

Layton Boulevard West

Quality of Life Plan Highlights





Layton Boulevard West is fast becoming a community of choice for families, young professionals, and small business owners. Bounded by Pierce Street on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the south, Layton Boulevard on the east, and Miller Park Way on the west, the area brings together three historic Milwaukee neighborhoods: Silver City, Burnham Park, and Layton Park. These neighborhoods offer quality, affordable housing, a wealth of retail and recreational amenities, and ethnic and cultural diversity.

Just 10 minutes from downtown Milwaukee, Layton Boulevard West encompasses the iconic Mitchell Park Conservatory Domes, Miller Park stadium, the bustling Miller Park Way commercial district, and the Menomonee Valley, where 300 acres of brownfields have been restored to job-creating productive use.

The Hank Aaron State Trail, starting at Milwaukee's lakefront and following the Menomonee River eight miles west to the county line, allows neighbors to walk or bike to work, while the newly restored Valley Passage at 37th and Pierce Streets gives people immediate access to the Valley's jobs and recreational opportunities.

Layton Boulevard West's diverse population—66% Latino, 22% Caucasian, 5% African American, and 4% Asian—is reflected in its mix of ethnic restaurants and distinctive shops along the National, Burnham, and

Lincoln corridors. This diversity is one of the area's most valued assets.

Layton Boulevard West also faces significant challenges from poverty, unemployment, and foreclosed homes. Neighbors old and new understand these challenges and have come together to take action. Coordinating their efforts is Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc., a community development organization founded in 1995 by the School Sisters of St. Francis. Layton Boulevard West Neighbors stabilizes and revitalizes the area through grassroots leadership, economic development, homeownership promotion, and housing development and rehabilitation.

Together, Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, community members, and partners are developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Layton Boulevard West



WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY!



WILD FLOUR BAKERY



FOOD CART VENDOR

Neighborhood Appearance

With a wealth of bungalows, churches, parks, three commercial corridors, and a historic boulevard, residents of Layton Park, Burnham Park, and Silver City recognize Layton Boulevard West's potential to become one of Milwaukee's most attractive neighborhoods. Neighbors have begun to uncover and capitalize on these assets. However, with over 75% of buildings and infrastructure built prior to 1930, neighbors understand the challenges that come with maintaining and improving private properties and public spaces. Vacant and boarded-up homes and businesses present an additional challenge to the neighborhood's appearance.

To improve the physical appearance of the neighborhood, we will **promote the maintenance and improvement of private properties and public spaces, and engage the community in cleanup efforts.** We will plant trees and flowers, create community gardens, and engage young people in creating public art for the neighborhood's open spaces. We will advocate for street and sidewalk repairs, remove and prevent graffiti, and tend to the appearance of vacant lots and buildings. We will work with homeowner-counseling organizations and public officials to assist property owners facing foreclosure.

Community Safety Network

Layton Boulevard West is a community of hard-working and caring people who strive for a more peaceful environment. While violent crime has decreased in recent years, neighbors involved in the planning process stated that property crimes, such as graffiti, are a challenge to the neighborhood's safety and welcoming spirit. Neighbors feel that engaging more people and building trust among residents, businesses, and partners will make people feel safe and welcome, encourage neighborliness, and contribute to community safety and confidence.

To **support a peaceful, clean, and well-maintained neighborhood where all feel safe and welcome,** we will encourage neighbors to work together in cleanup and beautification projects. We will create and connect block clubs to strengthen the community safety network. This network will improve communication among residents, landlords, business owners, and the police department; provide a forum for community problem-solving; and educate neighbors about crime trends, prevention, and reporting. Neighbors will work to strengthen relationships with external organizations that focus on community safety, such as the Citywide Block Watch Council and the Youth Council of the City of Milwaukee.



VIENTIANE NOODLE SHOP



HANK AARON STATE TRAIL MURAL ARTIST



U.S. GRANT SCHOOL

Layton Boulevard West

Social Engagement

Residents of Layton Boulevard West want to know their neighbors better, and they want more places and opportunities to socialize. They are attracted to and value the area’s ethnic diversity, yet recognize the need for some help in navigating cultural and language differences. In the course of community planning, neighbors highlighted the need to **build strong relationships that develop a sense of community and encourage collaboration.**

We will promote new opportunities for social interaction and foster inter-generational and cross-cultural interaction. We will work to overcome language barriers among our diverse population by connecting neighbors to educational resources in English, Spanish, and Hmong. We will multiply efforts to organize block clubs, open houses, and special events such as National Avenue’s Trick-or-Treat Street, Sounds of Summer concerts, and the Annual Neighborhood Gathering. We will identify and nurture local leaders who can move the neighborhood forward and create the relationships that will lead to a more connected community.

Youth Education and Leadership

Layton Boulevard West is a community of young people: 33% of the population is under the age of 18, compared to a citywide average of 27%. With so many residents under the age of 18, **supporting our youth in achieving their potential, both academically and personally, and encouraging them to serve the community as they develop life and work skills** is central to improving the quality of life in the community.

To prepare our children and youth for purposeful and productive lives, we will partner with local schools to improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates, and prepare youth for post-secondary education; with nonprofits to promote healthy living, leadership development, entrepreneurship, and community service; and with parents to enable and mobilize parental involvement in education. We will advocate for additional after-school and out-of-school opportunities for skill and character building, leadership cultivation, and workforce development; provide safe places for youth to gather and socialize; and attract additional child and youth development organizations to serve in the Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods.



CONCERTINA HALL OWNER



NATIVITY JESUIT MIDDLE SCHOOL



STEVE AND GLORIA ESPINOZA, SILVER CITY RESIDENTS

Layton Boulevard West

Community Identity

Neighbors in Silver City, Burnham Park, and Layton Park take pride in the wide array of exciting destinations that make up Layton Boulevard West. Biking on the Hank Aaron State Trail; trying exotic fruits and vegetables at any of the ethnic grocery stores; eating tacos, Pad Thai, or ceviche at a local restaurant; or touring a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home, are all unique experiences within Milwaukee. Add these experiences to what our neighbors value most—quality architecture, a diverse population, and a strong sense of community—and one understands why people are choosing to live, work and serve in Layton Boulevard West.

Developing and marketing a distinctive community identity that celebrates Layton Boulevard West’s rich history, diversity, assets, and market potential will positively influence how people outside the area view the neighborhood. As we promote Layton Boulevard West’s identity and offerings, we will attract more homeowners, visitors, patrons, businesses, and investments to the neighborhood.

Healthy Living

Numerous health studies show that socioeconomic status and environment affect health outcomes. With poverty and unemployment levels above the city average, an aging infrastructure, and limited space for recreation and exercise, Layton Boulevard West is at a disadvantage. Given these obstacles, throughout the planning process neighbors expressed a desire to lead healthier lives and recognized that, together, they can work to improve their personal health, the health of their community, and the environment.

To **promote and support physical, emotional, and social well-being** we will work with community organizations and health providers to offer classes in nutrition, canning, and healthy cooking; establish additional community gardens and conduct workshops on growing fruits and vegetables; and sponsor a new farmers’ market. We will increase access to free or affordable fitness, sports, and recreational activities; promote walking, biking, and other outdoor exercise; and offer walking tours that feature “green solutions” already in place, such as our energy efficient homes, rainwater systems, and native Wisconsin landscaping.



MAMIE'S



BURNHAM PARK



OSCAR ESTRADA, BURNHAM PARK RESIDENT

Layton Boulevard West

Economic Development

Layton Boulevard West is a centrally located residential neighborhood with three major commercial corridors of great potential: National Avenue, Burnham Street, and Lincoln Avenue. With a variety of established businesses and a number of vacant buildings offering attractive redevelopment opportunities, these corridors are primed for transformation. In addition, proximity to the Menomonee Valley and the Miller Park Way commercial district provides job opportunities to our residents.

Although we face challenges, such as having 22.3% of our families living below the poverty level (compared to 19.9% in the city

of Milwaukee) and an unemployment rate of 14% (compared to 11% in Milwaukee), we will capitalize the community's assets to move toward a prosperous future. We will **foster economic vitality by increasing business opportunities, access to jobs, and financial wellness.** We will identify the area's potential for economic development, increase business opportunities, and advocate for collaboration between large and small local businesses. To help neighbors achieve their financial goals, we will promote job opportunities and connect them with workforce development and financial literacy programs.

“What’s so special about Layton Boulevard West is that there are people who were born in these houses and they’re still here. And then you have people that were born in different countries, and we all come together and we are all friends, and that makes it a community.”

GERDA FRANSISKAS, SILVER CITY RESIDENT



PLANNING PROCESS



GREG AND DOLLY MERTENS, LAYTON PARK RESIDENTS



BURNHAM PARK

Layton Boulevard West

Inclusive. Collaborative. Resilient.

Every voice counts and every contribution is needed to revitalize the area. Understanding this, Layton Boulevard West Neighbors brought together neighbors and local groups to share their hopes and dreams for the community and to define a common vision.

Guided by a planning advisory committee made up of people who live, work, and serve in the Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods, staff and volunteers met with neighbors from every corner of the community. Layton Boulevard West Neighbors spoke with longtime homeowners and newcomers; with parents, school administrators, and faith leaders; and with community development colleagues, real estate agents, and shopkeepers. In visioning sessions and community meetings, neighbors identified local assets and areas for improvement; they brainstormed strategies and possible solutions.

Over the course of 10 months and countless conversations, more than 200 people contributed to this Quality of Life Plan. As a result of this process, neighbors have come together and committed themselves to realizing this collective vision for Layton Boulevard West.



These efforts are supported by the Zilber Family Foundation. In 2008, the Foundation announced a \$50 million commitment to improve the quality of life in Milwaukee neighborhoods, starting with Lindsay Heights and Clarke Square. In 2010, the Foundation added the Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods of Layton Park, Burnham Park, and Silver City to the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative. To read the full neighborhood plan, visit znimilwaukee.org.

Layton Boulevard West Catalytic Projects

Catalytic projects improve physical conditions in the neighborhood and stimulate interest and investment in the community. In the course of planning, people who live and work in Layton Boulevard West analyzed opportunities for growth and development, and identified several projects to undertake.



1 Turnkey Homes

Building on the successes of the Silver City Townhomes and LBWN's Turnkey Renovation Program, LBWN will expand to buy and renovate foreclosed homes to help stabilize the housing market and promote homeownership. We will give these homes new life, add value to the properties by using eco-friendly materials, practices, and renewable energy systems, and sell them at a price affordable for moderate-income owner-occupant buyers.



3 Arlington Heights Park

This underused park will become a destination for entertainment, sports, and recreation. Neighbors have asked for enhancements to bring more positive activities to the park. In partnership with the City of Milwaukee and others already invested in the Park, LBWN will lead improvement projects including the construction of a band shelter, installation of lighting and seating areas, eco-friendly landscaping, and new signage to create a safe, open space for families to gather and recreate.



6 Layton Boulevard West Legacy Homes

Historic Layton Boulevard's rich architecture and the six Frank Lloyd Wright homes on Burnham Street have the potential to attract new homeowners and become tourist destinations. LBWN will work with the Wright in Wisconsin organization and the Historic Layton Boulevard Association to return these homes to their architectural significance and promote them as a neighborhood amenity.



9 Welcome to our Community!

Gateway markers will be installed on the neighborhood's main intersections to promote Layton Boulevard West as a welcoming community and distinctive tourist destination. Additional signs will be installed throughout each of Layton Boulevard West's neighborhoods to promote their individual assets and identities.



2 School Model Block

The School Model Block initiative focuses on improving a one-block radius around a school. It stabilizes property values while increasing neighbors' pride. The community has identified Anna F. Doerfler School and the surrounding area as the first opportunity for revitalization, with other schools being involved in the future. Actions will include beautification and cleanup, housing renovation, homeownership promotion, and foreclosure prevention in the blocks around the school.



4 Greenfield Avenue Improvements

As a major thoroughfare, neighbors feel that Greenfield Avenue does not promote a welcoming and safe community in its current condition. We will advocate for improvements in Greenfield Avenue's infrastructure, increased pedestrian safety, and the installation of a bike lane.



7 Silver City Commercial Corridor

In coordination with small businesses, volunteers, the City of Milwaukee, and LISC Milwaukee, LBWN will commission a market analysis to identify commercial opportunities in the Silver City commercial corridor. LBWN will continue to support the development of key anchor businesses to attract visitors and new businesses.



Resource/Community Center

It became clear during the planning process that neighbors of all ages need a gathering place where they can share common interests and access information about services. A centrally located resource and community center will be developed to provide a place where all will feel connected to each other and the community.



5 Burnham Park

Burnham Park is centrally located in the neighborhood and many residents take advantage of its open spaces. To meet the increasing needs of youth and families for an active and safe park, neighbors will collaborate with partners to add seating areas, improve lighting and landscaping, and enhance the pavilion.



8 Pierce Street

Neighbors cited the Valley Passage and the new branch of the Urban Ecology Center as reasons for renovating residential properties and developing business and community activities in this area. LBWN will work with neighbors and partners to identify and support new development and redevelopment opportunities along this underutilized corridor.



Farmers' Market

A farmers' market will provide neighbors with affordable, local produce and other healthy foods, and serve as a place where neighbors can connect regularly.