Lake Road
  - These visualizations will be focused on massing, scale, and site orientation, rather than architectural details
  - We will supplement the scenarios with precedent imagery to depict a desired character or appearance using the input from task 2 as guidance
- The scenarios will be available for stakeholders and the general public to explore and provide their feedback and preferences on various components via the project web page
- Community feedback will be summarized and analyzed.
- The consultant team will prepare presentation materials and will facilitate discussion and dialogue with the project steering committee and City Council over Zoom.

#### Task 3 Deliverables

- ☐ Build out scenarios for three nodes – 3D renderings illustrating massing, scale, and site orientation. 1 or 2 scenarios envisioned for each node.
- ☐ Precedent imagery associated with various node components
- ☐ Updated project web page with interactive survey to allow engagement
- ☐ Summary presentations of engagement findings at two meetings

### Task 4: Prepare Plan Direction (1 month)

- Based on the outcome of Task 3 a preferred plan will be prepared for each key node:
  - From this “preferred plan” we will establish specific standards (or guidance when appropriate) for City Staff to utilize when preparing the zoning update for the areas
- The final deliverable will be the Preferred Plan for the Silver Lake Road Corridor Key Intersections, presented in the form of a website
  - The Preferred Plan will provide City Staff with standards and guidance to writing the zoning updates for the area

#### Task 4 Deliverables

- ☐ Preferred plan for each node annotated with identified precedent imagery and design directions
- ☐ Summary presentation of final plan
- ☐ Summary sheet of all public input for each node going back to 2017.





Agenda Section: VI
Item: 4
Report Date: 2/24/22
Commission Meeting Date: 03/02/22

## REQUEST FOR COMMISISON CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Nomination of 2022/23 Chair & Vice Chair
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S APPROVAL:
CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:
No comments to supplement this report ____ Comments attached ____

15.99 Deadline: None

- Recommendations:
- Nominate yourself or a fellow commission member for the role of Chair or Vice Chair
  - Vote on a commission recommendation for each position

**Legislative History:** On a yearly basis, all City commissions are asked to recommend which of its members should fill the role of Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year. The Commission's recommendation will be presented to the City Council in late March, and Council may elect to follow the recommendation or go with their own selections. Commission members selected by Council will then head up our meetings from April 2022 through March 2023.

**Financial Impact:** N/A

**Summary:** Heading into the meeting, each member should consider whom they'd like to nominate for leadership roles with the Commission. We recognize that we have a highly skilled and educated commission, so no member should feel slighted if they are not nominated. Maintaining the same leadership each year is not required, but is also not prohibited. Ultimately, the purpose of this exercise is to identify the individuals you would like to lead meetings over the course of the next year.

**Requested Action:** none

**Attachments:**

Ben Gozola, AICP  
*Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development*

