



AMANI
NEIGHBORHOOD
ACTION
PLAN

DOMINICAN CENTER FOR WOMEN

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD **ACTION PLAN**

A comprehensive report created to address quality of life concerns in the Amani Neighborhood.

Compiled By:
Fatima Benhaddou
Jeremy Davis
John Gardner
Jamila Wright



UWM
GRADUATE
STUDENTS



While the Amani Neighborhood has been experiencing some recent development, **there is still a significant lack of support for local businesses.**



Newly constructed homes rejuvenate blocks, **but many existing homes need repair.**

An abundance of homes are currently vacant in the Amani Neighborhood, we must develop a method to ensure security.





Vacant lots represent opportunity for development, **we must improve the Amani Neighborhood's desirability.**



The Amani Neighborhood rests on a rich history, **more effort** needs to be made to maintain the existing housing stock.



Neighborhood residents are the life source of change, **we must find a way to actively engage the residents of Amani.**

**NO
PARKING
DUMPING
OR
TRESPASSING**

CITY ORDINANCE

It is time for the Amani Neighborhood to become a thriving, vibrant community.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

XII	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
XIV	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1	INTRODUCTION & PLAN GOALS
7	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
11	EXISTING CONDITIONS
15	DEMOGRAPHICS
19	NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS
21	FOCUS AREAS
23	1 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION
43	2 COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
61	3 PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION
75	4 COMMUNITY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT
85	MOVING FORWARD
90	STRATEGIC HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was researched and written by Fatima Benhaddou, Jeremy Davis, John Gardner, and Jamila Wright, Masters of Urban Planning Students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The plan was prepared for the Dominican Center for Women, under the Directorship of Sister Patricia Rogers.

UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning Professors Nancy Frank and Carolyn Esswein provided direction and supervision of this project, created during the semester-long Applied Planning Workshop.

We are greatly indebted to Sister Patricia Rogers and the Dominican Center for Women's staff and volunteers, who provided ample opportunities for engagement and assistance.

Thank you to David Ciepluch, John Bach, and Steve Anholt, who serve as technical housing advisers to the Dominican Center for Women and for this project.

Thank you to the numerous neighborhood residents who gave their valuable insight and support during the entire project.



Finally, thank you to the numerous organizations that showed their support by hosting conversations, sharing their work, and by contributing many ideas, including but not limited to:

- Walnut Way Conservation Corp.
- ACTS Housing CDC
- Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee - Data Center
- Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity
- Select Milwaukee
- Washington Park Partners
- Layton Boulevard West Neighbors
- City of Milwaukee
- Safe & Sound
- Our Next Generation
- Pearls for Teen Girls
- Running Rebels
- Milwaukee Job Corps Center
- COA Youth & Family Centers
- Urban Underground
- YMCA Black Achievers
- District 5 MPD
- Mr. Bently Turner

We hope this plan will serve the Amani community as they move forward for effective community change.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



The Amani Neighborhood Action Plan focuses on a target neighborhood surrounding the Dominican Center for Women, bounded by Center Street, Burleigh Street, 20th Street and 27th Street. Like much of the near north side, the community has experienced significant disinvestment over the past twenty years. However, existing neighborhood assets combined with the tireless efforts by community organizations have laid the foundation for neighborhood renaissance.

In recent years, the Dominican Center for Women (DCW) has served the Amani Neighborhood in varying capacities, from direct service provision for residents to housing and health program assistance. DCW, in partnership with Children's Hospital and the Amani Neighborhood, recently established the Amani Community Action Group (ACAG) to serve as a coalition of residents and partners to support neighborhood development.

This plan is prepared for the Dominican Center for Women with the intent to support their efforts in addressing neighborhood challenges and promoting sustained revitalization. Created during a semester-long Applied Planning Workshop at UWM's School of Architecture and Urban Planning, the plan may be used by DCW, neighborhood stakeholders and residents to help inform current and future efforts.

The Action Plan first offers a detailed snapshot of current conditions within the target neighborhood, including both assets and liabilities. The plan then outlines four focus areas identified by DCW during a public input meeting: Housing, Commercial and Economic Development, Public Safety, and Community and Youth Involvement. Individual chapters explore each focus area in depth, assess current conditions, provide details and objectives, and make specific recommendations for improvements.

Considering the Dominican Center for Women's current strengths and focus in housing, the plan provides a detailed Strategic Housing Implementation Plan following the four focus areas. The Implementation Plan outlines specific and time-bound steps for the Dominican Center for Women to implement a strategy for restoration and revitalization of the neighborhood's housing stock.

Planning for a community must always involve the most important stakeholders—its residents. The plan was researched and drafted under guidance from DCW leadership, staff and participating residents. Preliminary recommendations were then shared in a public participation event where the resulting conversations and comments were used to shape final recommendations for the plan.



INTRODUCTION

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



The Amani Neighborhood Action Plan is prepared for the Dominican Center for Women with the intent to support their efforts in addressing neighborhood challenges and promoting sustained revitalization of the community.

The mission of the Dominican Center for Women is to partner with the community to “maintain and enhance a beautiful, stable, healthy, and safe neighborhood consisting of residents who are community-minded and are striving to be meaningfully educated and employed.” Unfortunately, the Amani neighborhood is struggling with multiple challenges that have hindered the efforts of the mission, most notably: a deterioration of the built fabric and an excess of vacant and foreclosed homes; blighted commercial corridors and high levels of unemployment; significant rates of property and personal crime; and a lack of community involvement that highlights a disconnect between older and younger residents as well as residents and community organizations.

The Amani neighborhood, led by the Dominican Center for Women, is actively seeking more comprehensive support via programs and initiatives that will address these issues. The following action plan was created to serve as a stepping stone in that effort. The process of creating this plan included multiple stages and many supporters. After an initial client request, the project team began research and data collection. Team members attended community meetings and conducted informal interviews with residents, stakeholders, and DCW staff. After drafting their preliminary recommendations, team members sought public input for the plan. Once the public input information was recorded and used to shape recommendations, the final plan was drafted and presented to DCW in May 2012.

PLAN GOALS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

Goal: Maintain and enhance neighborhood stability by improving Amani housing stock.

Objective 1: Evaluate existing neighborhood housing stock.

Research Step 1.1: Generate inventory of current vacancies, neglected properties, and boarded-up homes.

Research Step 1.2: Identify existing new investments and stable pockets within neighborhood.

Objective 2: Identify strategies to address vacancies, board-ups, and neglected properties.

Research Step 2.1: Develop methodology for evaluating extent of need for individual property rehabilitation.

Research Step 2.2: Highlight properties that have greatest potential for successful rehabilitation.

Research Step 2.3: Research funding opportunities for housing improvements.

Research Step 2.4: Develop marketing strategy for homes within the Amani neighborhood.

Objective 3: Promote responsible ownership of residential properties and engage tenants of rental properties.

Research Step 3.1: Identify funding sources for assisting homeowner-occupied and rental rehabilitation projects.

Research Step 3.2: Research initiatives promoting responsible homeownership and property management.

Research Step 3.3: Identify possible barriers preventing utilization of outlined programs and initiatives.

Research Step 3.4: Provide recommendations for improving and expanding Dominican Center's home improvement programs.

COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Promote vibrant and sustainable commercial corridors within the Amani neighborhood.

Objective 1: Complete an analysis of existing conditions within the Amani commercial corridors.

Research Step 1.1: Generate a property inventory of existing businesses and vacant parcels within the corridor.

Research Step 1.2: Review City of Milwaukee plans to identify relevant information.

Research Step 1.3: Identify nearby major job centers connected to Amani and recent development projects in the neighborhood.

Objective 2: Identify potential opportunities for revitalization of commercial corridors.

Research Step 2.1: Ascertain catalytic sites with greatest potential for near-term redevelopment.

Research Step 2.2: Identify major stakeholders and prospects for potential support.

Objective 3: Develop viable strategies for sustainable commercial corridors.

Research Step 3.1: Outline strategies for attraction, retention, and incubation of local businesses.

Research Step 3.2: Brainstorm potential project types for recognized catalytic sites.

Research Step 3.3: Delineate strategies for addressing vacancies and overall corridor appearance.

PLAN GOALS

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Goal: Support a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood where everyone feels safe and welcome.

Objective 1: Identify crime hot spots and problem areas in the Amani Neighborhood.

Research Step 1.1: Conduct interviews with police, community members and partners to assess location of crime hot spots.

Research Step 1.2: Produce map of crime hot spots.

Objective 2: Identify successful neighborhood safety strategies and programs.

Research Step 2.1: Conduct interviews with Police and neighborhood safety leaders in Milwaukee

Research Step 2.2: Provide case studies of neighborhood safety best practices.

Objective 3: Provide recommendations for building a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood.

Research Step 3.1: Identify existing communication strategies between community partners and between community partners and neighborhood residents.

Research Step 3.2: Conduct interviews with community safety partners and neighborhood residents.

Research Step 3.3: Develop possible communication strategies between community partners.

Research Step 3.4: Develop strategy to notify neighborhood residents of upcoming meetings and community gatherings.

COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Identify methods for fostering a greater community role in Amani's revitalization, as well as participation and collaboration with the Dominican Center for Women.

Objective 1: Achieve greater community engagement by creating connections to existing programs that offer educational, employment, social, and recreational activities for the youth and families of the Amani Neighborhood.

Research Step 1.1: Identify existing programs for youth and families that are easily accessible to members of the community and provide contact information for each recommended program.

Research Step 1.2: Identify barriers to participation of identified existing programs and develop a strategy for overcoming those barriers.

Research Step 1.3: Develop and implement a marketing plan to connect residents with identified organizations.

Objective 2: Facilitate the creation of a community planning council responsible for holding monthly meetings where Amani residents, leaders, and advocates can come together.

Research Step 2.1: Identify key players that should serve as members of the community planning council.

Research Step 2.2: Develop a model for council governance and participation among residents and stakeholders.

Research Step 2.3: Develop a strategy to notify neighborhood stakeholders of upcoming meetings and community gatherings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



Purpose

Community input is vital to the success of any strategic plan. It is through gathering information from residents and community stakeholders that we are able to discuss and address the needs, values, and assets of any area. Effective conversation with Amani residents will provide insight into the heart and nature of the community and will provide legitimacy for the Amani Neighborhood Action Plan.

Many of the Amani residents have been actively involved by participating in numerous community events organized by DCW including First Saturday meetings, fundraisers, and the annual Amani neighborhood cleanup. Participation, however, is often by the same individuals, making it challenging to gather and analyze the full range of issues faced by Amani residents. It is with the help of participating residents that the plan's recommendations were drafted.

Methodology

Every first Saturday of the month, DCW hosts a community meeting where residents are invited to hear and discuss the problems of the community and ways to address them. UWM Graduate Students attended monthly meetings from February 2012 to May 2012 to hear these community conversations and gather information on what residents feel are the most critical areas of concern. From there, the plan's specific focus areas were identified and further analyzed.

Interviews with local organization leaders, community partners, and residents were conducted in an effort to gather detailed data on demographics, programing feasibility and fees, and strategies for developing models. A public meeting was then held on Saturday, April 21st, 2012 at the Dominican Center where recommended action steps around the four focus areas were presented to participating residents and stakeholders. The notes from the meeting were compiled and used to redevelop and enhance the plan's recommendations.

Public Engagement

The public meeting began with a brief introduction of the project's background and context. Guests were informed of the goals of the event as well as an explanation of what would be done with the information collected from residents. Participants, including about 20 residents, were divided into two groups with each group gathered at opposite sides of the meeting space. Graduate students served as facilitators and presented their findings and recommendations concerning public safety, community and youth involvement, housing, and commercial and economic development.

Half-hour segments were allotted for discussion of each topic. Discussions were lively and engaging in all the groups, and connections between residents were made. The meeting lasted about two hours and guests left full of excitement; motivated about possibilities for the neighborhood's future (See Appendix for detailed information on discussions as well as resident comments).



EXISTING CONDITIONS

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

This chapter examines the existing conditions of the Dominican Center target neighborhood. It includes a brief history, demographics, as well as physical conditions of the community. Demographics provide a summary of the neighborhood's population, households, and trends in housing. This information helps to acknowledge the social capital of the neighborhood as well as recognize challenges facing the neighborhood.



Neighborhood History

The neighborhood surrounding the Dominican Center had its early roots as fertile farmland located just outside of the urban fringe of developing Milwaukee. As Milwaukee expanded in population and affluence, roads were platted and new residential neighborhoods built. In 1897, streetcar service was extended to Center Street. Service was later extended to 17th Street and Hopkins Street as well as 27th Street. A 1930 Caspar's Map of Milwaukee shows the majority of the neighborhood within a three-mile radius of Milwaukee's City Hall. Streetcar service and advent of the automobile made the neighborhood a viable residential suburb connected to the City.

German-built wood framed duplexes were constructed around or shortly after the turn of the century. Northward, many bungalows were added to the mix of housing as blocks filled up in the 1920s and 1930s. Additionally, rail lines along the 30th Street corridor made the neighborhood a viable suburban industrial center. Many industrial companies, both large and infant, chose the corridor as a location for business. A.O. Smith, a company with beginnings pressing sheet metal into bicycle frames, was by 1910 the largest manufacturer of automobile frames in the world. A.O. Smith's famous research building, constructed in 1930 in the Art Deco style, once housed over 300 engineers. Neighborhood residents did not have to go far to major centers of employment, and residences and neighborhood-based businesses thrived.

Just as Milwaukee's industrial fortunes reached zenith in the 1960s and began to wane, so did the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor. The 1980s and 1990s saw significant disinvestment in north side neighborhoods as companies downsized or closed their doors. In 1997, A.O. Smith sold its automotive division in the 30th Street Corridor to Tower Automotive. After multiple rounds of significant layoffs, the plant finally closed its doors in the mid-2000s. Shortly after, this neighborhood-along with the City of Milwaukee and the entire country's housing market took a turn for the worse. The economic recession and financing woes hit vulnerable communities especially hard, with many foreclosures in Milwaukee's central city neighborhoods.

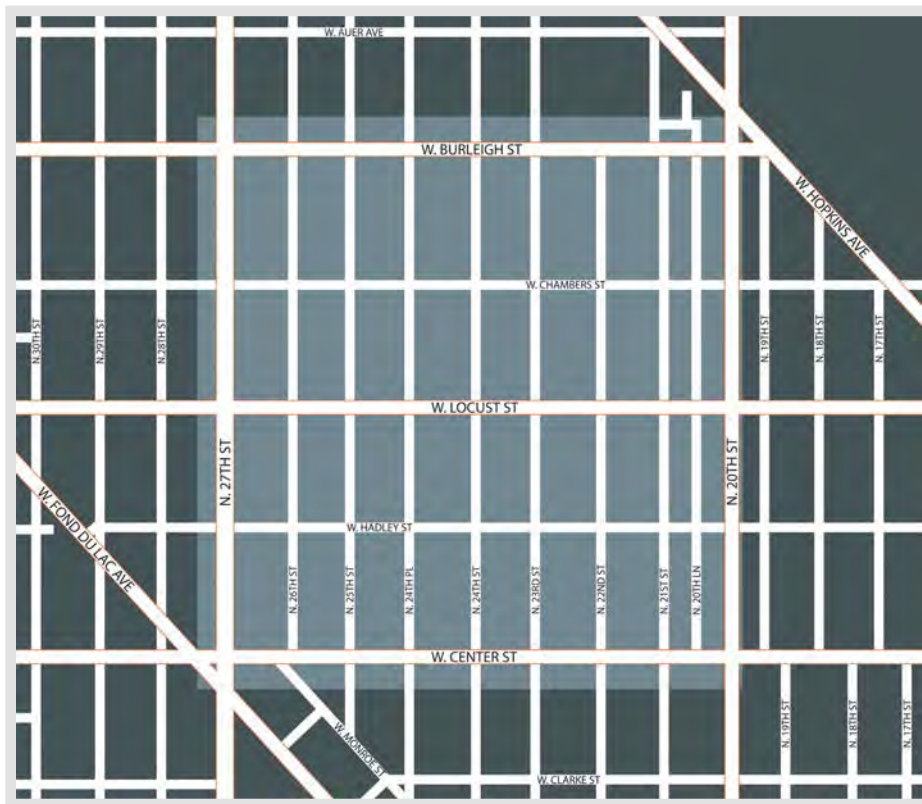
Context

Located in the Amani Neighborhood of Milwaukee, the Dominican Center target neighborhood is bounded on the south by Center Street, on the north by Burleigh Street, and 20th Street and 27th Street on the east and west, respectively. The neighborhood, roughly one-half square mile, is home to 6,041 residents in 1,921 households.

The neighborhood is located approximately ten to fifteen minutes northwest of downtown Milwaukee, and is adjacent to several well-known city neighborhoods, Sherman Park to the west and Lindsay Heights to the east. Major job centers are nearby as well; the neighborhood is immediately east of the 30th Street Industrial Corridor, and the RiverWorks Center and Menomonee Valley are within three miles. Commercial uses in the neighborhood are located primarily along the Center Street corridor, as well as corner stores located throughout the neighborhood.



Images of Center Street Corridor; Street condition in 1922 (left) and present day street condition (right)



DCW Amani Neighborhood Target Area Map - 20th St. to 27th St., Center St. to Burleigh St.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Neighborhood at a Glance

Boundaries: Center St. to Locust St., 20th St. to 27th St.	
Population	6,041
Number of Households	1,921
Median Household Income	\$23,935
Neighborhood Size	0.505 sq. mi.

Age Demographics

	0 to 17	18 to 34	35 to 64	65 Plus
DCW Target Neighborhood	33.2%	28.0%	30.3%	8.6%
City of Milwaukee	27.4%	29.3%	34.2%	9.1%

Age

In comparison, the neighborhood is younger than the City of Milwaukee. Youth under the age of 18 comprise one-third of the neighborhood's total population. The City of Milwaukee has just over one-quarter of its population under the age of 18.

Population by Race

At 95 percent, the neighborhood is predominately African American. Compared with the City of Milwaukee however, African Americans only make up 39 percent of the total population.



Educational Attainment

While more than 40 percent of the neighborhood's residents have completed high school, less than 4 percent have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, 21 percent of the City of Milwaukee's population has attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

Household Income

Currently, the median household income is \$23,935. More than 50 percent of households earn less than \$25,000 in a year, compared with 35 percent for the City of Milwaukee. However, there is some income diversity present in the neighborhood; almost four percent of households earn more than \$100,000 in a year.

Labor Force

Unemployment remains a challenge in the neighborhood. 32 percent of the neighborhood's working-age population is unemployed, in comparison to 12 percent across the entire City of Milwaukee. In absolute terms, this means approximately 675 residents are unemployed.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Housing Trends, 1995 - 2011

	1995	2005	2011
Residential Parcels	1,677	1,443	1,406
Homeownership Percentage	51.1%	51.5%	40.3%
Median Assessed Values			
Single Family	\$14,700	\$24,300	\$32,000
Duplex	\$17,300	\$35,200	\$42,900

Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

	Less than 20%	20% to 29%	30% or more
DCW Target Neighborhood	17.4%	9.6%	66.9%
City of Milwaukee	27.2%	23.4%	46.6%

Homeownership

Homeownership in the neighborhood plummeted between 2005 and 2011, dropping from 50 percent to 40 percent. Meanwhile, average assessments for both single family homes and duplexes rose over the same period.

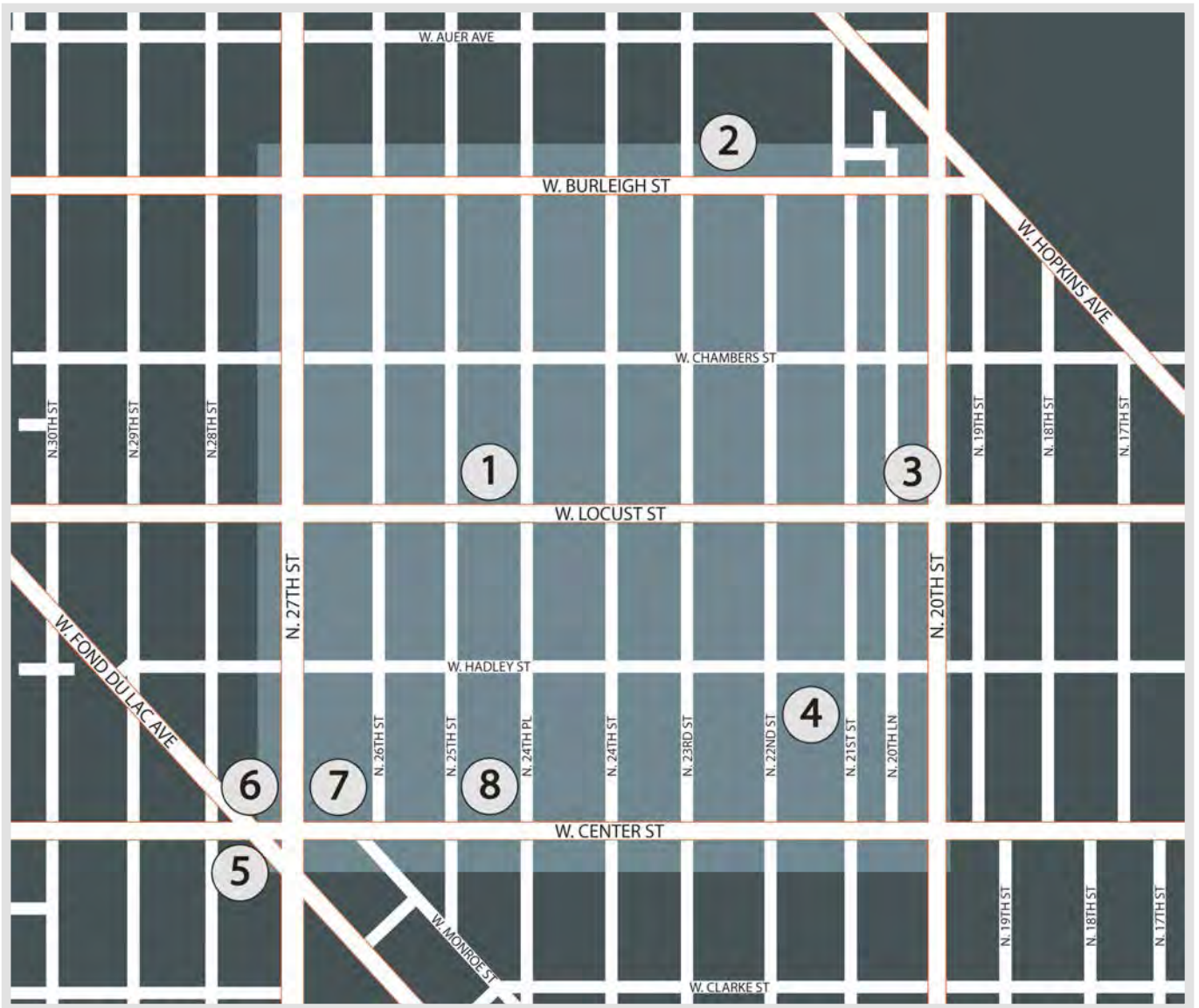
Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

For a household to be economically stable, housing costs should not exceed 30 percent of household income. However, a full 67 percent of households in the Amani neighborhood spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. This is in comparison to approximately 46 percent in the City of Milwaukee as a whole. When the burden of housing costs are high, spending in other areas tends to suffer.



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

- 1** **Dominican Center for Women (DCW)** - Lead community partner which seeks to enhance the safety, security, dignity, and economic self-sufficiency of members. DCW features programs for First Time Homeownership, Healthy Housing, Adult Education, and Senior Home Retention.
- 2** **COA Goldin Center/Nova School** – This complex features a COA Youth and Family Center which provides youth development, early education, after-school programs, family support services, and community services to the Amani neighborhood. The Nova Middle & High School is also located at the site.
- 3** **Bethesda Baptist Church** - A community partner and close collaborator with DCW on numerous neighborhood programs.
- 4** **Gwen T. Jackson Early Childhood and Elementary School** - A Reading Best Practices and model early childhood school which serves children as young as six weeks of age, through children in grade 5. The school also features an all-day kindergarten for 3 and 4 year olds and health care clinic on-site.
- 5** **Center Street Library** - This library features a children's story corner, small and large group meeting rooms, media and adult tutoring rooms, and a community technology center featuring laptop computers for public use in the library and a computer trainer assigned to provide customer service.
- 6** **Fond du Lac Center** - Recently constructed three-story affordable housing complex at the intersection of Fond du Lac Avenue and Center Street.
- 7** **Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum** - The historical society and museum features a learning center, events, and exhibits highlighting African American history in Wisconsin.
- 8** **United House** - United House Apartments are Milwaukee's first affordable supportive housing for persons experiencing mental illness.



DCW Amani Neighborhood Asset Map

Dominican Center for Women



FOCUS AREAS

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

Based on identified challenges and needs, the Amani Neighborhood Action Plan organizes a discussion of neighborhood revitalization and presents alternatives to promoting neighborhood improvement under four focus areas. The following chapters go in-depth into each of the four focus areas.

1

Housing and Neighborhood Stabilization

Goal: Maintain and enhance neighborhood stability by improving Amani housing stock.

Quality housing is undoubtedly a key component of quality of life, and provides stability to existing residents, as well as attracting diverse new residents to the neighborhood. Analysis of existing conditions reveal the Amani neighborhood to be hit especially hard by the housing troubles affecting every neighborhood in Milwaukee. Fortunately, the Dominican Center for Women is well positioned to leverage previous experience and initiatives to improve the neighborhood housing stock.

2

Commercial and Economic Development

Goal: Promote vibrant and sustainable commercial corridors within the Amani neighborhood.

A neighborhood is only strong when its residents are economically empowered. Economic empowerment means access to employment, as well as choices for nearby shopping. A neighborhood development strategy must support local businesses as well as address employment.

3

Public Safety and Crime Prevention

Goal: Support a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood where everyone feels safe and welcome.

Public safety is a vital component to neighborhood revitalization. Crime has far-reaching impacts beyond just the victims themselves. Crimes have an exponential effect on neighborhood perception, which is at the root of a person's decision to live, work, shop, or play in a given neighborhood. Currently, the Amani neighborhood is challenged with both incidences and perceptions of crime. Initiatives to reduce both the incidences and impact of crime must be a collective effort of many stakeholders including neighborhood residents, community partners, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

4

Community and Youth Involvement

Goal: Identify methods for fostering a greater community role in Amani's revitalization, as well as participation and collaboration with the Dominican Center for Women.

Community revitalization cannot be implemented by an isolated few, but rather must be a collective effort by diverse representatives by all segments of the community. Especially important is to address youth involvement, a group that makes up fully one-third of the neighborhood's population. By providing access to programs and activities for the youth today, we are investing in the community's future.

FOCUS AREAS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

1

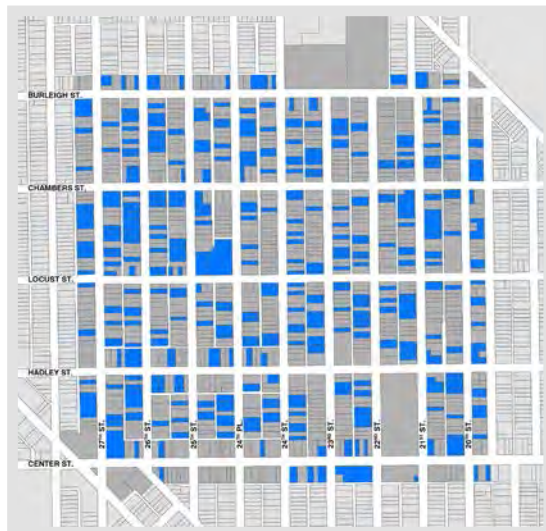


Introduction

The Amani neighborhood is afflicted with a concentration of problems perpetuated by the struggling housing market. The City of Milwaukee's central neighborhoods were hardest hit by the housing market collapse—a result of sub-prime and predatory lenders targeting the lower income families that reside there. More recently, the rise in foreclosures can be attributed to the generally poor economic condition of the region. Job scarcity and loss is causing homeowners that are usually capable of keeping up with their mortgage payments to default on their homes.

The increase in foreclosures is attributing to the loss of long-term Amani neighborhood residents that play a large role in maintaining stability on their blocks. Renters have also been affected, commonly facing eviction with short notice due to the rental property being foreclosed upon. The Amani neighborhood action plan is rooted in the promotion of responsible homeownership and informed renters that exercise their rights and responsibilities.

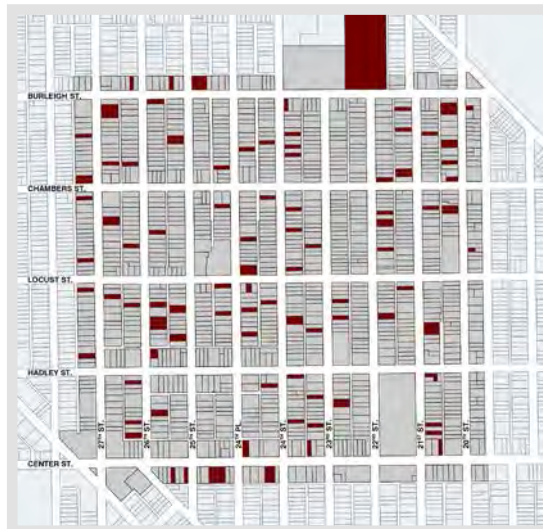
Owner-occupied
properties in target
area; 385 total



Why is housing the key to neighborhood stability?

Foreclosures and vacant properties pose many health risks and opportunities for crime within neighborhoods. The Amani neighborhood target area currently contains 107 boarded-up and vacant homes scattered throughout its blocks. The increase of foreclosures combined with a significant decrease in home sales and drop in home prices have led to an unmanageable amount of vacant and foreclosed properties throughout the City. Between the years 2007 and 2010, home sales in the City of Milwaukee had decreased by 70% and owner occupancy rates had decreased by 5.4%.

Boarded-up and abandoned properties within neighborhoods promote fire incidents and accrue numerous code and safety violations. These abandoned homes also decrease the property values of neighboring lots, reinforcing the difficulty of marketing the area. Proper preservation and rehabilitation of foreclosed and vacant homes within the Amani neighborhood will aid in minimizing their blighting influence on the area. These efforts will also increase neighborhood confidence and facilitate the Amani neighborhood's revitalization.



Boarded-up properties
in target area; 107 total



NO
PARKING
DUMPING
OR
HOODING

Goal: Maintain and enhance neighborhood stability by improving Amani housing stock.

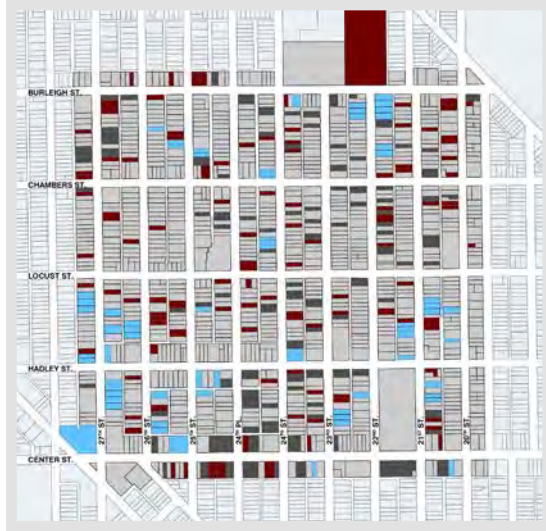
The current condition of the Amani housing stock is detrimental to the neighborhood's stability. The goal to attain neighborhood stability will consist of objectives and research steps that address a variety of issues contributing to the current status of the Amani housing stock. Recommendations will include the utilization of multiple resources and collaborative partners, but most importantly, it will include the engagement and participation of Amani neighborhood residents. The goal's purpose is to pursue a targeted approach that will result in neighborhood improvements that can be sustained over time as the housing market continues to recover.

Objective 1: Evaluate existing neighborhood housing stock.

Research Step 1.1: Generate inventory of current vacancies, neglected properties, and boarded-up homes.

The evaluation of the Amani housing stock began with a visual field survey that encompassed the entire target area. Every boarded-up or newly constructed home was accounted for, as well as the occurrence of razed lots.

The Amani focus area is bounded by 20th Street to 27th Street and Center Street to Burleigh Street. Within this section of the greater Amani neighborhood there are over 1,150 properties. As a result of the visual survey completed in March 2012, the study area was found to contain 107 currently boarded-up properties, 126 razed lots, and 67 newly constructed homes. Many of the nearly 800 remaining properties were also found to be in varying states of disrepair.



Visual Survey Results
map of target area
107 Board-ups
126 Vacant lots
67 Newly Constructed



Research Step 1.2: Identify existing new investments and stable pockets within the neighborhood.

The map to the right highlights the newly constructed homes in the Amani study area. Certain organizations have focused efforts in the Amani neighborhood in order to provide decent and affordable housing. The recently constructed homes represent the opportunity for vacant lots to be used for infill housing and for blocks to once again have complete street fronts.

One organization that has made significant strides in this effort is Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity. Upon speaking to the executive director, Brian Sonderman, Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity's intention of building seventeen more homes in the greater Amani neighborhood was brought to light. Since receiving funding from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program in 2010, Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity has been working toward building 100 homes in struggling neighborhoods throughout the City. Forty of these homes are intended to be built in Amani, with the final seventeen being constructed by the end of 2012.

Mr. Sonderman emphasized that it is hard to overcome the perception of an area when trying to bring in new homeowners. The Amani challenge, in his opinion, is to overcome that perception by ensuring safety, community involvement, and participatory neighbors.

Additionally, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) has directed efforts toward the Amani neighborhood. Over the years, WHEDA has allocated low income tax credits and funding to development teams that have helped bring new, affordable housing to the Amani neighborhood.



67 recently constructed properties in target area



WHEDA townhomes in Amani neighborhood

Objective 2: Identify strategies to address vacancies, board-ups, and neglected properties.

Research Step 2.1: Develop methodology for evaluating extent of need for individual property rehabilitation.

Problem properties have a blighting influence that diminish the quality of the neighborhood and can suppress efforts that aim to stabilize the area. Within the Amani neighborhood, numerous unmanaged vacant and foreclosed homes lower the marketability of the region and negatively affect neighboring property values. Milwaukee's new Vacant Building Code enacted in 2010 requires all owners to register their vacant property and ensure that the building is secure. Severely neglected properties can become health and safety hazards, especially when absentee owners do not maintain their vacant buildings. DCW can utilize the developed Rehab Scaling System to highlight problem properties and report potentially hazardous buildings to the City's Department of Neighborhood Services.

By developing a methodology for evaluating the extent of rehabilitation needed, the Amani neighborhood can identify structures that need to be inspected, demolished, significantly rehabbed, moderately rehabbed, or identify those that are ready to be marketed.

Research Step 2.2: Highlight properties that have greatest potential for successful rehabilitation.

The Rehab Scaling System developed for the Amani neighborhood has been tailored to address the existing conditions of homes located in the focus area. The spectrum used to gauge the extent of need for rehabilitation will be used to note code and safety violations, as well as work to identify homes with significantly needed rehab. When DCW is prepared to undertake the action steps outlined in this document's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan, the Rehab Scaling System developed will aid in assessing the amount of exterior rehabilitation needed on any property located in the Amani neighborhood. The complete Rehab Scaling System is provided in the Appendix.

<p>REHAB SCALING SYSTEM AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD TARGET AREA</p> <p>DOMINICAN CENTER FOR WOMEN STRATEGIC HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</p>																	
<p>VISUAL ASSESSMENT KEY:</p> <p>5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Fair 2 = Poor 1 = Critical</p>																	
<p>DATE OF ASSESSMENT: _____</p> <p>PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING UNIT: ___ 5 ___ 4 ___ 3 ___ 2 ___ 1</p>		<p>APPARENT OCCUPANCY STATUS:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED <input type="checkbox"/> VACANT <input type="checkbox"/> ABANDONED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SURE</p>															
<p>ROOF</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 (Very Good)</td> <td>4 (Good)</td> <td>3 (Fair)</td> <td>2 (Poor)</td> <td>1 (Critical)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>								5 (Very Good)	4 (Good)	3 (Fair)	2 (Poor)	1 (Critical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 (Very Good)	4 (Good)	3 (Fair)	2 (Poor)	1 (Critical)													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													
<p>GUTTERS</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 (Very Good)</td> <td>4 (Good)</td> <td>3 (Fair)</td> <td>2 (Poor)</td> <td>1 (Critical)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>								5 (Very Good)	4 (Good)	3 (Fair)	2 (Poor)	1 (Critical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 (Very Good)	4 (Good)	3 (Fair)	2 (Poor)	1 (Critical)													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													

Rehab Scaling System Snapshot. The target area used to develop the Rehab Scaling System is comprised of the blocks located between Locust Street and Burleigh Street, and 20th Street to 22nd Street. This area was chosen because it contains an adequate distribution of vacant lots, newly constructed homes, boarded-up properties, and occupied homes in varying states of disrepair.

Research Step 2.3: Research funding opportunities for housing improvements.

Funding opportunities for DCW's efforts to improve housing in the Amani neighborhood target area are outlined in the accompanying document, Strategic Housing Implementation Plan.

Research Step 2.4: Develop marketing strategy for homes within Amani neighborhood.

Through an existing partnership with the non-profit housing organization Allied Churches Teaching Self-empowerment (ACTS), DCW will regularly distribute "hot sheets" that advertise currently available homes in the Amani target area. The "hot sheets" will contain information on the listed properties and will provide contact information for the realtors selling the homes. In addition to the property descriptions, the "hot sheets" will include information on the services provided by ACTS. A sample "hot sheet" can be found in the Appendix.

Objective 3: Promote responsible ownership of residential properties and engage tenants of rental properties.

Research Step 3.1: Identify funding sources for assisting homeowner-occupied and rental rehabilitation projects.

Many homes in the study area of the Amani neighborhood are in need of some form of rehabilitation. Homes that are owner-occupied and in need of repair can qualify for certain rehabilitation assistance within the City of Milwaukee. Programs and organizations that aid in housing improvements and the correction of code violations are widely available to homeowners. Neighborhood stabilization is contingent on the quality of homes—homeowners need to be made aware of the opportunities available to them, as many of these programs exist solely for the purpose of improving Milwaukee's housing stock. Available programs are highlighted in the following section, and further specifications for each program can be found in the Appendix.

Energy Assistance and Weatherization

City of Milwaukee's Me2 Program

Rebates are available through the Milwaukee Energy Efficiency program after a home energy assessment is completed. Grants and financing are available for qualified homeowners to perform energy efficiency upgrades. The ME2 program aims to make home energy improvements affordable that will result in savings on home's energy bills.

La Casa de Esperanza

La Casa's Weatherization Program aids lower income families in identifying energy wastes and provides weatherization services for their homes. The program is provided through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program, and it is available at no cost to low-income owners and renters. La Casa also helps to enroll homeowners and renters that struggle with high energy bills in a Home Energy Assistance program.

Social Development Commission (SDC)

The SDC provides regular energy assistance as well as emergency replacement or repair of furnaces. The program is aimed to help low-income residents with their energy costs and provide other financial benefits.

Home Rehabilitation

WHEDA Home Improvement Loan Program

Residents that currently are eligible WHEDA homeowners are able to receive a loan of up to \$10,000 to direct toward home improvement. The loan can also be used to support energy updates and repairs that help make a home handicap accessible.

Amani Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN) Funding

The Department of City Development's Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC) created the Amani TIN to focus the City's funds and resources in a struggling part of the central city. The goal of the program is to encourage owner occupancy in neighborhoods and improve the overall appearance of the housing stock. Funds obtained through the program can be used for home repairs and updates. The Home Rehab program provides low interest and forgivable loans to low income home owners. The types of repairs covered in the program range from exterior improvements to energy conservation.

The Amani TIN also allows for investor owners to gain funding for the rehabilitation of rental units of properties located in the Amani neighborhood. The rental rehabilitation loan program primarily addresses repairs in code compliance. Tenants of these rental properties must be at low to moderate income levels.

Home Rehabilitation

NIDC Block Stabilization Program

The goal of the Block Stabilization Program is to attract responsible homeowners to neighborhoods through funding exterior home improvements for existing neighborhood residents. If a homeowner lives on a block that has two or more vacant and/or boarded foreclosed properties, they are able to apply for a matching grant from the City for up to \$500. Improvements made to the home are required to be visible from the curb in hopes to attract new homeowners to buy the vacant, foreclosed homes in the neighborhood.

NIDC Home/Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program

The NIDC offers assistance to low-income homeowners and responsible investors that have properties located within the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Block Grant Area. For homes that are located in the Amani neighborhood but do not fall within the Amani TIN boundaries, the NIDC rehabilitation loan program can still offer financial assistance to those who apply. The Home Rehabilitation Loan Program provides zero-interest and deferred payment rehab loans to low-income owner-occupants. The program focuses mainly on code-related work, but also allows some remodeling projects. A rehab specialist itemizes the work that needs to be done on a home after a thorough inspection of the property and produces a scope of work. The scope of work is then used to obtain bids from contractors. The technical assistance provided by the rehab specialist extends to periodic inspections that ensure the work being completed meets the program requirements.

Similar to the Home Rehabilitation Loan, the Rental Rehabilitation loan is a zero-interest opportunity for financial assistance. Responsible investor-owners are eligible for forgivable loans up to \$14,999 per unit. The owner must provide matching funds for whatever amount of rehab loan they receive, and are expected to meet code requirements and pass periodic re-inspections over five years. The owner must also be renting to lower-income families and rent cost must be capped at affordable rates. Technical assistance from a rehab specialist is also required, and just as with the home rehab loan, inspections will be done to ensure program requirements are met.

NIDC Homeowners Emergency Loan Program (HELP)

In the case of emergency repairs that could prevent a home from becoming uninhabitable, HELP is available to income-eligible owner-occupants residing anywhere in the City of Milwaukee. Emergency repairs covered are intended to help return a home to decent and safe conditions. The minimum loan provided is \$1,000 and the maximum is \$7,500 with a maximum loan term of five years.

Rebuilding Together Greater Milwaukee (RTGM) Home Repair Program

RTGM utilizes the help of volunteers to repair homes of low-income elderly or disabled residents. Once a home is chosen as a repair project, all improvements will be completed at no cost to the owner. Homeowners in Milwaukee that are income-eligible can apply for the program.

Lead Hazard Control

The median age of properties in the Amani neighborhood is 109 years. Over 900 of the 1,157 properties in the area were constructed before 1978. Homes that were built before 1978 may contain lead paint, and homes constructed before 1950 usually have the highest amounts of lead paint. Whenever areas containing lead based paint are disturbed during repairs or remodeling, it can be hazardous to young children if it is being done in an unsafe manner. The City of Milwaukee's Health Department has undertaken a lead poisoning prevention initiative that educates residents and provides funding for lead-safe home improvements.

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides an opportunity for eligible property owners to obtain funding for the abatement of lead based paint hazards in windows. The owner can select between making current windows lead-safe or elect to have vinyl replacement windows installed. The program is available to owners living in eligible properties and can also be used in rental properties, so long as the units are available to low-income tenants. Owners are required to use contractors that are listed on the City's MHD Certified Lead Abatement Contractor List.

Research Step 3.2: Research initiatives promoting responsible homeownership and property management.

Many resources are available for owner education throughout the City of Milwaukee. Programs and organizations were created in response to the sharp rise in foreclosures and the number of homes bought by individuals who were not completely informed on responsible homeownership or property management. The City of Milwaukee and numerous organizations have partnered to provide workshops and counseling services that aim to educate homeowners and prevent foreclosures. Not enough homeowners are seeking help, and those close to foreclosure are not seeking preventative counseling services early in the process.

It is important for residents of the Amani neighborhood to be made aware of programs available to them and be encouraged to partake in the offered activities. The initiatives outlined in the following section are available to homeowners, future homebuyers, and rental property owners all throughout the City of Milwaukee. Additional information regarding each opportunity is provided in the Appendix.

Take Root Milwaukee

Soon after the collapse of the housing market, the City of Milwaukee and partnering organizations created the Milwaukee Foreclosure Partnership Initiative (MFPI) to address the foreclosure crisis. The goal of the initiative was to find a way to slow the rapidly increasing rate of foreclosure filings. Professionals throughout the housing sector discussed the problem and developed multiple strategies for the City to implement. One product of the MFPI was Take Root Milwaukee. The purpose of Take Root is to “preserve and promote sustainable, diverse neighborhoods by encouraging and maintaining homeownership”. This is intended to be accomplished through the participation of local organizations working together toward addressing the challenges and opportunities in homeownership.



Several opportunities for homeowners to gain information and resources regarding responsible homeownership and foreclosure prevention are provided through Take Root programs. Highlighted below are some of the active Take Root participant organizations and the services they offer regularly through the Take Root Initiative:

Select Milwaukee

- o Financial Wellness Workshops
- o Homebuyer Orientations
- o Foreclosure Prevention
- o Mortgage Check-up Workshops

Career Youth Development

- o First-time Homebuyer Program, Workshop Series
- o Financial Assessments
- o One-on-One Counseling

United Community Center

- o Homebuyer Seminars
- o Mortgage Pre-Qualification
- o Grant Information

Housing Resources, Inc.

- o Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
- o Homebuyer Education Classes
- o Workshop Series, "Homeworks for Homebuyers"

Landlord Training

The City of Milwaukee offers training for landlords that teaches them the fundamental ways to prevent illegal activity from occurring within their property. The classes are free and frequently offered throughout the year. The goal of the program is to promote responsible property management through prevention of violations and applicant screening, drug nuisance abatement, and knowledge of community resources.

Research Step 3.3: Identify possible barriers preventing utilization of outlined programs and initiatives.

During the community engagement portion of the planning process, residents were asked about barriers and obstacles that would prevent them from utilizing these programs and initiatives. There was a general consensus among the residents present that they were fairly aware of most programs' existence, only they do not always know how to get to them. Also, they noted that other neighborhood residents that would most benefit from these offered services will not be aware of these programs unless they are directly engaged. A common theme of "one-on-one" or "door-to-door" was repeated. Residents present at the meeting believe other neighborhood residents will not seek the help they need because they are largely unaware of programs available and feel they do not qualify.

Additionally, there is the added obstacle that most of the available programs related to housing require all taxes on one's home to be up to date and that there are no current open violations on the property. This is an added difficulty for Amani residents, as nearly 20% of the properties in the project's focus area are currently tax delinquent. Challenging administrative and documentation requirements can also discourage program participation, and in most cases, once benefits are secured many residents do not take full advantage of all services available.

Research Step 3.4: Provide recommendations for improving and expanding Dominican Center's home improvement programs.

Recommendation #1: DCW coordinates a Housing Survey of the Amani neighborhood target area.

Rationale: *In order to highlight problem properties and take action against their neglectful owners, DCW can undertake a housing survey that will call out violations or deteriorating conditions of homes in the neighborhood. Once code or safety violations have been noted, owners can be contacted to correct the violations. If an owner does not cooperate or take any action, DCW can coordinate with the City's Department of Building Inspection to conduct building inspections and enforce code compliance. This Housing Survey process is modeled after the housing survey guide compiled by the Sherman Park Community Association and the City of Milwaukee Department of Building Inspection, which is provided in the Appendix.*

DCW Action Item: DCW is recommended to revive the once active Housing Committee. Once a Housing Committee is reestablished, the committee should decide which blocks of the DCW's Amani neighborhood target area will be surveyed. The Housing Committee should decide what are the most vital repairs and violations they will be looking for. The survey check-list should be created and kept to an understandable level.

DCW Action Item: Garner neighborhood resident interest. DCW's revived Housing Committee can coordinate participation among residents. Information sessions can be held on the purpose and goals of a neighborhood housing survey and resident volunteers can be acquired. Based on the number of resident participants, the Housing Committee will further specify the area to be surveyed and choose a date/time that will best accommodate the scope of the survey. Routes should be prioritized, and packets containing maps, the survey check-list, and directions should be organized.

DCW Action Item: Contact the City's Building Inspection to alert them to DCW's Housing Survey. On the day of the survey, a representative from the City might be available to make a presentation that can further educate resident volunteers on housing problems. At the end of the survey day, inspection check-lists will be collected and analyzed. Sample letters have been provided in the Appendix for alerting owners of properties to violations, safety issues, and needed repairs. Addresses for owners can be found using the City's Master Property Record; however, some properties' listed owner may no longer be accurate. The time interval for correcting issues and violations must be sensible, but it should also be stressed that the City will be asked to inspect the property if no action is taken.

DCW Action Item: At the end of the work interval given to correct violations, a resurvey of the target area should be done. Only the properties that were highlighted should be revisited, and volunteers should be informed on what specifically to look for. The City's Building Inspection has determined that each neighborhood may refer up to 20 properties for follow up inspections. Once the enforcement process has begun with the City's Building Inspection, time for compliance varies for each property, but it is important that the process enforcing housing improvements has begun.

Recommendation #2: DCW holds a Resource Fair for neighborhood residents.

Rationale: *A recurring theme during the conversations with neighborhood residents is the lack of awareness of programs and initiatives available. Residents would be more likely to take advantage of resources if they were alerted to the opportunities.*

DCW Action Item: Contact the organizations listed in the Appendix of this document that provide services for homeowners, rental tenants, and rental property owners. Coordinate with the organizations to obtain informational materials that can be distributed at the resource fair or give opportunity for the organization to send a representative.

DCW Action Item: Partner with organizations that hold orientations and educational workshops regarding finances, homeownership, property management, and foreclosure prevention. Work to coordinate workshop sessions that can be held for Amani neighborhood residents at DCW during resource distributing events.

Recommendation #3: Adopt Neighborhood Behavior Guidelines.

Rationale: *In order to continue the significant effort toward neighborhood stabilization, DCW should encourage its target area residents to partake in the creation of neighborhood behavior guidelines. The guidelines can act as a tool to promote a healthy neighborhood environment while creating a sense of pride for Amani residents. The behavior guidelines can also outline procedures for reporting and preventing neighborhood nuisances, enforcing the notion of community based standards. Sample neighborhood guidelines have been provided in the Appendix.*

DCW Action Item: Consult with target area residents to identify major or recurring issues throughout the neighborhood. Compile list of common nuisances and methods of addressing them. Create final list of ten to fifteen guidelines that include the most concerning behavior nuisances in the neighborhood. The overall goal of the guidelines should be to promote: the upkeep of homes, responsible landlords, the reporting of nuisances and violations, a healthy atmosphere for seniors and children, and neighborhood pride.

DCW Action Item: Adopt neighborhood behavior guidelines and exercise through awareness. As a representative organization for the community, DCW can ask that the residents of the Amani target area acknowledge the guidelines and follow recommended reporting of suspicious activity and nuisances.

FOCUS AREAS

COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2



Introduction

A look at Amani's history shows that the neighborhood established itself as a vibrant residential community in tandem with the growth of its businesses. The Amani neighborhood supported small businesses on its main streets, and offered residences to workers in the nearby industrial corridor. It is no surprise that the struggles of the homes and families in the neighborhood have come about with the demise of those same businesses. A plan for revitalizing the Amani neighborhood therefore must also include strategies for economic development.

In order to promote vibrant and sustainable commercial corridors within the Amani neighborhood, it is necessary to have an in-depth understanding of the historic and existing conditions of the neighborhood's commercial areas, as well as identifying recent developments that play an important role in the community. Additionally, several of the City of Milwaukee's plans address the future of the neighborhood. Within this context, the Amani Neighborhood Action Plan makes recommendations for DCW's role in the transformation of the neighborhood's commercial corridors.

Why is commercial and economic development important?

A neighborhood is only strong and sustainable when its residents are economically empowered. Economic empowerment means both access to employment options and neighborhood shopping choices. A neighborhood development strategy must therefore support local business development as well as address employment for its residents.

Goal: Promote vibrant and sustainable commercial corridors within the Amani neighborhood.

Objective 1: Complete an analysis of existing conditions within the Amani commercial corridors.

Existing Conditions

A complete database of properties along the Center Street corridor in between 20th Street and 27th Street is included in the appendix.

An analysis of traffic patterns in the neighborhood and surrounding area shows that the DCW target neighborhood's main corridors are considered "minor arterials" based on the number of cars that pass during any given day. Minor arterials running east to west include Center Street, Locust Street, and Burleigh Street; minor arterials running north to south include 20th Street and 27th Street. Of all arterials, the Center Street corridor is the most active and most connected to surrounding areas. However, the North Avenue corridor is the main commercial corridor for the near north side, which limits what Center can attract. Consequently, Center Street is considered a neighborhood district. Plans for this portion of Center Street should focus on developing neighborhood shopping and residential infill in a "string of pearls" pattern.

"String of Pearls" – This concept is used to describe a mixed-use residential and commercial corridor with intense commercial nodes. Nodes are on Center Street at Teutonia Avenue and 27th Street / Fond du Lac Avenue. In between these nodes, the corridor is characterized by a significant number of blighted and/or vacant properties, intermixed with a few neighborhood businesses, many religious or institutional uses, and residential properties. The 27th Street / Fond du Lac Avenue node is very active in both vehicular traffic (21,900 cars per day on Fond du Lac Avenue), pedestrian activity, and public transit (1,800 bus transfers per day).

Center Street Corridor, By the Numbers

Boundaries: Center St., 20th St. to 27th St.	
Number of parcels	76
Average parcel size	0.3 Acres
Number of church-owned parcels	13
Number of vacant parcels (no structures)	17
Total land area	22.8 acres
Blighted land area	17 %
Parking lots	4 %
Church-owned	20 %
Median assessed value, commercial properties (13 improved)	\$227,000

Images of Center Street Corridor; 1956 area map (top) and present day area map (bottom)



Recent Catalytic Projects in the Center Street Corridor

United House – Completed in 2008, this 24-unit housing development provides housing plus support services for the mentally ill. Additional phases have been applied for under WHEDA's LIHTC program.



United House Christian Center, a 24-unit supportive housing development.

Fond du Lac Center – Completed in 2007, this mixed-use development features 24 housing units above 5,000 feet of retail space. It completes a multi-phase redevelopment effort at the Center Street / Fond du Lac Avenue node, at the southwest corner of the Amani neighborhood focus area.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Below are some excerpts from two City-adopted development plans with relevance to the Amani neighborhood.

Northeast Side Area Plan (Adopted 2004)

Commercial Goals

- o Create successful retail destinations that utilize existing commercial land and infrastructure.
- o Enhance the marketability of commercial districts to promote economic stability and growth.
- o Create revitalized neighborhood shopping streets and commercial corridors using the “Main Street” approach to redevelopment: organization, preservation, economic restructuring, marketing and promotion, and streetscape design.

Recommendations, excerpts:

- o Additional commercial development should strive to improve the overall appearance of commercial districts throughout the neighborhood with improved building facades, better identification of the area and removal of blighted properties; specific commercial districts, i.e. Lisbon Avenue/Walnut Avenue and North Avenue should develop a strategy to attract a mix of both large and small businesses that draw from a broad geographic market area.
- o The buildings included unique signage, awnings, windows facing the street and landscaping along the street or parking lot.
- o “Green” the corridor, especially at key points where the general public passes through the corridor, i.e. North Avenue and Center Street.
- o No chain-link fences should be allowed. Ornamental iron fences are preferred, with landscaping located in front of the fence to soften its appearance.
- o Blank walls next to the street or sidewalk are strongly discouraged.
- o Establish Neighborhood Conservation Districts as a way of helping special districts establish and maintain their own urban, architectural and landscape character.
- o In land use decisions requiring public support, new taxable uses are preferred over new non-taxable uses, unless a strong case can be made that the nontaxable use supports the surrounding tax base or spurs economic development.
- o Two-story (or two-story plus attic) single family and duplex detached units create the predominant residential pattern for traditional Milwaukee neighborhoods, with multi-family units clustered around commercial corridors. New construction should continue and reinforce this established pattern.

30th Street Corridor Economic Development Master Plan (Adopted 2011)

Small Business Development Zone: The Small Business Development Zone is bounded on the north by Locust Street, by Lloyd Avenue on the south, on the east by 32nd Street and 33rd Street, and on the west by 30th Street and Capitol Stampings. While this zone includes some large employers, such as Capitol Stampings and Master Lock, it is closely hemmed in by residential uses on either side, and parcel dimensions are inappropriate for modern larger-scale business uses.

Given the proximity of residential uses and lack of sites for large operations, this zone seems most suitable for start-ups and other small businesses that can benefit from the proximity to larger operations to the north as well as low-cost real estate in existing buildings that may be suitable to small business use. Where appropriate, adaptive reuse of existing buildings could provide relatively inexpensive space for small enterprises.

In addition, the portion of the zone on the south side of North Avenue could be redeveloped as commercial to support and continue the revitalization of the avenue to the east and west of the zone. It is currently occupied by several vacant and underutilized lots. Transitioning the area to more active uses would bolster surrounding employers and increase the area's attractiveness to small businesses.



Large scale industrial redevelopment zone: The Large Scale Industrial Redevelopment Zone is bounded on the north by Townsend Street, on the south by Locust Street, and by 30th Street on the east. Its western boundary runs on 35th Street between Townsend and Concordia, then on 33rd Street until Burleigh, where it doglegs around 34th Street to Fond du Lac. This zone has a high concentration of sites that are used for recycling or are underutilized or vacant. Land use conflicts are also a major concern, with residences directly abutting industrially zoned land. In addition, preservation of viable industrial land for industrial use is an important economic development goal given the loss of industrially zoned land in recent years. The recommendations for this zone center on improving its overall appearance and functionality through the enforcement of appearance, building and maintenance codes, and minimizing land use conflicts through buffering, strategic rezoning. Over the longer term, the City should work to encourage opportunistic or private assembly of viable development sites and the gradual replacement or upgrade of street infrastructure to serve modern industrial sites.

Coordinate with the Building Inspection Department for appropriate enforcement for both grandfathered and new businesses. Over time, installation of residential buffers and parking lot screening, combined with enforcement to meet use provisions in the zoning code.

However, if volumes were to increase and become a nuisance, particularly toward the residential zone at the south end of the corridor, the City might consider diverting truck traffic off 27th and 35th Streets. Traffic calming and conducive signalization would route truck traffic along east/ west arterials.

Objectives 2 & 3: Identify potential opportunities for revitalization of the corridors & Develop viable strategies for sustainable commercial corridors.

For these two objectives, this report provides specific recommendations and their respective rationales on how to begin revitalization of the Amani neighborhood's commercial corridors. In addition, the report provides the Dominican Center for Women with specific action items in order to address each of the recommendations.

Recommendation #1: Promote enforcement of the City of Milwaukee's recommendation of tax base ownership on commercial corridors.

Rationale: *Currently, 4.5 acres, or 20 percent of the land area in the Center Street Corridor is occupied by non-taxable entities (excluding City-owned properties). Additional tax exclusions will reduce the Corridor's long-term sustainability by reducing the amount of revenue the City may generate. Taxes on commercial properties contribute to supporting general maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and business support initiatives in the corridor. A healthy business corridor needs a healthy tax base.*

DCW Action Item: Submit a policy recommendation letter to the City of Milwaukee requesting that no additional parcels on Center Street be allowed to be redeveloped for parking as a primary use. Rows of buildings with few parking lots maintain overall walkability of the corridor as well as enhance the visual appeal.

DCW Action Item: Keep abreast of property requests in the neighborhood. Request that the City redirect new 501(c)3 property ownership to large parcels or combinable contiguous parcels on feeder streets, or in existing neighborhood developments.

Recommendation #2: Lobby for and support aesthetic improvements to publicly-owned properties in the neighborhood.

Rationale: While budgets are constrained in the current economic recession, governmental entities still have the responsibility of being stewards in Milwaukee's communities. Additionally, public investment often times spurs growth in the private sector. Schools and City-owned vacant properties must be maintained to a high standard to bolster neighborhood appearance and marketability.

DCW Action Item: Establish a committee or assign designated staff member to monitor appearance of vacant properties in the neighborhood. Committee and/or staff member may interface with the Department of City Development, the Department of Public Works, and Milwaukee Public Schools to improve and maintain public property in the neighborhood.

DCW Action Item: Lobby and work with Milwaukee Public Schools to implement landscape improvements along Gwen T. Jackson Elementary School's Center Street property boundary. Landscape improvements could include replacement of the chain link fencing with decorative metal fencing, new trees, shrubbery and perennials, and improved school signage. Consider a project partnership with the Milwaukee Job Corps Center, which has a training program for both welding and masonry. Overall landscape overhauls featuring stormwater gardens and improved playgrounds have been completed at Lloyd Street Elementary and Brown Street Elementary.

DCW Action Item: Lobby and work with the Department of City Development to clean up and market prominent, vacant City-owned lots. Cleanup should include the removal of sucker trees, accumulated trash, and reseeding. A marketing initiative to the corridor can be modeled after a similar initiative on North Avenue in the Bronzeville neighborhood, where branded signage indicating development opportunities was installed.

DCW Action Item: Work with the Department of City Development to develop a neighborhood-based contract for landscape maintenance and snow removal of City-owned vacant lots in the neighborhood. DCW may partner with existing contractors or neighborhood organizations with the capacity to perform the work to standard, with a priority for hiring neighborhood youth.

Recommendation #3: Address the appearance of privately-owned vacant properties. Promote enforcement of the City of Milwaukee's recommendation of tax base ownership on commercial corridors.

Rationale: *Private property owners also have the responsibility of being stewards and maintaining their properties to a high standard. The City of Milwaukee has established policies and enforcement to support the upkeep of properties with the goal of maintaining neighborhood aesthetics. Additionally, neighborhood beautification, in the form of landscaping, neighborhood gardens and art installations, add to the aesthetic of the neighborhood and improve perception both within and outside the community.*

DCW Action Item: Establish a committee or assign designated staff member to monitor appearance of vacant properties in the neighborhood. Committee and/or staff member may interface with the Department of Neighborhood Services and/or private landowners to improve and maintain private property in the neighborhood. Using City design guidelines and code, DCW may request enforcement of non-compliant properties from DNS.

DCW Action Item: Partner with religious-affiliated organizations on the Center Street Corridor to implement an "adopt-a-block" program. Assigned groups or organizations become stewards of specific blocks and pledge to periodically clear them of litter and debris, and engage in small-scale beautification projects where possible.

DCW Action Item: Seek grant funding for neighborhood beautification initiatives. Milwaukee Urban Gardens supports the establishment of urban gardens in the City. Additionally, the City's Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC) has matching funds of up to \$3,000 for neighborhood beautification under the Community Improvement Project (CIP).

DCW Action Item: Initiate necessary partnerships to create a large-scale mural at the four-story building at 2461 W. Center Street. The mural can be created to depict neighborhood history, culture, and / or a source of community pride. A successful large-scale mural can be found on Milwaukee's south side at Esperanza Unida.

DCW Action Item: Partner with In:Site Milwaukee to install temporary art displays in vacant storefronts or on board-ups along important corridors in the neighborhood (Center Street, Locust Street, Burleigh Street).

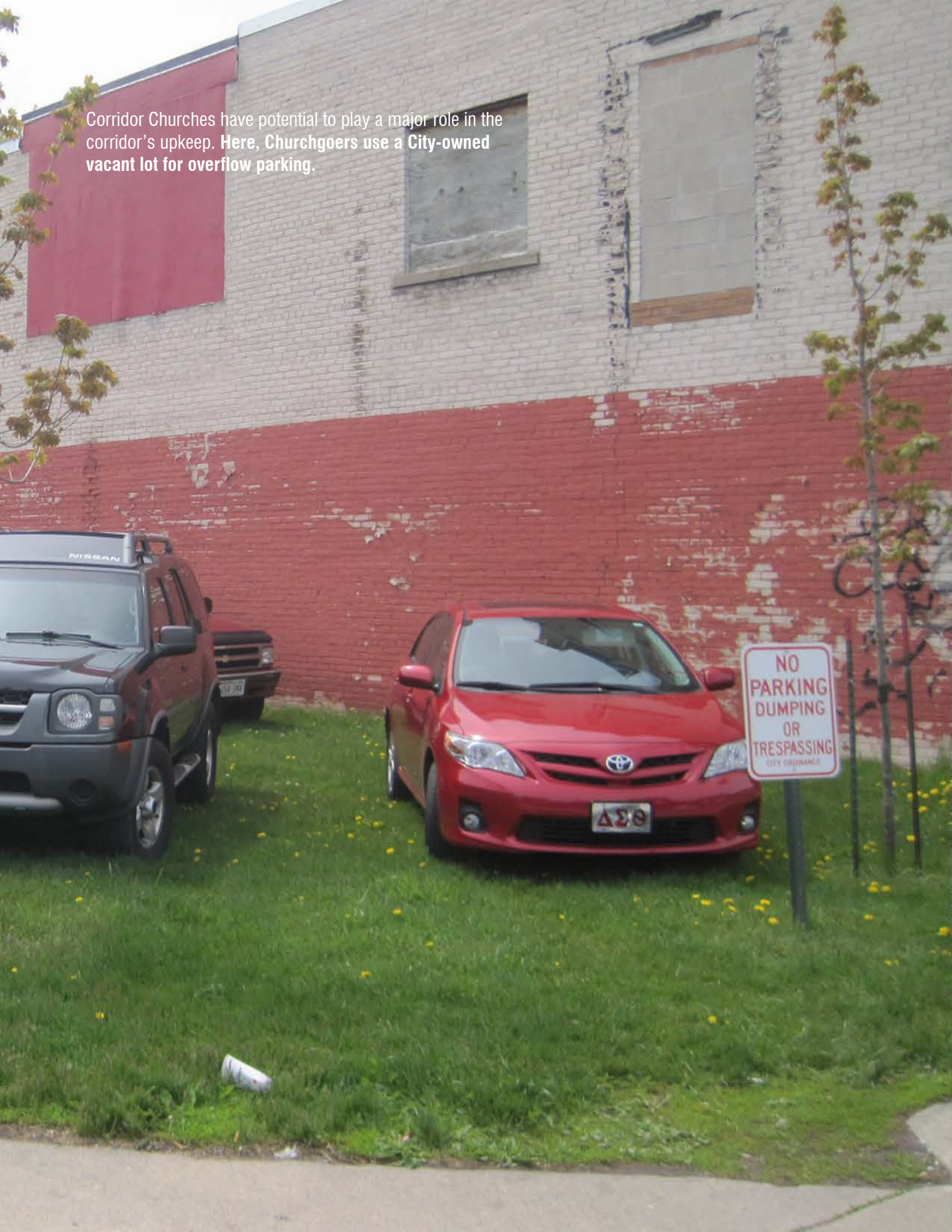
Recommendation #4: Support the development of infill housing initiatives along the Center Street Corridor.

Rationale: *Center Street is the main corridor of the DCW target neighborhood, because of its connectivity to both the east and west sides of the City. Passing traffic may not venture into the neighborhood; therefore, Center Street may be the only indicator of neighborhood health to many viewers. Because perception is a major factor in demand for housing and businesses, DCW should support a concentrated investment to upgrade properties, construct infill and develop multifamily housing on the Center Street corridor. A focus on multifamily housing is key—development of single family infill housing should occur within the residential neighborhoods that anchor the Center street corridor north of the street.*

DCW Action Item: Lobby the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee to construct infill housing on two HACM-owned lots on the 2000 block of Center Street (2021, 2015 W. Center St.). At present, four of the six lots have no housing addressing Center Street. Two additional houses on the block will anchor the center of the block and encourage investment on the two privately-owned out-lots. Consider connecting with existing nearby tenants and property owners to better understand and promote demand for the housing.

DCW Action Item: Use the Rehab Scaling System to conduct a housing survey of vacant properties along corridor. Develop action plan to address most pressing properties. Work with existing homeowners to connect them to housing resources (this process is outlined in depth in the Strategic Housing Action Plan).

Corridor Churches have potential to play a major role in the corridor's upkeep. Here, Churchgoers use a City-owned vacant lot for overflow parking.





Examples of multifamily infill projects that would fit in with the **existing character of the Center Street corridor.**

DCW Action Item: Provide community support for mixed-use, multifamily infill developments on the Center Street corridor. Currently, two sites on the corridor are available for large-scale infill development: the 2100 block (south) and the 2400 block (north) of W. Center Street. While the 2100 block has been acquired by a faith-based LLC, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee owns a majority stake in the 2400 block. Examples of successful mixed-use multifamily infill projects include King Drive Commons (I, II and III) and Franklin Square / Teutonia Gardens. Many projects are financed using WHEDA's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, which scores applications using criterion for community involvement and support.

Recommendation #5: Support improvement of existing neighborhood businesses.

Rationale: *Supporting neighborhood businesses is important for multiple reasons. First, existing business improvement offers gains in the immediate term, in comparison to business attraction or incubation. Secondly, it encourages investment in the neighborhood, creating jobs and enhancing overall neighborhood aesthetic and appearance. Finally, active and engaged businesses can become strong program and development partners.*

DCW Action Item: Work with the Department of City Development to offer Façade Improvement Grants to small businesses in the neighborhood. Façade Improvement Grants are available City-wide to commercially-zoned taxpaying properties. Establish a working partnership with Community Design Solutions at UWM's School of Architecture and Urban Planning to offer businesses free or discounted design services. DCW may initiate outreach efforts with three existing businesses at 2024, 2229, and 2405 W. Center Street.

DCW Action Item: Partner with the Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Health Alliance (LHNHA) to extend the Lindsay Heights Corner Store Initiative to Am-ani corner stores. The Initiative helps store owners to offer healthy consumer options to its patrons, as well as support other business concerns, such as marketing, safety and security, and energy efficiency. It is important to work with willing store owners to begin the program.



DCW Action Item: Establish partnerships with area Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). A property inventory of the corridor reveals insufficient tax base available to support creation of a BID within the DCW focus neighborhood. Partner with neighboring BIDs to offer services to existing businesses within the neighborhood. Long term, explore expanding BID 32 boundaries to include assessed parcels on Center Street two blocks east and west of the Center Street / 27th Street / Fond du Lac Avenue node. Expansion of an existing BID requires an amendment to the BID's Operating Plan by the Common Council (Sec. 66.1109(3)(b)).

Recommendation #6: Establish strategic partnerships with economic stakeholders in and near the neighborhood.

Rationale: *Many hands make light work. DCW may leverage their impact by partnering with stakeholders whose mission is directly aligned with economic development of the neighborhood.*

DCW Action Item: Establish partnership with the 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation to market homeownership and health initiatives in the Amani neighborhood to existing and new employers in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. Models of existing programs include a walk-to-work marketing effort between the Menomonee Valley Partners and the Silver City Townhomes development, the Harley Davidson employee homeownership initiative in Washington Park, and St Joseph's Hospital employee rental housing.

DCW Action Item: Offer a transitions-to-work program for neighborhood residents. DCW may serve as an intake site, offering education to residents regarding training and employment opportunities that are available. DCW may also facilitate resident access to these programs. DCW should consider partnering with local training organizations (MCSC, MAWIB, Northcott Neighborhood House) to promote job opportunities for graduates with construction firms working on DCW's housing initiatives.

Recommendation #7: Lobby for and support infrastructure improvements as well as commercial development at the 27th Street / Center Street / Fond du Lac business node.

Rationale: *As mentioned in the existing conditions section, the Center Street / Fond du Lac node presents the greatest potential for commercial development, with an opportunity of becoming a neighborhood shopping destination. However, additional actions by the City of Milwaukee are required in order for the site to reach its potential.*

DCW Action Item: Lobby the City Department of Public Works to improve the intersection at 27th and Center. Traffic configuration and intersection design inhibit pedestrian crossing between significant public facilities on the east and west sides of Center Street. The City's Area Plan calls for this intersection to be reconfigured to improve pedestrian friendliness.

DCW Action Item: Support rezoning to allow commercial expansion around the commercial node at 27th Street and Center Street. Currently, parcels are zoned residential immediately east of 27th Street. As the City considers rezones for commercial development, DCW may provide neighborhood support. In this manner, the 27th and Center node can develop into a neighborhood shopping destination.

Notable aesthetic improvements can help **stimulate development** along Amani's commercial corridors.



FOCUS AREAS

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

3



Introduction

The feeling of safety and security has a significant impact on the quality of life of residents and their families in any neighborhood. Night or day, inside the house or along the street, Amani residents should feel safe from harm. Residents should be able to walk the dog or let their children play in the yard without fear of crime. However, crime and nuisance problems leave families concerned about living in the neighborhood and elicit a negative perception of the neighborhood.

The visible impact of crime significantly affects residents living where incidents occur. Human and drug trafficking, property crime, high-speed driving on Locust, and vehicle theft all contribute to residents feeling unsafe in their neighborhood. In order to build a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood, residents and community partners must collectively address neighborhood crime and nuisance issues. Initiatives to reduce both the incidences and impact of crime must be a collective effort of many stakeholders including neighborhood residents, community partners, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

Why is public safety important?

Crime has far-reaching impacts beyond just the victims themselves. Crimes have an exponential effect on neighborhood perception, which is at the root of a person's decision to live, work, shop, or play in a given neighborhood. Currently, the Amani neighborhood is challenged with both incidences and perceptions of crime, affecting the neighborhood's marketability and cohesion.

Goal: Support a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood where everyone feels safe and welcome.

Objective 1: Identify crime hot spots and problem areas in the Amani neighborhood.

Existing Conditions

The Amani neighborhood is located within Milwaukee Police District 5 and is one of the higher crime areas within the City of Milwaukee. Data from March 2011 - March 2012 reveal higher crime percentages relative to the City of Milwaukee, and double the rates of assaults, burglary, robbery, theft, and vehicle theft. Residents also see evidence of drug trafficking along the street, in alleys, and around local corner stores.

In addition, in community meetings and interviews, residents noted that homes with overgrown yards and abandoned homes often serve as the locus for illegal activities. Lastly, residents expressed concerns about the speed of traffic on Locust Street. Several initiatives have been recently implemented to address the issue, such as the installation of a speed tower; however, concerns must be continually expressed to local aldermen and safety officials in order to see marked improvement and change.

District 5 Crime Statistics March 2011-2012	District 5	City of Milwaukee
	Per 1000 Residents	Per 1000 Residents
Total Summary WBR for specific group A offenses	153.09	100.05
Assault Offenses	35.66	19.15
Arson	1.21	0.67
Burglary	24.05	14.9
Criminal Damage	20.33	16.07
Locked Vehicle	11.31	10.52
Robbery	14.3	7.3
Sex Offense	1.88	1.45
Theft	30.85	21.88
Vehicle Theft	13.14	7.95
Homicide	0.37	0.16

Many residents have reported or have expressed interest in reporting criminal activity in the area. Unfortunately, some residents have had trouble experienced complications from the uncertainty about who to report incidents to or whether to call. Of the residents who have expressed interest in reporting, many have noted fears about being personally investigated and/or the possible retribution that may result from local crime elements if identified as a reporter. To remedy these concerns, DCW provides a service where the organization will call the Police on the behalf of local residents as well as to report nuisance property issues. However, further outreach by DCW is still needed to help educate neighborhood residents about which City Department to call concerning crime and property issues.

The Amani Community Liaison Officer and Community Prosecution Unit have provided important alternative avenues to crime reporting. However, greater community engagement by active neighbors will have the greatest impact on visibly reducing the negative effects of crime.

Objective 2: Identify successful neighborhood safety strategies and programs.

The Dominican Center for Women works with a number of neighborhood partners to improve safety and provide information to residents regarding crime reporting and household maintenance. Neighborhood partners include:

District 5 Milwaukee Police Department (MPD)

The MPD partners with communities in order to create and maintain sustainable neighborhoods. The MPD is committed to “reducing the levels of crime, fear and disorder through community-based, problem-oriented, and data-driven policing.” The MPD, through community liaison officers, also works to inform residents within the Amani neighborhood of criminal trends and provides crime reporting tools to community partners.

District Attorney's Community Prosecution Unit (CPU)

The Community Prosecution Unit is a community-based crime fighting initiative collaborating with community partners and residents to develop problem-solving initiatives. The CPU works with neighborhood stakeholders to develop crime-fighting initiatives, prevent crime, and improve public confidence in the justice system.

COA Goldin Center

The COA Goldin Center is one of several COA Youth and Family Centers that provide youth development, early education, after-school programs, family support services, and community services to the Amani neighborhood.

Safe & Sound

Safe & Sound is a community-based, anti-crime strategy aimed to reduce crime and violence within local neighborhoods. Two local chapters serve the area, WAICO AMANI and United South. Both work closely with neighborhood partners to support positive youth development at designated Safe Places, such as the COA Goldin Center, and aid neighborhood anti-crime efforts through community partners. Safe & Sound Safe features programs for youth, community block walks, and other collaborative anti-crime efforts.

Safe Places provide after-school youth development programming. Members of COA and Safe & Sound participated in the 2011 Amani Neighborhood Community Action Day, which consisted of trash cleanup, garden planting, and an alley identification project.



In addition, Safe & Sound Community Partner Organizers work with Community Prosecution Coordinators to develop anti-crime strategies for each district served. They conduct neighborhood block walks, facilitate block watch/investment groups, and work with the Department of Neighborhood Services to encourage other neighborhood beautification and anti-crime efforts. Community Partners also help probation and parole law enforcement with reentry efforts for former offenders, as well as provide additional knowledge of community resources.

Local Churches

DCW works with a number of churches within and outside of the focus area to provide links to adjacent neighborhoods. Hephatha Lutheran Church and Bethesda Baptist are two notable partners that work collaboratively to engage community residents and promote and develop neighborhood safety initiatives.



Bethesda Baptist Church in the Amani Neighborhood

Case studies for neighborhood safety

Several actions implemented by neighborhood safety organizations provide a guiding framework for the Dominican Center for Women to incrementally build on initial outreach successes and further neighborhood safety. Local corner store initiatives and community-wide home improvement contests utilize community partners such as DCW to facilitate change.

The St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project

A joint program of University of Missouri Extension, City of St. Louis Departments of Health and Public Safety and the St. Louis Development Corporation began a healthy corner store initiative in 2012. The initiative seeks to help participating corner stores by suggesting items to stock, promoting the store within its neighborhood and educating neighbors about nutrition and healthy food options. Problems among corner stores in St. Louis, as in Milwaukee, range from loitering, gun activity, drug dealing, illegal alcohol and tobacco sales.

The joint program employs community partners to work with corner stores to develop a safe and healthy store environment. A similar program, the Milwaukee Healthy Corner Stores, coordinated by the Lindsay Heights Health Alliance helps three participating corner stores obtain and sell produce from a local community garden. Coordination between corner stores and neighborhood partners provides a platform to address loitering issues and nuisance problems located at corner stores.

Most Improved Porch Contest - Layton Boulevard West Neighbors

Layton Boulevard West Neighbors partnered with Home Depot and Tri-City National Bank to organize a Most Improved Porch Contest in 2011. Application forms included a description of the project as well as certification that the project was approved by LBWN, a waiver to allow LBWN to take before and after photos, a full account of project expenses, and acknowledgement that the first 40 residents who verify completion of their work would receive a \$20 rebate. Prizes ranged from first-place at \$1,000, to fourth- and fifth-place prizes of Home Depot power tools. All improvements to front porch area, including adjacent landscape or garden improvements visible from the curb, qualified.

LBWN provided pamphlets and expenditure forms in both English and Spanish and received overwhelming participation from residents. \$2,500 of incentives resulted in over \$24,000 worth of resident investment.



LBWN Porch Improvements
Source: lbwn.org

Objective 3: Provide recommendations for building a peaceful and well-maintained neighborhood.

Recommendation #1: Engage more residents and build trust among residents and community partners.

Rationale: *Resident outreach is the first step to fostering a sense of community. Many residents do not know who their neighbors are, what programs DCW offers, or who to call when problems arise. Clear, trustworthy paths of communication help residents know they have people to rely on. DCW should spearhead efforts to bring community partners and neighborhood residents together.*

DCW Action Item: Use a variety of strategies to increase resident awareness about DCW, programs offered in the community, crime reporting tools, and household safety strategies. Outreach strategies should include:

Door-to-door: DCW staff and volunteers should continue to go door-to-door in order to engage residents and determine residents' willingness to participate in community events and neighborhood safety strategies. Door-to-door efforts allow direct participation and a great venue for informal conversation. In addition, door-to-door efforts provide a link to legacy knowledge of residents who have lived in the area for many years. Older residents often know which homes and residents consistently cause problems on a block, as well as history of the community.

During outreach, information on homeowner safety, property maintenance, and programs offered in the area should be distributed. Questions and short surveys will help DCW gauge residents' willingness to devote time and special skills to community events and DCW programs. DCW volunteers should also contact local businesses, corner stores, and schools to gain information about what they are interested in and how collaboration can occur.

In addition, door-to-door outreach will help to profile how people feel about the neighborhood. Questions typically included:

- Do you (your spouse) feel safe personally in the community?
- Where would you feel unsafe?
- Where would you let your children go without supervision?

During interviews and public participation meetings, residents noted the importance of youth going door-to-door alongside DCW volunteers. Residents in the neighborhood were put at ease and glad to see young people taking an active interest in the community. Canvassing efforts should include a number of committed neighborhood volunteers, with special emphasis put on including children and teenagers in outreach efforts. In addition, special attention should be given to residents of newly constructed homes. Residents of adjacent Habitat for Humanity and WHEDA homes often know each other through the construction process and are a cluster of invested neighbors.

Get to know your neighbor meetings: After door-to-door canvassing, DCW can focus outreach on blocks that are home to residents who regularly attend community meetings. DCW will work with these active community members to further outreach efforts and gather block-area residents for informal meetings. Meetings can be held on the block, at a resident's home (if allowed), or at DCW. Get to know your neighbor meetings are good opportunities for neighbors to share interests (dog-owners, bikers, etc.), alert residents of community programs, and to seek out residents who want to be further involved in community initiatives. Residents cannot be overburdened, but even a simple walk with the dog provides ample opportunity to discover what is going on in the neighborhood.

Newsletter: DCW currently publishes a newsletter and would like to expand its circulation to include neighborhood residents. A newsletter, delivered by mail, email, and posted on the DCW website, will highlight positive developments in the community, provide crime reporting and nuisance abatement information, and feature a monthly calendar of community events. Residents suggested the newsletter be posted on the DCW website, as many residents in the neighborhood did not have access to a computer or email account. Those who had a computer would rather have a central, recognized location for the newsletter than receive an email which might get easily lost or deleted.

Newsletters should include:

- Crime reporting and nuisance reporting information - who to call for each kind of disturbance such as dumping, illegal drug activity, etc.
- DCW programs
- Community Highlights - What great things are happening in the neighborhood?
- Monthly events: the newsletter may focus on DCW's events, but should include community-wide events.
- Real Estate "Hot Sheets"

Resource Fair: A Resource Fair provides excellent opportunity to inform residents about community safety initiatives and recruit neighbors of all ages. In addition, the fair provides a good opportunity to gauge what residents need and what assets the people involved possess.



Recommendation #2: Encourage residents, businesses, and property owners and to take responsibility for maintenance of property, including yards.

Rationale: *Property maintenance is a visible marker of neighborhood pride and greatly affects non-residents' perception of the neighborhood. Property maintenance is also an integral part of community safety. Homes with frequent garbage dumping problems create health hazards; abandoned homes often serve as drug houses; and overgrown shrubs/trees hide illicit activity from watchful neighbors' eyes.*

DCW Action Item: Provide information of property maintenance topics to community residents.

DCW should continue to provide information regarding property maintenance and household safety to neighborhood residents. Information on topics such as fire alarms and health hazards such as lead paint help alert residents to potential problems in homes before they happen. In addition, information should be given regarding who to call if medical emergencies arise, especially helpful for those who need help the most. Lastly, guidelines for physical improvements to the built environment such as tree trimming and placement of trees/shrubs in yards help prevent criminal activity and keeps areas open for resident surveillance. In addition, community meetings provide a forum for residents to learn tactics for safe property management from fellow residents who have experience.

It should be noted that property maintenance is not just a household issue. If adjacent properties along a block are the site of nuisance problems, overgrown, or sites for dumping, the problem becomes a neighborhood problem. Residents currently may report nuisance problems to the Department of Neighborhood Services, but may also choose to ask DCW to call on their behalf. DCW will continue to provide information regarding what constitutes a nuisance problem and solutions to address it, first by calling the property owner, and second by alerting the Department of Neighborhood Services to the problem site.

Recommendation #3: Continue to provide residents with crime prevention and reporting tools from the Milwaukee Police Department as well as access to a community liaison officer from District 5.

Rationale: *DCW must continue to work with the Milwaukee Police Department to provide information on crime trends within the area and to keep the concerns of the DCW focus area at the forefront of MPD's and local aldermen's attention. Public officials need to be clearly engaged in order for problems to be addressed at a higher level. In addition, it is vital for MPD to provide support and information to residents at monthly meetings.*

DCW needs a group of committed residents who will represent the community at local crime meetings (the District 5 meeting is the first Thursday of the month). At district police meetings, residents are able to express concerns unfiltered. In addition, MPD communicates which resources can be allocated to specific problems and where they need additional community support. At public safety meetings, committed residents can ask:

- What is the nature of the criminal activity?
- How bad is our neighborhood?
- Compared to adjacent neighborhoods, what do we need to be aware of in regard to criminal activity?
- What has not been reported this month?

Questions will help residents to determine the difference between perceived and actual crime as well as what crimes went unreported. Additionally, attendees will raise awareness in the neighborhood by sharing information with neighbors.

The formation of a committed team of leaders and watchers within the neighborhood is a key facet in initial efforts to broaden community safety initiatives. DCW must engage the committed team of leaders on a more regular basis than the community as a whole in order to energize participation, as well as spread the word about safety concerns and upcoming events.



Amani neighborhood corner stores can aid in **addressing loitering and nuisance problems.**

FOCUS AREAS

COMMUNITY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

4



Introduction

Currently, there is a disconnect between Amani neighborhood residents and existing programs and organizations. There are many barriers to participation, however, the greatest barrier is awareness. The purpose of this focus area, therefore, is to provide information and develop strategies for Amani residents to become more connected and engaged in their community.

At the public input meeting on May 21, 2012, many residents expressed a desire for greater neighborhood engagement, and if given the opportunity, will surely begin to connect to and develop a sense of pride for their community. Furthermore, the Amani neighborhood is near other Milwaukee neighborhoods such as Harambee and Lindsay Heights which serve as case studies for resident involvement. Already, the Dominican Center for Women has been a strong center for resident engagement in the Amani neighborhood. Strategies outlined below will help to build on DCW's current efforts and accomplishments.

Why is community and youth involvement important?

Neighborhood residents are the life source of change in any neighborhood revitalization strategy. Residents are the primary investors in a community, owning homes and patronizing local businesses. Because of this, community change requires significant input from these residents in the form of participation, idea sharing, adoption of new practices, and volunteerism to effect change.

Especially important is youth involvement. Demographics show that the Amani neighborhood is a community of young people. Not only do these youth form the majority of residents, they are also the generation that will steward the neighborhood in decades to come. Because youth are actively forming their life direction, it is important to offer choices to these youth for personal development as well as meaningful opportunities to engage in the neighborhood.

Goal: Identify methods for fostering a greater community role in Amani's revitalization, as well as participation and collaboration with the Dominican Center for Women.



here, mothers are...
heard

hermothersare.washpost.com

Objective 1: Achieve greater community engagement by creating connections to existing programs that offer educational, employment, social, and recreational activities for the youth and families of the Amani Neighborhood.

Youth activities and programs seek to improve the lives of children and adolescents by assisting in meeting their basic physical, developmental, and social needs. The skills and opportunities that are gained by a child who participates in such activities are vital to ensuring they become successful adults.

Research Step 1.1 Identify existing programs for youth and families that are easily accessible to members of the community and provide the contact information of each recommended program.

Fortunately, residents of the Amani neighborhood may take advantage of multiple existing programs for community and youth development. Research for this plan identified various programs that offer different approaches, such as athletics, education, and mentoring. Programs were evaluated based on proximity to the neighborhood, cost, and effectiveness. The programs recommended on the following pages are therefore near or within the Amani neighborhood, have low costs for participation, and have demonstrated effectiveness for instituting positive change.

“Our mission is not only to help youth achieve academic excellence but also personal excellence. And being a kind, well-rounded, well-spoken part of the community is crucial to their success as an adult.”

*- Codi Johnson Alger, Public Relations and Volunteer Intake Manager
Neighborhood Center Our Next Generation*

Available Programs

Pearls for Teen Girls

Pearls for Teen Girls is a nonprofit organization specifically designed for at-risk girls from ages 10-19 in the City of Milwaukee. PEARLS helps young girls succeed in school, avoid teen pregnancy, and realize and achieve their dreams and goals. By partnering with local organizations, PEARLS is brought to a community with significant need in order to meet the girls where they are and to increase the likelihood of participation. PEARLS has made it their goal to increase high school graduation and college acceptance rates and to lower teen pregnancy rates among girls in the City of Milwaukee. Participants of the PEARLS program are given the opportunity to take college tours both locally and nationally, and have made lasting friendships—not only with their fellow Pearls, but also with alumni of the program. To initiate contact with the community, PEARLS partners with a local organization, such as DCW, to hold a meeting with young ladies and their caretakers. The young ladies, ages 10 to 19, are invited to hear a presentation and join the PEARLS group. Notification of the meeting should be made through the use of flyers, posters, emails, website postings and by going door-to-door.

Cost: \$650 per semester, made by partner organization

Location: Dominican Center for Women

Running Rebels

Running Rebels offers programs and activities in conjunction with Milwaukee Violence Free Zone, Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, The Latino Community Center, Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee Public Schools such as tutoring, mentoring, anger management, crisis stabilization, and life skills for high-risk youth. These programs aim to work with students with behavioral difficulties to reduce school suspensions and violent incidents and to help these students overcome barriers to academic success. The Running Rebels organization also offers recreational activities for youth to include the following:

- AAU boys' basketball team
- Football
- Track
- Boxing
- Cheerleading
- Music instruction
- Youth entrepreneurial program

Cost: None

Location: 1300 W. Fond Du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53205

COA Day Camps

COA offers a variety of programs and activities that engage children and families both for education and recreational purposes. At the Goldin Center, children ages 5-12 can participate in day camp activities such as sports, visual and performing arts, computers, swimming, rock climbing and even sailing. Day and night care is also provided for parents who need care from 6:30am to 6:00pm.

Cost: \$20 as an application fee that is applied to the overall cost of the camp. \$150 per child for each session. Day Camp sessions are offered from June to August in 5 day sessions. Scholarships are available.

Location: COA Goldin Center, 2320 W. Burleigh Street, Milwaukee, WI 53201

Job Corps

Job Corps is an education and paid career training program that helps young adults develop the skills and a work ethic that will enhance their future careers. Serving youth between the ages of 16 and 24, Job Corps offers the HSD and GED program, free career training, and job placement assistance. Job Corps also helps alleviate the financial burden by providing free food, medical, and room and board services. To top off the perks of joining this program, students are given money and a clothing allowance throughout their time in the program. Participants of the Job Corps program have gone on to college, the military, and even directly into the work force with gainful employment.

Cost: None

Location: 6665 N. 60th Street, Milwaukee WI 53223

Our Next Generation

Our Next Generation is an organization that originally began as the “Homework Club” which consisted of a group of volunteers committing personal time to help inner city children in school with one-on-one tutoring. For 20 years, Our Next Generation has served children pre-K through 12th grade with the help of various programs such as “The High School Connection”, “The Middle School Program”, and the Outbound Learning programs that partner with Manpower Group, Saint John’s on the Lake, UW-Milwaukee, and the robotics program at M.S.O.E. Children who participate in this program are highly likely to succeed. To date, every child who has participated in this program has graduated high school.

Cost: None

Location: 3421 W. Lisbon Avenue, Milwaukee WI 53208

Urban Underground

Urban Underground is a youth leadership and development organization that fosters youth development, academic enrichment, and civic engagement among the youth of Milwaukee. Youth who participate in this organization will receive weekly training in leadership, life skills, and goal setting. Members are also invited on various field trips that include college visits, company tours, and even national conferences.

Cost: None

Location: 4850 West Fond Du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee WI 53216

Black Achievers

The Black Achievers at the YMCA offers high school students the opportunity to explore career paths, develop leadership skills, prepare for college, and participate in service learning and social activities. Students who participate in Black Achievers are encouraged to interact with local professionals who can offer a positive influence and much needed guidance.

Cost: None

Location: 1350 West North Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53206

Research Step 1.2: Identify barriers to resident participation in identified existing organizations and programs.

Potential barriers to resident participation in identified programs and activities for youth include cost, awareness, and difficulty of logistics for families. Interviews and discussions identified the most common barrier is awareness. Most of the identified programs have existed for many years; however, many residents of the Amani neighborhood do not know of the programs or are unaware that they are eligible to participate. Many of the programs are offered at moderate or no costs as well as scholarships for youth based on family income. DCW may facilitate partnerships and resident awareness in order to increase resident engagement.

Research Step 1.3 Develop a strategy to connect the youth of Amani with identified organizations and programs.

Recommendation: Plan a resource fair for Amani residents where program representatives can offer information and residents may ask questions about various programs.

DCW Action Item: Host a Resource Fair at the Dominican Center for Women where residents from the Amani community will be invited to gather information regarding various resources offered by the City of Milwaukee and local organizations. Identified organizations may host booths with representatives available to answer questions. Notification for the fair may include flyers, posters, phone calls, and door-to-door outreach (See flyer/poster mockup in the Appendix).

“COA has been around for 106 years and has always been community based—not just focusing on the kids, but the whole family needed to have services...”

- Betsy Corry, Associate Executive Director COA Youth & Family Centers

Objective 2: Facilitate the creation of a community planning council that will hold monthly community meetings where Amani residents, leaders, and advocates can come together.

Successful community engagement requires a continuous platform for interaction between residents, neighborhood organizations, and officials. The Amani community will benefit from a platform for residents to meet with community leaders, community advocates, and political affiliates to collaborate and discuss the needs and issues of concern within the community as well as develop solutions and opportunities for real community change. Already, Children's Hospital has facilitated the creation of the Amani Community Advisory Group, which serves as a planning group for the neighborhood. This effort should be leveraged to create a permanent Amani Neighborhood Community Planning Council.

Research Step 2.1: Identify key stakeholders that should serve as members of a Community Planning Council.

A Community Planning Council should allow open membership to neighborhood residents and identified partner organizations. It is important to identify and involve long-standing neighborhood residents, because these residents have a knowledge of neighborhood history and hold a great stake in the community's well-being. In addition, developing a diverse membership should be a concerted effort in planning and formation of the Council. Below is a list of members that should be identified and invited:

- Senior residents
- Parents
- DCW and other neighborhood non-profits
- Youth, ages 16-18
- Community business owners
- Religious organizations

In addition to the general membership, selecting the right people to serve on the Council's Board of Officers is crucial to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Community Planning Council. Officers may be elected from the general membership, with requirements such as meeting attendance and community standing.



Research Step 2.2: Develop a model for council governance and participation among residents and stakeholders.

The Amani Community Planning Council (ACPC) will conduct business under the bylaws created by the ACPC governing body. To assist the ACPC in development of their bylaws, a sample Bylaws of the Lindsay Heights Community Planning Council is provided in the Appendix. It is recommended that the ACPC review the document to help generate ideas for content as it strictly relates to the needs of the Amani Neighborhood. At the first meeting of the ACPC, an interim Chairperson may be responsible for keeping order and assisting in the formation of the Council.

Research Step 2.3: Develop a strategy to notify neighborhood stakeholders of upcoming meetings and community gatherings.

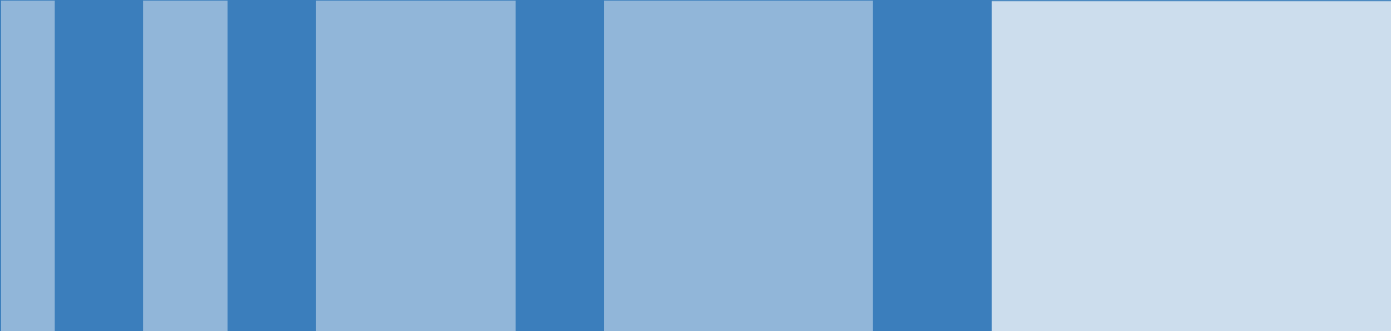
Various media types may be used in order to notify community members and stakeholders of the Amani neighborhood about upcoming meetings. Marketing methods include but are not limited to:

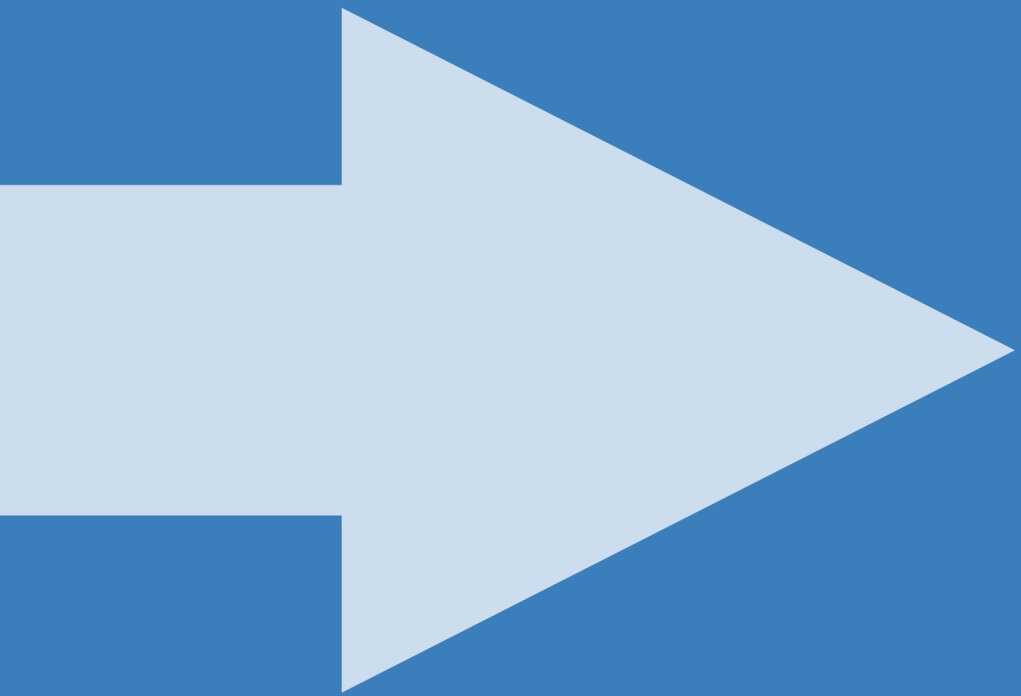
- Website
- Posters
- Flyers
- Email
- Word-of-mouth
- Newsletter

Members of the Amani Community Planning Council will be responsible for setting a date and time for the monthly community meeting. ACPC governing members will also be responsible for selecting and securing an appropriate location that is well-known and accessible. Both the Dominican Center for Women and the Goldin Center may serve as appropriate location options.

MOVING FORWARD

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN





Moving Forward

The Amani Neighborhood Action Plan presents multiple recommendations and action items under each of the four focus areas. Implementing these recommendations will require a great deal of time, focus and energy—not a feasible task for an individual or independent organization. Many of the recommendations have already begun to take shape; however, to maintain forward momentum, partnerships and resident engagement are crucial. This section identifies some key steps to begin implementation of the plan, as well as the Dominican Center for Women’s role in the transformation of Amani.

Moving forward, the Dominican Center for Women will play an important role in the Amani neighborhood’s revitalization. Equipped with funding to support organizational capacity, the Dominican Center for Women may enter into a “convening” role for the Amani Neighborhood. A convening role recognizes the limitations of an individual organization to tackle the many tasks for neighborhood revitalization. Instead, a convener works to establish communication, cooperation, and clarity amongst neighborhood residents and partners.

Some key steps include:

Board and Staff review; identification of priorities – Dominican Center for Women Board members and staff should review the plan and its recommendations. From the information, Board and Staff may work collectively to identify the priorities for DCW to pursue as well as an appropriate timeline.

Community presentation – UWM Graduate students will present their work to Amani neighborhood stakeholders in June 2012. Residents and partners may use this platform to review the plan’s recommendations and discuss strategies for implementation.



Distribution to partners – A plan becomes ineffectual if it is placed on a shelf. The Amani Neighborhood Action Plan must be shared with partner organizations (such as the City of Milwaukee DCD, neighborhood community-based organizations, and funding partners). Additionally, the plan, in digital form, should be placed on the Dominican Center for Women’s website for viewing by the broader public.

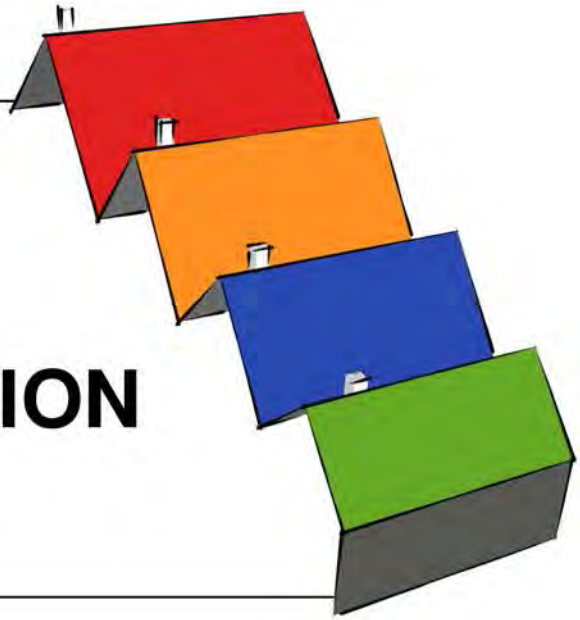
Internship or Fellowship – The Dominican Center for Women will benefit from creating an internship position at the organization. An intern may be able to place their concentration upon a specific focus area, or work to implement the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan. Specific tasks could include assisting in planning and hosting a DCW Resource Fair, supporting development of the Amani Planning Council, and establishing and maintaining contact with partner organizations. UWM’s Masters of Urban Planning program is a great source for internship candidates.

Strategic Housing Implementation Plan – The Plan identifies housing as a critical area for DCW to focus its intervention efforts. The following section outlines a Housing Implementation Plan which provides a road map for an incremental, strength-based approach to addressing housing challenges in the Amani neighborhood.





STRATEGIC HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Strategic Housing Implementation Plan

The Strategic Housing Implementation Plan builds on DCW's existing work and current strengths. This plan outlines the neighborhood's conditions and identifies housing as a priority focus area. Outlined below are step-by-step recommendations for DCW to implement in a strategic housing plan. These recommendations are placed in chronological order for near-term feasibility within the year, to long-term feasibility over a five-year period.

1. **Develop a cluster Strategy for NIP investments; leverage housing partnerships.**

Currently, the Dominican Center for Women is a NIP provider through the City of Milwaukee's CDBG housing programs. In 2012, DCW plans to support five to ten moderate home rehabilitations for owner-occupied units. The Dominican Center for Women should leverage these funds to make a concentrated impact in the neighborhood. Using maps generated in this study, the Dominican Center for Women can determine a targeted impact area to focus its NIP investment.

Additionally, DCW can assist accepted NIP applicants to participate in additional housing rehabilitation programs in order to leverage their investment to maximum impact. Several options are outlined below; a full listing of housing resources for Milwaukee's north side are included in the Appendix:

Habitat for Humanity, A Brush with Kindness: Executive Director Brian Sonderman has indicated a potential partnership to offer the Brush for Kindness program to DCW's NIP Program recipients. ABWK provides minor home improvement grants to help low-income homeowners. Milwaukee Habitat volunteers work with the partner families to make the improvements to their homes. Projects include painting, porch repair, siding, gutter repairs, landscaping, demolition, door and window installation and correcting code violations.

City of Milwaukee Lead Prevention: The Milwaukee Health Department's Primary Prevention Program supports window replacement for income-qualified homeowners who have young children live in or frequently visit the home. Window replacement is also a significant step in improving the home's energy efficiency.

2. Continue promotion of TIN benefits within City's defined TIN; petition the City for a Conservation Overlay District.

Currently, the Dominican Center for Women recruits and supports neighbors to take advantage of City of Milwaukee housing programs offered in its Target Investment Neighborhoods (TINs). The Amani TIN is 24th Street to 27th Street, Hadley Street to Burleigh Street. This geographic boundary is significant for several reasons. One, because it is the core neighborhood surrounding DCW's Center and Office. Two, because it contains an incredible asset—a block of housing that remains almost one hundred percent intact.

Across Milwaukee, many neighborhoods have historic housing stock; however, the near north side of the City, under pressure of many decades of disinvestment, has very few blocks where original homes stand. The 2900 block of 26th Street is unlike any other block nearby—and should be preserved as such. A Conservation Overlay requires the City generate a plan for the neighborhood's preservation. Transforming the TIN into a conservation overlay will scale up both planning and support for neighborhood preservation around the Dominican Center for Women.

3. Develop and formalize a property rating system for vacant and foreclosed properties.

As previously described, DCW may utilize the Rehab Scaling System as a property checklist and rating system.

4. Form a neighborhood task force to implement the rating system and encourage property owners to improve their properties.

A neighborhood task force should be comprised of resident volunteers and led by a staff member. The task force should move through the neighborhood block-by-block, rating vacant properties, noting violations and challenges at occupied properties, and communicating with neighbors.

5. Develop a home marketing program for neighborhood properties.

Amani Neighborhood “Hot Sheets” will be regularly created to feature properties that are currently available. A sample “Hot Sheet” has been provided in the Appendix.

6. Partner with north side neighborhoods to implement a neighborhood most improved porch contest.

Modeled after Layton Boulevard’s MANDI Award-nominated project, DCW can work to implement a most improved porch contest. A porch contest would be a summer season competition, where entries are taken from the community and judged after a period of several months. Prizes can be sourced from community donors, with a small incentive for participation.

7. Acquire and rehabilitate selected City-owned or foreclosed homes in the conservation overlay district.

DCW can utilize existing partnerships to identify homes for rehabilitation. The Rehab Rating System can aid in highlighting properties that can be successfully rehabilitated. DCW can then acquire properties through City CHDO Certification, Banks and CDC Loan Funds.

8. Develop a Home Acquisition / Rehabilitation Initiative using funding from WHEDA's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

In 2012, multiple acquire / rehab projects in Milwaukee were successful in Tax Credit applications. These initiatives typically acquire existing vacant or foreclosed housing stock, renovate the properties, and then transfer to end-users in a rent-to-own program. Tax credits are useful because they provide a source of financing to support major property renovation. During this process, the Dominican Center for Women may act in the role of developer, change agent, or partner in the process.

9. Build housing development portfolio and grassroots community support.

Housing organizations will build their experience and portfolio incrementally over time. It is of paramount importance to continuously keep track of investments made, as well as develop a system for measuring real impacts of any programs. Additionally, many of DCW's most loyal resident base come from recipients of their programs and services. DCW must be deliberate in continuously engaging those who take part in their housing programs. Requiring attendance at community meetings or volunteer hours in exchange for home services will help to forge the initial connection. These residents may also play important roles on future committees and perhaps on a resident-based Board for the organization.

10. Apply for a large grant (State, Federal or foundation) to implement large-scale rehabilitation effort.

In addition to WHEDA's LIHTC program, there are various grants and programs available to address community revitalization. Following the steps above builds the portfolio and capacity for DCW to pursue these opportunities in the future. It is critical to build a foundation of experience and a portfolio of successful projects, as well as strong partnerships with other organizations and governmental entities.

“The Dominican Center for Women partners with the community to maintain and enhance a beautiful, stable, healthy and safe neighborhood consisting of residents who are community-minded and are striving to be meaningfully educated and employed.”

- DCW Mission





NO LOITERING
OR PROWLING



AMANI
NEIGHBORHOOD
ACTION
PLAN



UWM
GRADUATE
STUDENTS

