



VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

To: The Village of West Milwaukee
From: Jolena Presti and Meredith Perks, Vandewalle & Associates
Date: Wednesday, August 07, 2019
Re: July 16th Comprehensive Plan Work Session

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the Village hosted a work session with members of the Village Board, Plan Commission, and Community Development Authority. The work session was held at the Community Centre and was an interactive workshop with activities facilitated by the plan consultants, Vandewalle & Associates.

Eleven participants completed three activities intended to draw out common themes and priorities for the Comprehensive Plan, generate new ideas, and foster group discussion. Ideas and input from this work session will be incorporated throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update and integrated to each plan element or chapter. The meeting was noticed and open to the public. Below is a summary of the activities and responses from the work session.

Activity 1: Identifying Key Values, Goals and Directions

Participants were asked to identify what they value most about the Village of West Milwaukee as well as what the most important goals or direction for the Village should be. They were also asked to rank their top two responses and discuss them with their table.

Top 2 responses given for what you value most about the Village of West Milwaukee:

- Centrally located
- Clean, beautiful, unique houses – well kept
- Commercially attractive
- Community
- Great location
- Great neighborhoods
- Great schools
- Intimacy (close-knit) / believe it's safe
- Location
- Location – close to downtown, surrounding communities
- Police, DPW response times to concerns, etc.
- Potential
- Public services – police, DPW
- Safe neighborhoods
- Safety
- Small community feel
- Small knit neighbors. I know all my surrounding neighbors.
- Small suburban feel
- West Milwaukee Park

Top 2 responses given for what you believe should be the Village's most important Goals/Directions for the future:

- Add nice upscale multi-family city center
- Adding quality senior housing option
- Adding quality residential to mix
- Attract large employers

- Be a place people want to live/work
- Better police/community
- Citizens' safety
- Economic development
- Get more facilities
- Improve/new housing
- Increase public service manpower and equipment
- Integrate more community activities
- Keep crime in check
- Keeping residents feeling safe in the community
- Make sure there is a West Milwaukee 100+ years from now
- More areas for social gathering (parks, bars, restaurants)
- Redevelopment of vacant/underutilized commercial property
- Rehabilitate storefronts and commercial property – welcoming environment
- Schools, schools, schools
- Tax relief

Activity 2: Achieving Top Goals and Directions

In the second exercise of the evening, participants were asked to identify one of their top goals and directions from the first exercise and brainstorm specific ideas and strategies for achieving that priority. Responses included the following:

Goal: City Center/Destination Area (2)

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Target potential lands adjacent to or close to existing village center
2. Include green space geared to activities
3. Include housing/retail component
4. Include townhouse component
5. Create historic district/review board
6. Rearrange parking to encourage stopping vs. a pass thru
7. Curb bump-outs/bike lanes/connection to Hank Aaron's Trail
8. Permitting sidewalk restaurant seating/advertising
9. Tax credits
10. Greenery areas/trees in median and right of way
11. Village participation in promotional events (i.e., Doors Open MKE)
12. Include gathering public area zoning requirements with new development

Goal: Community Safety (2)

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Increase police staffing, including more temporary or part-time officers
2. Address blighted properties
3. Drug awareness and prevention programs
4. Police community officer engagement
 - a. Events that bring staff/police/citizens together – National Night Out
5. Gateway signs “You are in the Village”

Goal: Be a Magnet Community

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Attract more families with better schools
2. Attract more residents with pleasant homes
3. Attract regional attention with innovative and unique visuals, art, projects, events
4. Have stuff for people to do...anywhere, any time
5. Learn from and emulate other successful communities' activities
6. Open houses in government, homes, schools, buildings
7. Spend tourism dollars
8. Street parties

Goal: Mixed-Use Development

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Plan for this – guide developers
2. Control through zoning (make sure CDA, Plan Commission, Board are on the same page)
3. Seek funding – incorporate historical buildings and reuse
4. Incorporate City Center concept
5. Include accessible and senior housing
6. Require mix of owner-occupied and rental
7. Do not gentrify – maintain community feel – we live here!
8. Plan and fund for infrastructure and services

Goal: New Housing – Maintenance of Properties

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Identify areas for development of housing
2. Reduce or address crime
3. Convert rental to single family
4. Maintain housing stock
5. Improve existing multi-family
6. Beautification contest
7. Create community with neighbors

Goal: Integrate more Community Activities

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Create a neighborhood association for West Milwaukee
2. Designate/delegate coordination
3. Network with businesses to sponsor activities
4. Utilize tourism budget to fund community activities
5. Earmark budget dollars to community engagement

Goal: Increase Public Service Manpower and Equipment

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. More economic development = more tax revenue for services
2. Increase development of more visitor friendly places
3. As industrial continues to leave, use central location as advantage to increase motel, restaurant, gym's, etc. to pull in outside visitors
4. State money/incentives for owner-occupied homes
5. Ability (laws) for Village to acquire dilapidated/trouble properties

Goal: Economic Development

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Incentivize business to move to West Milwaukee
2. Decrease taxes
3. Increase mixed-use developments
4. Create new downtown and P&H site
5. Grow tax base
6. Create better community
7. Make West Milwaukee a place to visit
8. Create more community events

Goal: Lower Taxes

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. Better working relationship with Madison
2. Smart development in order to encourage more tax revenue
3. Madison changing their attitudes towards municipalities state-wide

Goal: Maintain the Business/Residential Feeling that is Part of the History and also the Future of the Village

Ideas & Strategies to Achieve this Goal/Direction:

1. That has to be taught in the schools, civic groups
2. Keep West Milwaukee pride at its maximum
3. More government transparency for citizens and businesses

Activity 3: Mapping

The three tables of participants were given a large map of the Village along with stickers and markers for them to make recommendations and point out important areas for preservation, development, or improvement. Below is a summary of the map recommendations:

Map Recommendations:

- Redevelopment Areas:
 - Former REXNORD property could be redeveloped as future Village Center that would include mixed-use development, housing, greenspace/gathering space and commercial.
 - Former KOMATSU property could be redeveloped to include mixed-use development with commercial and residential as well as bicycle connections to the Hank Aaron Trail.

- National and 41st Street, near the new hotel and Walmart, could be redeveloped to include compatible uses such as commercial and mixed-use.
- Mixed-Use development along National Avenue (west of Miller Park Way) in with the historic commercial area across from the Veterans Affairs property.
- Redevelopment pockets and sites in areas with former or aging industrial and commercial uses.
- Village Hall, Community Centre, Pershing Elementary School, West Milwaukee Middle School, and St. John's Lutheran Church were identified as community gathering spaces that should be preserved.
- Opportunities for updated or additional commercial uses along the southern end of Miller Park Way – keeping it a vibrant commercial corridor.
- Increased bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Hank Aaron Trail, connecting neighborhoods and destinations like parks.
- Improve congestion along National Avenue, near the Veterans Affairs property, by widening the road (adding a lane) and including a bike lane.
- Restore the street grid at the Rexnord property, specifically West Lapham Street and South 51st Street. This could better serve and connect the future Village Center area.
- Dangerous or congested intersections and roads were identified at the following:
 - National Avenue and:

▪ South 56 th Street	▪ South 47 th Street
▪ South 54 th Street	▪ Miller Park Way
▪ South 48 th Street	
 - Beloit Road and:
 - West Greenfield Avenue
 - South 47th Street
 - West Lapham Street
 - Speed control on Miller Park Way was also identified