

Turning the Corner

A Closer Look at Neighborhood Change

Prepared by Data You Can Use, Inc.
Milwaukee WI

In conjunction with the Urban Institute's
National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership
Cross-site Study

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About the report:

This study is part of a larger national effort titled *Turning the Corner: Monitoring Neighborhood Change for Action*, a project guided by the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership and the Funders' Network Federal Reserve-Philanthropy Initiative. Launched in January 2016, the project pilots a research model that monitors neighborhood change, drives informed government action, and supports displacement prevention and inclusive revitalization. Local teams in Buffalo, Detroit, Milwaukee, Phoenix, and Twin Cities conducted independent research to understand neighborhood change and displacement risk in their communities. The Urban Institute, funded by the Kresge Foundation, will be synthesizing lessons across the five cities. For more information about the cross-site study, see <http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/turningthecorner>.

Data You Can Use, a Milwaukee-based nonprofit and the National Neighborhood Indicator Partnership member in Milwaukee, leads the research and engagement activities in the study. Partners in the project work include the Greater Milwaukee Committee's MKE United, LISC Milwaukee, and the Department of City Development. The project is supported by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation, and the Zilber Family Foundation. In-kind data and support were provided by the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development.

Milwaukee's Community Development Alliance (CDA) served as sponsor and Advisory Committee. The work was implemented in coordination with the city's Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development (TOD) grant from the US Department of Transportation and an additional grant to Data You Can Use to explore expanded indicators of neighborhood change beyond the traditional market value analysis. The *Turning the Corner* study in Milwaukee focuses on two neighborhoods, Walker's Point and Brewers Hill. In each case, the neighborhood and its history, are briefly described, followed by a summary of quantitative data.

The report was written by Kathleen Pritchard, PhD with staff and student support from Carrie Koss Vallejo, Casandra Leopold, Van Le, Gerardo Mares, Eric Mendes, Mariam Ashour, and Emmanuel Okumara. The work is the result of the contributions of many individuals and organizations who are gratefully acknowledged in the appendix.

Structure of the Report:

The report begins with background on the cross-site study and a discussion of the concept of neighborhood change and explores why it is difficult to discuss and a challenge to measure. It then provides a brief description of several local efforts to address gentrification and takes a look at how gentrification has affected Milwaukee. While what happens in the city as a whole is important and of interest, neighborhood change is hyper-local. And while neighborhoods are always changing, larger geographies and averages often mask this change. Looking at neighborhoods, census tracts or even blocks helps uncover early signs of change.

The discussion of selected quantitative data is followed by the qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus groups with longtime residents and business-owners in the two neighborhoods. The report then looks at selected indicators showing change in Brewers Hill and Walker's Point and raises additional factors to consider in observing, measuring, and promoting development, assuring affordable housing and mitigating displacement.

Executive Summary

Background Purpose and Process of the Study

This study is part of a larger national effort titled, Turning the Corner: Monitoring Neighborhood Change for Action, a project guided by the Urban Institute’s National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) and the Funder’ Network Federal Reserve-Philanthropy Initiative. Launched in January 2016, the project pilots a research model that monitors neighborhood change, drives informed government action, and supports displacement prevention and inclusive revitalization.

Local teams in Buffalo, Detroit, Milwaukee, Phoenix and the Twin Cities conducted independent research to understand neighborhood change and displacement risk in their communities. The Urban Institute, funded by the Kresge Foundation, will be synthesizing lessons across the five cities. Locally, the research was conducted by Data You Can Use, the Milwaukee partner in the NNIP. It was supported, both financially and in-kind, by the Community Development Alliance, a collaborative effort of the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Greater Milwaukee Committee, LISC-Milwaukee, Northwestern Mutual Foundation and the Zilber Family Foundation.

The work was aimed at elevating the conversation about neighborhood change and gentrification and includes background research on the topic, learnings from other efforts in Milwaukee, shared learnings from the partner cities, interviews with businesses and residents, focus groups with residents and ongoing feedback from partners.

Challenges to Informed Discussion

The conversation around neighborhood change is challenging for a number of reasons. They include the fact that change is constant and a characteristic of cities, the complexity of the concept, the lack of agreement about “appropriate” indicators, the challenge of comparability, accounting for residential mobility and unbundling gentrification from displacement, the reluctance to consider indicators of class, the challenge of recognizing stages of gentrification and understanding that the definition depends on both the timing and perspective of the observer.

The research points out, for example, that:

- Most of what we know about gentrification comes from studies about change in San Francisco and New York—cities that are generally, and empirically, not considered comparable to Milwaukee.
- Seven recent and reputable studies identified key indicators but none of the studies agree on each of the indicators.
- Mobility and migration are generally higher among the same populations that are most at risk for displacement so methods to account for that should be considered in documenting effects of neighborhood change
- Neighborhood change may be hyper-local level. Change is not readily apparent at the City, ZIP, neighborhood or even census tract level. It may be “house by house and block by block.”
- Change reflected in data does not always align with the change perceived by residents and business owners.

Related Milwaukee Efforts

Despite the challenges associated with measuring change, in Milwaukee, efforts to promote equitable development and avoid displacement often associated with gentrification are front and center. This

report looks at related local efforts including MKE United, LISC- Milwaukee, the Department of City Development's Transit Oriented Development Study, and A Place in the Neighborhood, Milwaukee's Anti-Displacement Plan.

Further insights into understanding neighborhood change were garnered from a focused look at two Milwaukee neighborhoods associated with the fear of gentrification and displacement: the Brewers Hill neighborhood on the North side of downtown and the Walker's Point neighborhood on the South side of downtown. In both cases, Data You Can Use:

- provided historical context and a description of the neighborhoods
- summarized and presented the quantitative data collected by the
 - The Department of City Development's Transit Oriented Design study
 - MKE United in its Downtown study
 - The City's Anti-Displacement Study
- prepared a neighborhood "data portrait" for each neighborhood summarizing key census data points most often requested by neighborhood organizations
- conducted and summarized individual interviews with long-time residents, investors, policy makers and business-owners
- conducted and synthesized focus groups in collaboration with the neighborhood organization in each area
- explored two key indicators of gentrification at the micro (census block) level (change in race and education levels)
- analyzed two key indicators of displacement (changes in housing-burden for renters and homeowners) at the census block level in these neighborhoods



Changes in Population, Education and Housing Burden

In brief, the analysis confirms that, at the block group level, there is a different kind of neighborhood change occurring in Walker's Point and Brewers Hill compared to the city as a whole, and that these two areas are very different from each other in their stages of change. Between 2000 and 2015, Milwaukee as a whole experienced a decline in the percent of the population that is White (from 50.6% to 46.9%) while the White population in Brewers Hill increased from 29.5% to 61.3%. In Walker's Point, the percent of the population that is White decreased from 60% to 47.2% during this same period. For Brewers Hill, the rate of change was greater between 2000 and 2010 while in Walker's Point the change is more dramatic between 2010 and 2015.

Changes in educational attainment in these two neighborhoods also show patterns very different from the city overall. Between 2000 and 2015, the percent of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher increased slowly across the city from 18.3% to 23.3%. In Brewers Hill, over this same period, the percent grew from 26.7% to 50%, while in Walker's Point it increased from 10.2% to 23.2%.

On the selected indicators of displacement, the neighborhoods again vary from the city and from each other. Overall, the city has seen an increase in the percentage of renters who are housing-burdened: that is, paying over 30% of their household income on rent or a mortgage. For renters across the city, the percent of housing-burdened residents increased from 40.9% in 2000 to 57.2% in 2015. In Walker's Point, the increase was much steeper, going from 34.1% to 67.7%. Brewers Hill, on the other hand, remained relatively flat, going only from 43.7% to 45.4%.

The risk of displacement for homeowners shows a different story. While city-wide the percent of homeowners who are housing-burdened increased from 24.9% in 2000 to 38.9% in 2015, the increase in Brewers Hill was much less, going from 24.7% to 29.5%. Walker's Point, on the other hand saw a decrease in homeowners who were housing-burdened, going from 45.8% to 20.5%.

Looking Ahead

While the selected indicators show reason to follow in looking for evidence or future projections of neighborhood change, the qualitative analysis is likely more significant in pointing out other things that might be included in the discussion of neighborhood change in the future. These include:

- A more serious look at additional indicators of class (particularly occupation and wealth)
- A look at the impact of historic legacy
- A more serious consideration of indicators of diversity
- Inclusion of analysis of protective factors that influence the response to and rate of change.

The report points out that:

- Indicators based solely on race oversimplify. While race, income and class are clearly intertwined, treating race as a monolith, ignores the fact that people of color may be part of the gentrification movement and that occupations associated with gentrification may not be indicated by income. Both residents and business owners of Brewers Hill and Walker's Point pointed to examples of middle-class Black and Latino families making housing choices based on housing stock, and proximity to downtown and family members.
- A legacy of racial segregation impacts the rate and type of change that can occur in a neighborhood. As we attempt to understand neighborhood change, we need to incorporate an

understanding of economic necessity, restrictive housing covenants, discriminatory real estate and lending practices and overt racism.

- We need to broaden our conception of diversity to include both the composition and the evenness of the racial and ethnic groups. In a hyper-segregated city, neighborhoods that all Black, or all Latino are no more diverse than neighborhoods that are all white.
- Change itself is often a reason for fear. The “fear of gentrification” when unpacked is often about the fear of change and the lack of involvement in affecting the change. The fear can be due to the failure to involve the right people at the right time. More authentic engagement of the population affected by the change and a focus on protective factors could be beneficial.

A Focus on Protective Factors:

Through the interviews and focus groups, the research identified several “protective factors” that might mitigate both the fear and reality of displacement. These include:

- informed conversations including shared knowledge and understanding of terms and real and perceived opportunities and threats.
- active neighborhood organizations that provide a forum for goal setting, planning, engagement and debate. Those that include the interests of both business and residents were preferred.
- responsive political representatives who interact with business, residents and organizations and represent the interests of the neighborhood were identified as critical.
- the presence of neighborhood schools where neighbors have the opportunity to come together around the well-being of their children and break down barriers that divide them
- a diversity of housing options providing a balance. The focus should not be on low income housing but the balance.

Last Words

Perhaps the most insightful comment from hundreds of hours of interviews came from an elderly gentleman who has worked in Walker’s Point for nearly 40 years. “The nature of the city,” he said, “is to reinvent.”

Milwaukee has the opportunity to continue to reinvent. Informed by data and with an understanding of history, the wisdom of those with lived experience, and thoughtful partners, Milwaukee can do so in a way that monitor neighborhood change, drives informed government action and supports the prevention of displacement and the promotion of inclusive revitalization.

Recommendations

Because this study was intended to stimulate action, below are some final recommendations to help direct future efforts to observe and track neighborhood change.

WATCH for change beyond simple migration. Regularly monitor and assess changes in education, racial balance, class, wealth, occupation, and housing burden. Factor in historical legacy.

GET the right comparable for drawing comparisons or conclusions about neighborhood change in Milwaukee. Waiting for or responding to changes as they occurred in larger markets may obscure more subtle changes as they occur in a city like Milwaukee.

LOOK at the hyper-local level. Change is likely to be masked at the City, ZIP, and even neighborhood and tract level. It may be most obvious block by block, or even house by house.

ASK the experts – the people in the neighborhood. Provide opportunities for authentic engagement and support indigenous organizations as they provide a forum for informed conversation.

SEPARATE the concepts of gentrification and displacement and distinguish between types of growth and development.

VALUE demographic changes that increase diversity, meaning a mix of people represented across multiple groups. Rather than solutions focused solely on increasing low-income housing include strategies that aim for a mix of housing across the neighborhood.

ADDRESS “the fear” of gentrification by elevating the debate and engaging the right people at the right time.

BUILD protective factors that prevent displacement. Most commonly, persuasively, and passionately suggested by this report are the need to:

- **Include** deliberate strategies to include the voice and authentic participation of residents in the decision-making process. Honor the wisdom of residents.
- **Increase** attention to the importance of access to quality schools in neighborhood development. In Milwaukee, most children are not attending schools in their neighborhoods and most schools do not attract neighborhood residents. Development strategies that ignore schools risk building neighborhoods without children and neighborhoods without business.
- **Invest** in the capacity of neighborhood organizations that promote indigenous leadership development. Integrating business interests and resident interests under the same organization was recommended.
- **Acknowledge** the role of strong ties to city government and the importance of responsive elected officials in assuring appropriate development.



What do Detroit, the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Buffalo, and Phoenix have in common?

All five cities have significant downtown development going on, all are concerned about segregation, all have efforts to spread development opportunities to nearby neighborhoods, and several are employing transit-oriented design solutions. Additionally, all are part of the Turning the Corner cross-site study of the Urban Institute, the Kresge Foundation, and the Federal Reserve/Philanthropy Initiative. The purpose of the study is to better understand early signs of neighborhood change. The goal is to produce meaningful and more frequent measures of neighborhood dynamics and facilitate informed community conversations to prevent displacement and promote equitable neighborhood restoration.

Like the other cities in the study, Milwaukee is experiencing unprecedented downtown development. New developments include the Northwestern Mutual Corporate Headquarters and luxury residential tower; Fiserv Forum, the new NBA basketball arena; Foxconn's new headquarters on Wisconsin Ave; and the installation of the HOP, the new downtown streetcar. At the same time, there is increased concern about equity, displacement, and shared development and a fear that downtown development will draw resources away from or lead to gentrification and displacement in adjacent neighborhoods. Examples include the Common Council's call for an anti-displacement plan, MKE United an initiative of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Urban League, and the City of Milwaukee; and the direct investment in neighborhoods by several philanthropic organizations (the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Northwestern Mutual Foundation, the Zilber Family Foundation) as well as the place-based focus of Children's Hospital's and the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC-Milwaukee), all with an equity lens.

This study was taken on with the support of the Community Development Alliance (CDA), a coalition of community, family and corporate foundations, government leaders, financial institutions and neighborhood practitioners who meet quarterly to share information and explore ideas. Written and oral reports on *Turning the Corner* were provided at quarterly meetings and copies may be found in the appendix of this report. The program committee of the CDA also serves as the advisory group for a related study on expanding the set of indicators that the City currently uses to assess neighborhood change (Beyond Market Value) by supplementing traditional market and housing-related indicators with indicators of the status and well-being of the population. This group provided additional review and guidance and is acknowledged in the appendix.

How has Neighborhood Change played out in Milwaukee?

Like other rust belt cities, civil unrest in the 1960's and deindustrialization in the 1970's affected Milwaukee and its future. Much occurred in the name of urban renewal. Industrial parks were built in White areas far from the city. Clearing the land for the Park West freeway, which was never built, has been called "intentional displacement" that tore apart neighborhoods and the walk-to-work culture. The near north side, by most accounts, has been neglected. Loss of industrial jobs, suburban growth due to highway and housing developments, and white flight changed neighborhoods and reduced neighborhood income levels. Efforts to de-segregate schools further led to the decline of neighborhood cohesion, and thus the decline of some neighborhoods.

The City's investments in housing and development have taken many routes over time. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Redevelopment Authority's strategy was to buy-up properties and sell them for \$5,000 with the provision that there would be businesses on the first floor and residential units on the upper floors. In the early 2000's the City focused redevelopment efforts around the rivers, investing in

the improvement and expansion of the Riverwalk as a method to drive tourism. Hospitals and healthcare were thought to be key to development and jobs. At the same time, there was an effort to attract high-tech companies to promote employment and workforce development. By some accounts, this resulted in reduced efforts to sustain neighborhoods. During the great recession, Milwaukee suffered significantly from the foreclosure crisis, with the City acquiring thousands of vacant and abandoned properties.

With the economic recovery, the city experienced remarkable growth, mostly concentrated in the downtown area. In recent years, the City has focused on downtown development, seeing the related construction jobs (Foxconn, Northwestern Mutual, the arena, and the streetcar) as holding a key to economic development. Responding to organized political demands, this downtown development has been accompanied by neighborhood investments; the city has allocating \$13-15 million annually for exterior preservation and foreclosure remediation in neighborhoods, and an additional \$36 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for neighborhood development.

What have we learned about neighborhoods that are changing?

All neighborhoods change.

Neighborhoods are changing all the time—there are natural waves of births, deaths, moves for upward mobility and moves due to unfortunate circumstances. There is business growth and business closings, some due to market conditions and some due to personal circumstances. There are housing booms and housing busts associated both with the economy and with policy.ⁱ

As change is constant, what may matter most is the rate of change. Neighborhoods where natural out-migration is balanced by newcomers may remain stable. Neighborhoods that grow too quickly may leave residents with a sense of fear and uncertainty. And neighborhoods that see increased vacant and abandoned properties fight uphill battles to attract new residents and businesses at a rate that compensates for the loss. (Baltimore Vital Signs)

Most cities contain neighborhoods that are declining, neighborhoods that are stable, and those that are growing. There are stagnant and declining areas adjacent to fast-paced developments and there are areas that remain strong as adjacent areas decline. Neighborhoods may have “pockets” within them, as small as blocks and intersections where change is occurring at a rate that is faster or slower than others.

This change and how it is viewed offered depends on one’s vantage point. Along the *spectrum of change*, there is positive development that may take place on previously vacant land; redevelopment that may occur on abandoned property in revitalization efforts; development that displaces the existing population sometimes intentionally and often in the name of urban renewal; and gentrification which may attract people who have more education and higher incomes and are often white. In some cases, gentrification is associated with the displacement of poorer populations and people of color.

“Gentrification” —Challenges to informed conversation and measurement:

This project is aimed at producing meaningful and more frequent measures of neighborhood dynamics and facilitating informed community conversations to prevent displacement and equitably restore

neighborhoods. All conversations are challenging when people bring different conceptions, definitions, and experiences to the discussion. Conversations around the concept of neighborhood change and more specifically the term “gentrification” are no different. This section addresses the challenge of documenting gentrification given mixed understandings. Additional challenges have their origins in the lack of good comparisons with other cities; failure to account for normal geographic mobility and moving patterns; and the resistance to using indicators related to class. Additionally, the research surfaces other indicators that deserve more attention—including the presence of protective factors—engaging the right people at the right time, the power of informed conversation, active neighborhood organizations that focus on both residents and business, responsive political representatives, the presence of neighborhood schools, and the diversity of housing options.

The Complexity of the Concept While the use of the word “gentrification” is common, its meaning is not. Although much work has been done to document, describe and define the term, in common parlance it is used in contradictory ways. For some, it means redevelopment, refurbishment, renovation and restoration while for others it means inflated prices, displacement, forced relocation, and a manifestation of racism. The term is often used to express fear of change, uncertainty, and a feeling of being excluded from the decision-making process. Like McCarthy’s accusations of “communism,” people sometimes raise the specter of gentrification with little understanding or evidence of its presence. Establishing good evidence of gentrification also poses multiple challenges.

Lack of Agreement on Appropriate Indicators A recent [study](#) from DataSmart at Harvard focuses on how local governments in Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, New York City and Boston are identifying and intervening in neighborhoods in the early stages of gentrification. The purpose is to provide a starting point for cities that are attempting to map, document or predict gentrification and displacement. The work includes the caution that the various studies “differ greatly in both the number of factors considered and the fine-grainedness of the data used,” warning that a city’s decisions of what typology to follow should depend on their goals and available data.

It is worth noting that there is not one indicator that is used in all seven studies. Across the seven studies, the indicators used most frequently are identified in the table below.

Table 1 Commonly used indicators of gentrification

Indicator	Number of Studies
residents who rent	6
residents who are white	5
residents without a college degree	5
percent low income	5
percent housing cost-burdened	4
change in median rent	4

Constructed by DYCU from [Where is Gentrification Happening in Your City?](#)

The Challenge of Comparability Much of what has been written about gentrification stems from what has occurred in New York and San Francisco. While there are things to learn from such mega-metropolises, they are not good “comparables” for the city of Milwaukee. One tool that might allow better comparison is the Peer City Identification Tool (PCIT), developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of

Chicago. PCIT identifies cities that cluster together on indicators of key dimensions (equity, resilience, outlook and housing). The following table describes these dimensions; lists Milwaukee’s peers and displays in blue the indicators used to measure gentrification in the study mentioned above.

Table 2 Comparable Cities from PCIT

Milwaukee’s Peer Cities on Key indicators			
Construct			
Equity (racial and socioeconomic composition)	Resilience (economic and labor market conditions)	Outlook (demographic and economic future)	Housing (affordability, tenure and age of housing stock)
Indicators			
Hispanic-white dissimilarity index	Labor force participation	Percent foreign born	Percent of housing units built before 1980
Black-white dissimilarity index	Changes in labor force participation	Percent population change	Vacancy rate
Poverty rate	Labor share of manufacturing	Percent of families with children	Home value to income ratio
Changes in poverty rate	Median family income	Percent of population 20-64	Homeownership rate
Percent white	Labor share of manufacturing both	Population size	Percent rent burdened households
Percent with a bachelor’s degree	Changes in median family income		
Milwaukee’s Peer Cities			
Atlantic City, NJ	Allentown, PA	Kansas City, MO	Allentown, PA
Cleveland, OH	Canton, NJ	Long Beach, CA	Binghamton, NY
Dayton, OH	Cincinnati, OH	Memphis, TN	Bridgeport, CT
Detroit, MI	Covington, KY	Oakland, CA	Lancaster, PA
Flint, MI	Euclid, OH	St. Paul, MN	Reading, PA
Gary, IN	Memphis, TN	Tucson, AZ	Rochester, NY
Patterson, NJ	New Britain, CT	Tulsa, OK	Springfield, MA
Saginaw, MI	Vallejo, CA	Virginia Beach, VA	Syracuse, NY
Trenton, NJ	Winston-Salem, NC		Utica, NY
Youngstown, OH			York, PA

Constructed from the Peer City Identification Tool (PCIT), Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago by Data You Can Use

NOTE variables in blue are those included in the Harvard study cited above. The top five used in those seven studies are represented in the PCIT.

Note that there are only two cities, Memphis and Allentown, that are in the same category as Milwaukee on more than one construct, and on only one of the constructs (resilience) are the three cities in the same category. More importantly and in every case, the comparable cities vary by the constructs and **in no case is Milwaukee in the same category as New York or San Francisco** suggesting that lessons from these cities may not be relevant here and reinforcing the need to look for indicators appropriate in comparable settings.

Residential Mobility Beyond the challenge of identifying comparable cities, there is a challenge of distinguishing normal movement from displacement, and then gentrification from displacement. Gentrification assumes lower-income people move when they are forced out by rising prices. But both the national data and the interviews in Walker’s Point and Brewers Hill reveal a range of other reasons for people moving from both houses and neighborhoods

As one long-time Brewers Hill Resident noted:

“Growing up I must have lived in more than 30 different houses in this neighborhood. That’s what people did, they moved from one house to another, the plumbing was bad, the heat was bad, the neighbors were bad...we’d move.”

Similarly, a long-time Walker’s Point resident said:

“Hispanic people are not moving out because white people are moving in. They moved because the housing stock is not good, and they want a better house where their children can play in the yard. They are moving away from cockroaches just like anyone else would.”

According to the US Census Bureau, nationally, nearly 40 million people per year move. In 2013, approximately 12% of the US population moved. We know that there is generally a high degree of geographic mobility in urban areas. A portion of this is explained by naturally occurring movement, and there are some general patterns. Whether measured by the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey (ASEC) or the American Housing Survey (AHS), there are **four main reasons for moving**.

1. Family-related includes change in marital status, establishing one’s own household, and other family reasons.
2. Job-related reasons include: retirement, loss of a job or looking for work, to reduce commute time or move closer to work, and transfer or to take a new job.
3. Housing-related reasons include wanting a better neighborhood/less crime, wanting to own, wanting cheaper housing, wanting a new or better apartment, and foreclosure or eviction.
4. Other includes natural disaster, change of climate, health reasons, to attend or leave college and other. (CPS ASES)



Both the ASEC and the AHS report reasons for moving. Nearly half (48%) of people who moved gave a housing-related reason, followed by family-related reasons (30%), and job-related reasons (19%). Most people who move do so within the same county.

There are notable differences however among different segments of the population. For example,

- Urban people move more than rural people.
- Males are more likely than females to move for job-related reasons.
- Young people 25-29 have the lowest percentage of housing-related reasons for moving.
- Black or African American respondents report the highest housing-related reasons for moving of any race.
- People with a bachelor's degree or advanced education have different reasons for moving than those with lower levels of educational attainment.

Because many of these factors are found in neighborhoods that are gentrifying, they complicate the causal connection. When determining the extent or effect of gentrification, how do we account for what we know about people's reasons for moving and the variation among populations of interest?

The Conception of Class

Beyond the issues of comparability and general residential mobility, the term “gentrification” is more traditionally related to class than simply income or race. While some dismiss the concept of class as being equal to income, others take a more sociological or anthropological view and note that middle and upper class black and ethnic minorities are also part of the gentrification movement. Further, academics, artists and entrepreneurs are often early adopters in neighborhoods that are later labeled gentrified, and these groups have an elevated status that may not be reflected in their income.

From its origins in England in the 1960's, the term “gentrification” referred to “people of good social position.” In the United Kingdom, this refers to the class of people directly below the nobility in position and birth, that is, the privileged upper- class. While we shy away from the concept of class in the US, the indicators that are generally included in its assessment might be informative here. Traditionally, the concept of class includes a consideration of **occupation, education, income and wealth**. Differences in wealth may be reflected in investments in housing, education and health care. Acknowledging that class and race are often closely intertwined, there are some who say gentrification is more about class than race, and that what distinguishes gentrification from normal migration is the displacement of lower-class populations with higher-class populations. The interviews and focus groups conducted here support this consideration and it is addressed later in the report.

In addition to these challenges, there are other areas mentioned in interviews and focus groups that should be explored in greater detail in considering indicators of neighborhood change. These are addressed after reviewing the data and qualitative input.

Stages of gentrification and “at-risk of displacement”

The research would also suggest that there are different stages of gentrification and that displacement is not always necessary or obvious. It also suggests that different stages require different interventions to address displacement. Classification schemes can be useful in pairing the stage of displacement with the appropriate response.

Finally, as Lisa Bates points out in her work on gentrification and displacement, the classification and data are NOT a substitute for engagement with residents to assure that whatever strategy is chosen to avoid displacement is realistic. And, because change is constant, there is a need for ongoing monitoring and tracking to understand changing conditions and emerging at-risk neighborhoods.

Related local efforts:

The topic is “front and center” in Milwaukee.

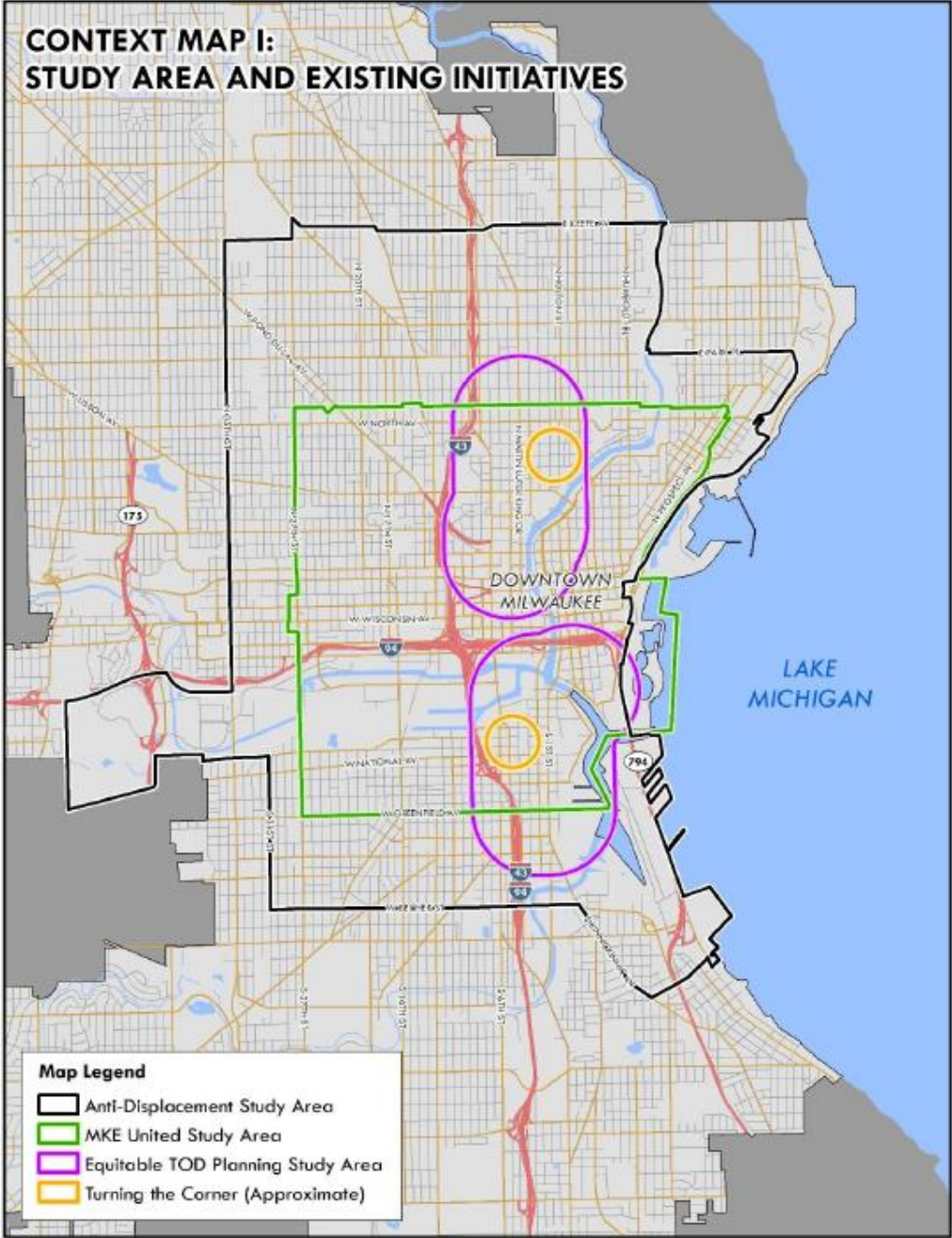
While there are differing views and perspectives, one thing that is certain. Milwaukee, in its development efforts, is paying attention to neighborhood change. Whether it is following a national trend, responding to fear, or proactive promotion, conversations about neighborhood development and anti-displacement and anti-gentrification are common. In addition to the cross-site study coordinated by Data You Can Use, Milwaukee’s partner in the Urban Institute’s National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP), local examples include:

- **Moving Milwaukee Forward: Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development** (City of Milwaukee, King Drive BID, Harbor District Inc., Walker’s Point Association)
- **MKE United** (Greater Milwaukee Committee, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Urban League, City of Milwaukee, and Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) – Milwaukee.
- **Eviction and Landlord/Tenant Initiatives** (City of Milwaukee, CommonBond Communities of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Policy Forum, Community Advocates Public Policy Institute)
- **LISC’s Equitable Economic Development Strategy** introduced at the 2017 “Advancing Equitable Development in Milwaukee: Policy and Practice” Symposium (Local Initiatives Support Corporation- Milwaukee)
- **The City of Milwaukee’s Anti-Displacement Plan: A Place in the Neighborhood** was released In February of 2018, by the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD).

A brief summary of these efforts follows. In summarizing these efforts, it should be noted that not only do the definitions and conceptions of neighborhood change vary, but the boundaries used to describe neighborhoods may vary as well. In reality, neighborhoods can overlap, census tracts can include multiple neighborhoods, neighborhood “boundaries” may be defined one way by one group and another by a different group. Data are reported here as they are reported in the various reports and an effort is made to describe the boundaries used the various reports for further clarification.

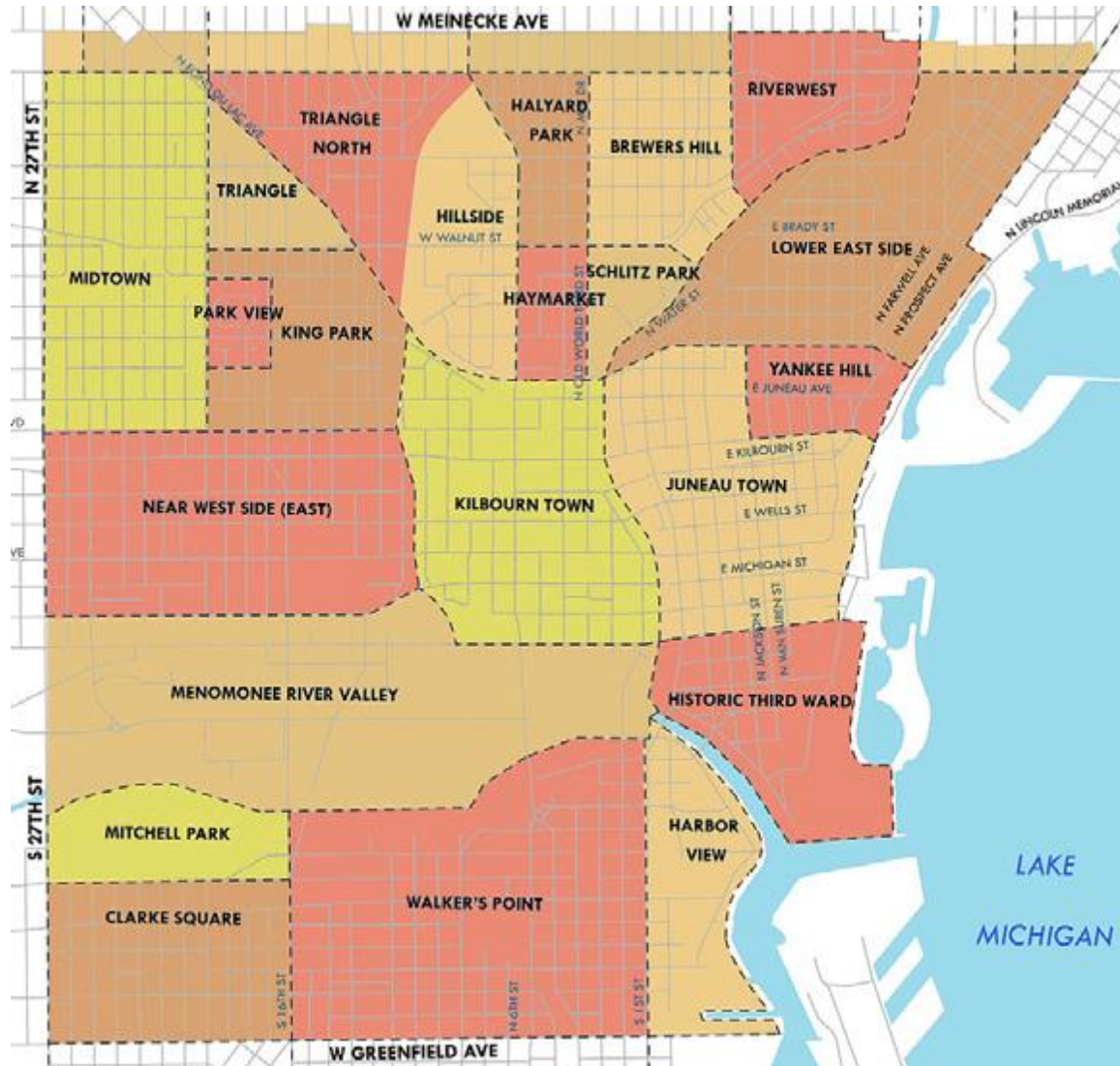
The following map from the Department of City Development Anti-Displacement plan identifies the boundaries of the various efforts. (Source: Department of City Development)

Context Map I: Area Overview and Existing Initiatives



Map 1: Focus of related efforts. Source Dept. of City Development

MKE United: The Greater Milwaukee Committee, in partnership with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, LISC Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Urban League and the City of Milwaukee are sponsors of MKE United, which is a comprehensive planning project to create an inclusive vision for Downtown Milwaukee and adjacent areas of interest. The sponsors have engaged in strategic visioning to create a Strategic Action Agenda to better connect downtown with the surrounding neighborhoods. The goals include increasing home ownership rates, addressing segregation, minimizing displacement, increasing density.



Map 2: Neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area. Source: MKE United

The project uses two maps: one with the eleven neighborhood clusters (that include Brewery Hill and Walker’s Point) and one with the city’s traditional neighborhoods defined by the City of Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan for Neighborhoods. Both maps can be found [here](#). In the cluster map, the Brewery Hill neighborhood includes Harambee, Halyard Park and parts of Riverwest, while the Walker’s Point neighborhood includes the Harbor View area.

As part of the planning process, MKE United surveyed stakeholders at events and on-line about perceptions of the various neighborhoods. At the time of review there were 533 respondents. Of these, 230 (45%) resided in the Greater Downtown area while 253 (47.5%) lived outside the area and an additional 9.3% were unidentified. Of those living in the Greater Downtown area, 24 were from the Brewers Hill/Harambee neighborhood and 19 were from the Walker's Point/Walker Square area.

Respondents were asked to identify neighborhoods within the Greater Downtown area that felt welcoming to them. The neighborhoods identified as most welcoming were the Historic Third Ward (86%), Downtown (80%) and the Lower East Side (80%). These were followed by Walker's Point (72%) and Brewers Hill/Harambee (41%). Perceptions were that people were more likely to visit /shop dine in Walker's Point than in Brewers Hill. Reasons that respondents offered to explain why neighborhoods did not feel welcoming included public safety (30%), perception of crime (24%), "nothing of interest" (23%), and "no one living in these areas" (23%). Because the survey combined Brewers Hill and Harambee, perceptions of Harambee may influence results. Similarly, the common perception of Brewers Hill may be limited to the residential areas.

Respondents were also asked what would strengthen social connections among the people in neighborhoods of the Greater Downtown areas. There was little variation in responses among the options: more offerings for a range of cultures (91%); more affordable housing (90%); more affordable fresh food and dining (89%); more places to meet a range of cultures (91%); and better safety measures (91%). This consistency within response categories was also apparent among respondents in the Brewers Hill/Harambee and Walker's Point/Walkers Square neighborhoods.

In July of 2018, MKE United released a summary of the [Greater Downtown Action Agenda](#) to share the collective vision and outline the next steps. The following excerpt (from page 8 of the report) provides their description of the challenges and trends facing the area:

***Low Population Growth:** Greater Downtown as a whole is facing a decline in population. SEWRPC projections show Milwaukee County will grow by only 2% over the next decade.*

***Segregation and Poverty:** Poverty levels remain higher for minorities in Greater Downtown compared to the entire population. If racial inequality persists, it will limit retention of existing residents and attraction of new residents.*

***Loss of "Authentic" Milwaukee:** Greater Downtown as a whole is racially diverse; however these diverse populations live in segregated neighborhoods.*

***Fear of Gentrification:** If the intention of creating more mixed-income housing is not met, neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown core risk experiencing gentrification and resident displacement.*

Three relevant early action areas of focus for MKE United are:

- a neighborhood investment fund, to address capital access issues across communities of color specifically tied to catalytic development across neighborhoods;
- collaborative work on commercial corridor revitalization (including Pop-Up MKE and Brew City Match); and
- continued community engagement to further shape the steps taken to implement the vision.

[Moving Milwaukee Forward: Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\)](#) In partnerships with neighborhood groups including the Historic King Drive BID, the Harbor District Inc. and the Walker's Point Association, this planning process is designed to guide the expansion of the HOP, Milwaukee's new streetcar. The creation and preservation of affordable housing along the potential future extensions of the Streetcar is a major focus of the study. The Department of City Development contracted with HR&A to provide a market analysis of the Walker's Point and Brewers Hill neighborhoods as areas where the new street car would be expanding. HR&A Advisors and its subconsultant Lockly Valuation were retained to conduct a residential and commercial market analysis of the existing conditions along the transit corridor and develop a long-term affordability strategy for the area. This data will be explored later in the report in connection to the two specific neighborhoods of interest.

The analysis by HR&A in conjunction with the Transit Oriented Development study defines gentrification as:

"the displacement of lower income, nonwhite households by higher income households."

The HR&A report comments on the roots of the word "gentrification" where it was first used in England in the 1960's and note its expanded meaning in the United States where they suggest it "has come to suggest displacement along racial, occupational, and religious lines."¹

According to this study, gentrification occurs "when the total population of these lower income and nonwhite populations in an area, and the share of the population of those populations in an area are both in decline. While this is not the only means of defining gentrification, it is among the more quantifiable." (emphasis added)

The TOD study notes the limitations of available data stating that "because of the nature of available data, analysis is only possible on a neighborhood-wide level, meaning that the data cannot reflect the way individual households may or may not have been impacted by neighborhood-wide changes."

[LISC -Milwaukee](#): In November of 2017, LISC Milwaukee sponsored a symposium on "[Advancing Equitable Development in Milwaukee: Policy and Practice](#)" which focused on advancing Equitable Economic Development strategies, to introduce effective tools and disruptive tactics to mitigate displacement while providing ways in which all people can benefit and build wealth. Three panels featuring local and national experts reported on creative, established models that support equitable economic development delivered to more than 200 residents and professionals. LISC Milwaukee's commitment to working through an equitable economic development lens and supporting partners with a shared view, are captured in its housing and commercial corridor development strategies which seek to minimize physical and cultural displacement. To further support community capacity and individual capacity to implement activities addressing displacement, they sponsored a series of workshops on Community Wealth Building. The workshops further explored concepts introduced at the symposium. Community centric, equitable housing development concepts that promote wealth creation including housing co-operatives and community land trusts were discussed.

LISC also partnered with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Fair Housing Council to engage the Milwaukee community in a city-wide book read of the [Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government](#)

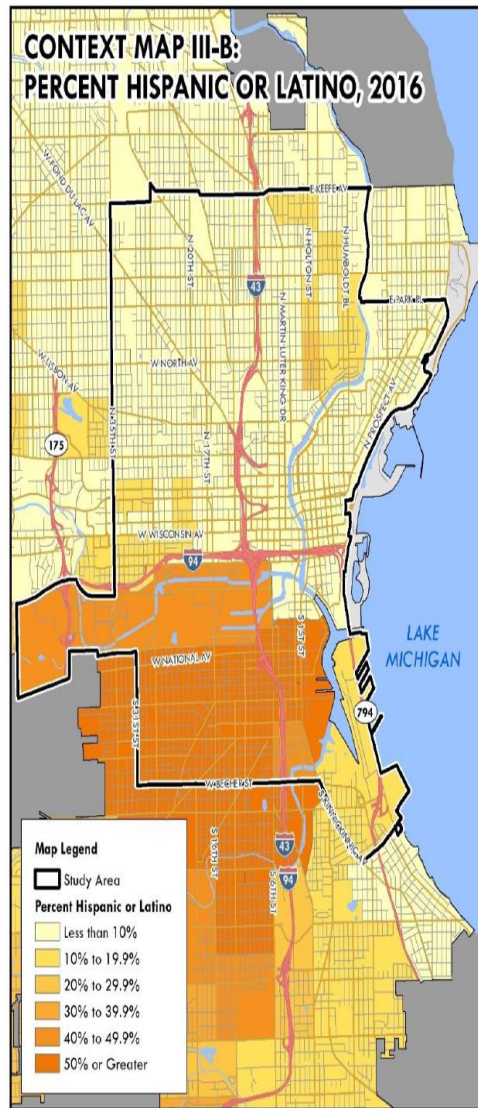
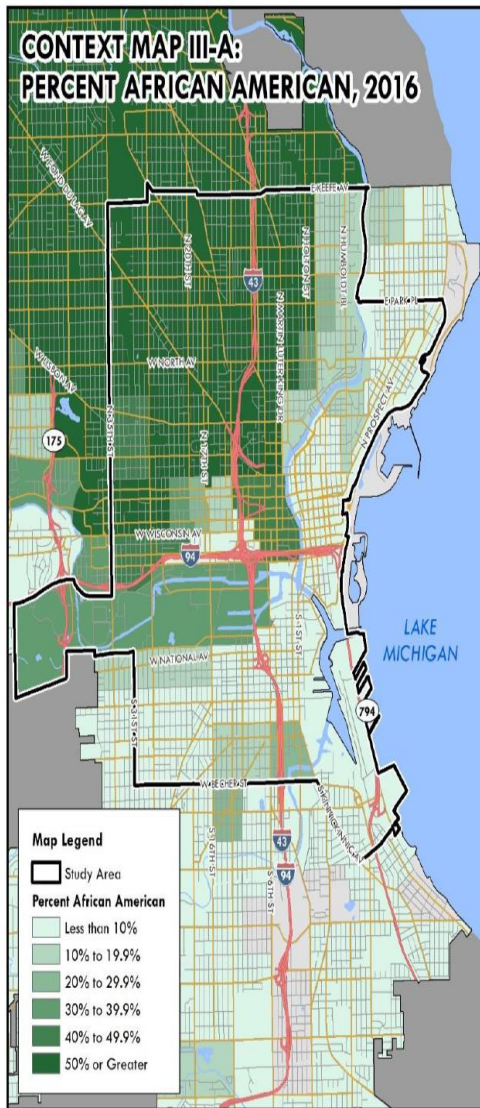
¹ Interestingly, no other reference to the relationship between religion and gentrification has been uncovered.

Segregated America by Richard Rothstein. The goal was to facilitate a broad understanding of the intentional, historical government policies and practices that resulted in housing segregation and continue to impact neighborhoods. LISC and the Fair Housing Council organized community discussions and brought the author to speak at a free, public event.

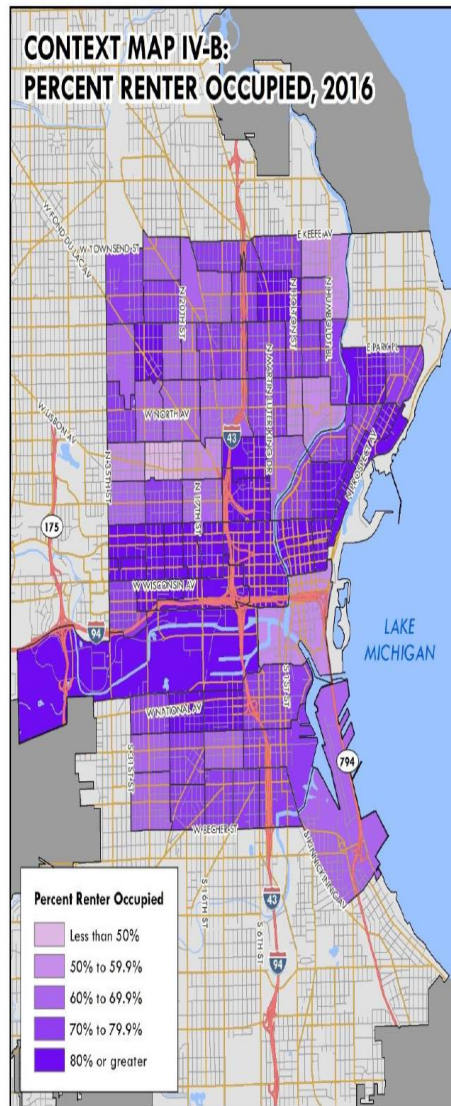
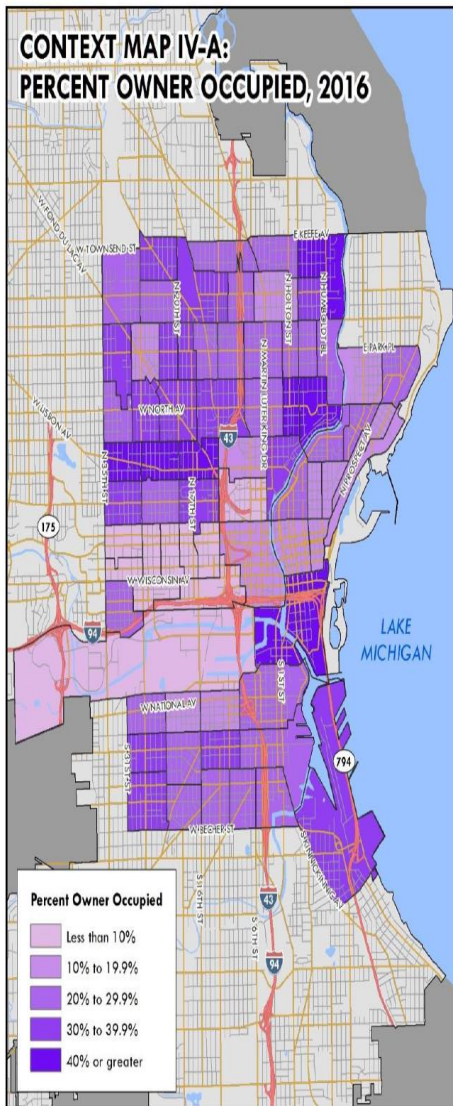
An additional equitable economic development initiative supported by LISC in partnership with Marquette University and Milwaukee School of Engineering is the Associates in Commercial Real Estate (ACRE) program. The core goal is to support development by people from the community developing for the community. To leverage the ACRE program and facilitate commercial corridor revitalization efforts, LISC, with support from the City, launched Brew City Ramp Up and Pop-Up MKE to re-activate underutilized commercial properties. The programs provide emerging entrepreneurs short-term, low-cost leases to test their products and establish neighborhood-based businesses in time to reap the benefits of gentrification and mitigate threats of displacement. These efforts are leveraged with the RISE program, in partnership with Milwaukee Urban League and African American Chamber of Commerce, which supports local entrepreneurs with culturally relevant business development training to create a diverse, local economy of entrepreneurs.

[A Place in the Neighborhood: Milwaukee's Anti-Displacement Plan](#)

While it was not envisioned when the Turning the Corner study began, in October of 2017 the Common Council called for the creation of an Anti-Displacement plan. [This led to a study](#) and its measures of gentrification and displacement are summarized in the following pages. To provide additional context, the following maps from DCD display the distribution of different racial and ethnic groups in the city, as well as the geographic representation of homeowners and renters within the boundaries of the study area.



Map 3: % African American and Hispanic or Latino Source: City of Milwaukee Anti-Displacement Plan



Map 4: % renter and owner occupied: Source: City of Milwaukee Anti-Displacement Plan

In February of 2018, the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD) released A Place in the Neighborhood: An Anti-Displacement Plan for neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown Milwaukee. The Plan was requested by the Milwaukee Common Council in a resolution that stated

“Development should not dismantle and displace existing neighborhoods and communities in order to make way for new residents...”

The well-written and -documented report recognizes that understanding the problem of displacement is the first step in reducing disparities. It also defines the use of key terms including “gentrification, displacement, equitable development, and affordability,” necessary to advancing the work of the anti-

displacement plan and specifies measures to correspond with the terms. Accordingly, terms were defined as follows:

Table 3: Anti-Displacement Plan Use of Terms

Term	Definition	Measure
Gentrification	A market driven, racial and socio-economic reconfiguration of urban communities that have suffered from a history of disinvestment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A reduction in the percentage of households of color AND ➤ A greater than city average increase in household income.
Displacement	The involuntary relocation of established residents or businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater than city average increases in rent of home sale prices AND ➤ A decline in the number of low-income households
Cultural Displacement	Stores, community organizations or other institutions that have been operated by and served neighborhood residents (especially) residents of color and contributed to neighborhood identity relocate or close and are replaced by businesses that do not have the same neighborhood ties.	

Acknowledging that some definitions of gentrification (including the original 1960’s version) do not explicitly mention race, the plan states that “given the historical relationship between race, residential development patterns and government policy, this anti displacement plan focuses specifically on neighborhood change that is accompanied by a change in racial composition. (p.6)

The plan reviews data and trends in the census tracts adjacent to downtown, using the neighborhood boundaries identified by MKE United. The methodology is well-described, and the underlying data used to identify possible gentrification or displacement are readily available from the census and administrative records for 2000, 2010, 2016 and 2017. The study acknowledges that even census tracts may not be a small enough to capture change that may be occurring at the block or street level, and that some of the cultural change cannot be fully captured with housing market and demographic data. This observation also surfaces in *Turning the Corner* qualitative data; is played out in the qualitative data in the *Turning the Corner* study where participants in focus groups and interviews often described the change as occurring “house by house” and “block by block.”

The Anti-Displacement report identified “neighborhoods that have changed” and “neighborhoods at risk of displacement.” As the data indicate, Milwaukee was a “majority minority” city in the 2000 census. Overall, the authors report that, between the 2000 census and 2016, people of color increased from 55.2% of the total population to 61.4%, an 8.9% increase. In general terms, they describe the increase in

African Americans on the Northwest side, an increase of Latinos on the South and West sides, and an increase of white people-- both young and empty nesters--in the areas near downtown.

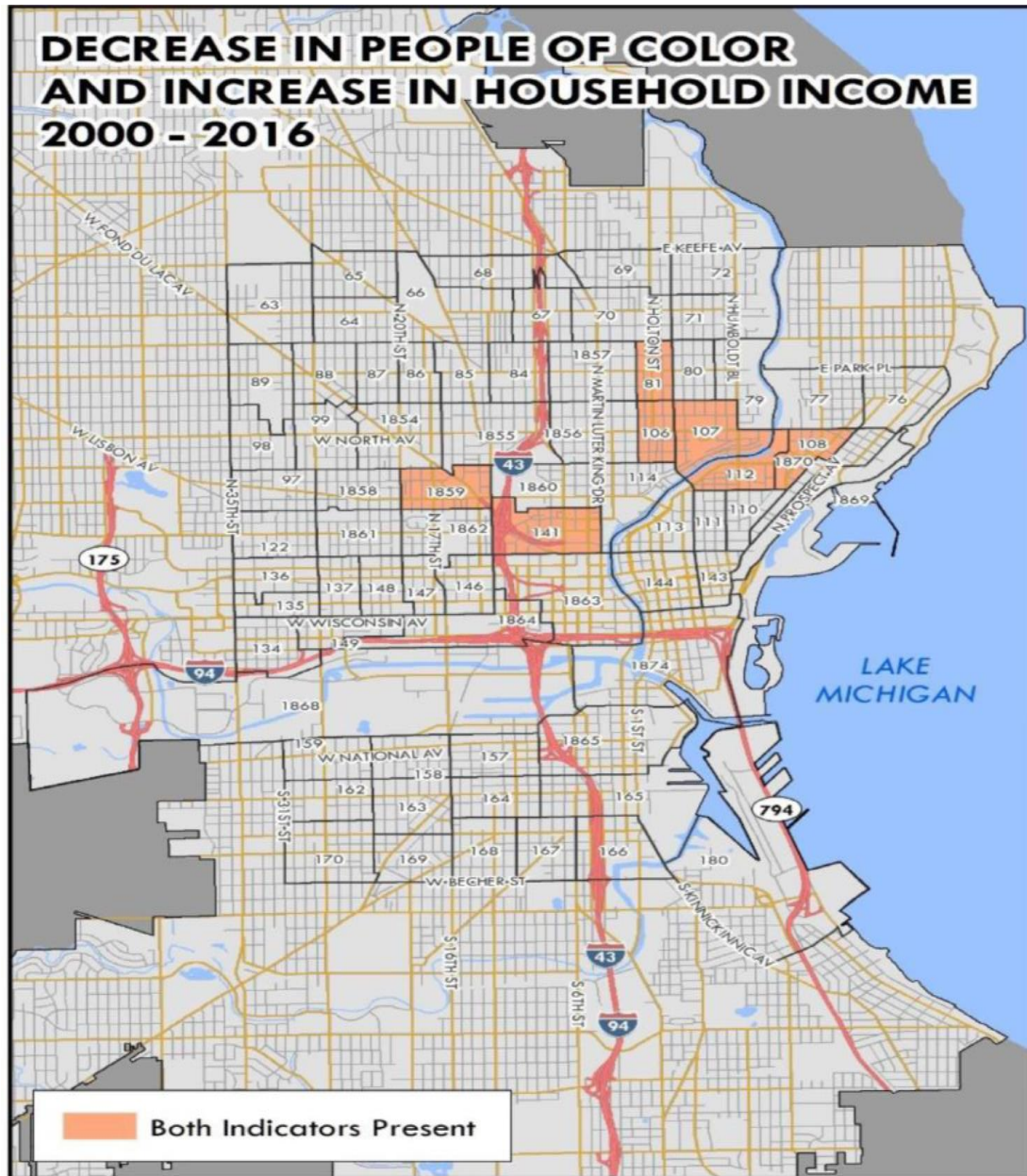
Additionally, the study notes the importance of taking normal mobility patterns into account, such as the fact that on an annual basis approximately 12% of households relocate regardless of market factors. As noted previously, mobility rates are higher among lower income people and people of color; and people move for family and employment reasons, but housing related reasons are the most common (48%). Nationally, among those who move for housing, some move for positive reasons (e.g. they want a new or better house or apartment, a safer area, or more affordable housing), while others move for negative reasons (e.g. foreclosure, eviction).

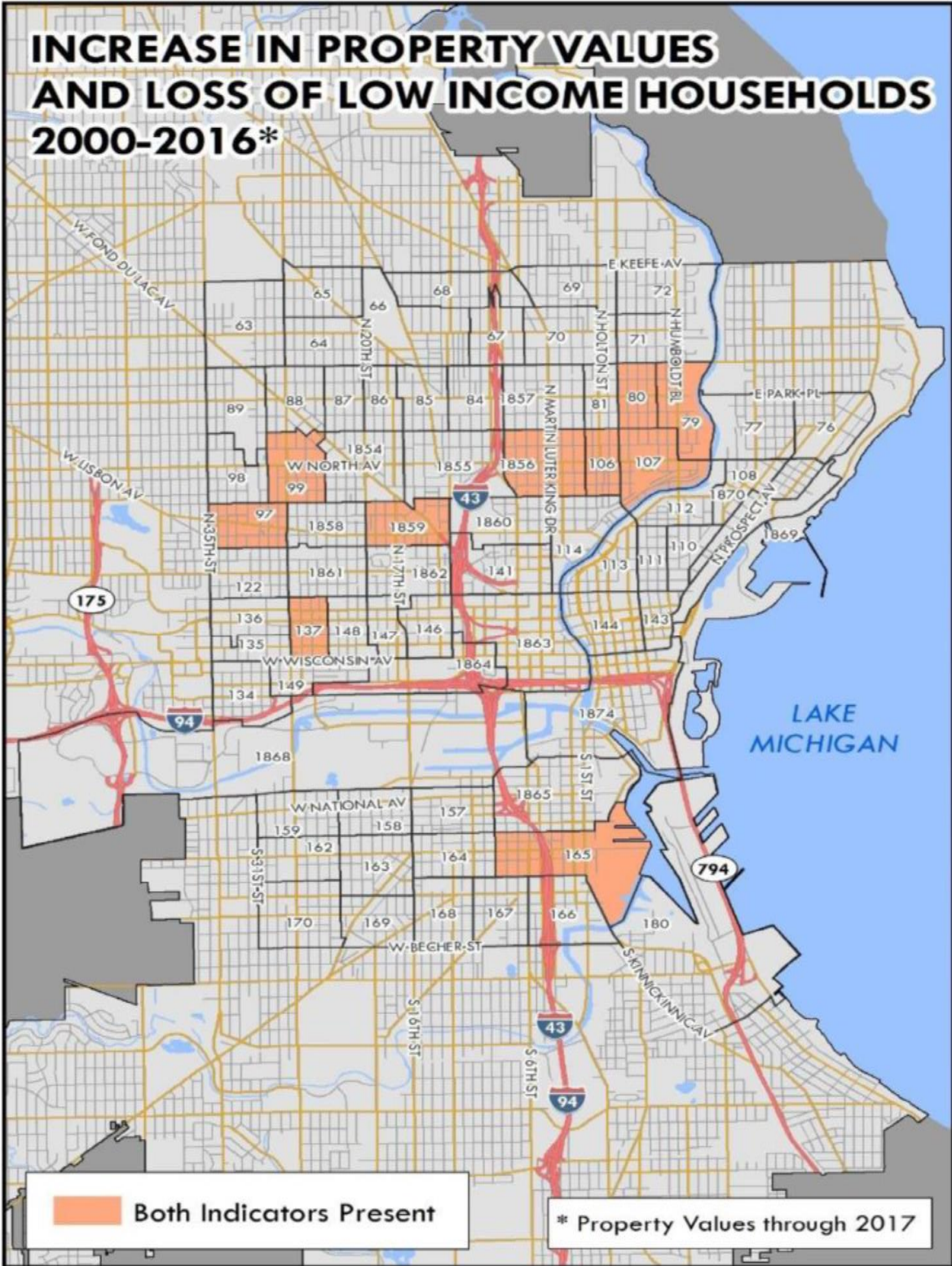
Median Household Income in the city as a whole grew from \$32,000 to \$37,000 (14.9%) while the median assessed value of single family and duplexes went from \$72,400 to \$93,700 (up 29.4%). During this same time period, between 2000 and 2016, the percentage of families in poverty in the city increased by approximately 7,200 families from 17.4% to 24.1%. (p15). Citywide, those considered housing burdened, (paying 30% or more of their income for their housing) include 32.9% of homeowners and 55.8% of renters.

Again, the study behind the Anti-Displacement Plan points out that the quantitative data alone cannot reveal the full story. The supplemental data from the *Turning the Corner* interviews and focus groups presented later in this report highlight the high mobility rates in the Brewer Hill neighborhood and discuss some of the positive reasons for mobility in the Walker's Point neighborhood.

The following maps display the variation in tracts on the key variables used by DCD to define gentrification and displacement.

Map 5. Indicators of Gentrification: Source City of Milwaukee Anti-displacement Plan





Map 6. Indicators of Displacement: Source City of Milwaukee Anti-displacement Plan

Examining indicators of risk of gentrification between 2000 and 2016, the authors of the Anti-Displacement Plan found:

- A decrease in the percent of People of Color in tracts 81, 106 (down 28.3%); 107 (down 42.1%), 141, and 1859.
- An increase in median household income found in tracts 81, 106 (up 50.7%) 107 (up 98.9%), 141 and 1859 (more than doubled)
- Both were found in five tracts in Riverwest and Brewers Hill (81, 106, 107, 141, 1859)

In sum, the tracts most clearly demonstrating the types of changes associated with the report's definition of **gentrification** are found in 106, 107 and 81, which includes portions of Brewers Hill, Harambee and Riverwest. By these indicators, the authors find no data that indicates gentrification in the Walker's Point neighborhood, in part because the development there occurred on previously vacant land or is so recent as to not show up in census data. The tracts most clearly demonstrating the types of changes associated with their definition of **displacement** are tracts in portions of Brewers Hill, Harambee, Riverwest and Walker's Point.

The study also notes that Tracts 106 and 107 together increased by 500 people but were down by 680 African Americans. (p. 17) and that Tracts 108 and 112 on the lower east side also have both sets of indicators but have different histories than the other areas and were thus excluded from the analysis.

The plan concludes that Downtown neighborhoods are stable or growing in the percent of residents of color and, although generally stable, there are both areas where household incomes are declining, and areas that have seen significant increases. Housing cost burden, the report concludes is due mostly to low household incomes (below 50% of area median) rather than high rental costs. A newly released Wisconsin Policy Forum [study](#) supports this view. The Cost of Living: Milwaukee County's Rental Housing Trends and Challenges (August 2018) finds that There is a significant gap in available rental units to meet the demand from low-income renters. While 42% of renter households in Milwaukee County earned less than \$25,000 per year in 2016, only 9% of rental units charged monthly rents those households could afford.

In light of the discussion of the challenges of comparability, one of the major contributions of the City's Anti-Displacement Plan is the summary of national studies and reports with the addition of the pivotal question of **why is this relevant to Milwaukee**. It puts the lessons of the various studies into local context.



A Closer Look at the Neighborhoods of Interest

As previously noted, two neighborhoods, Brewers Hill and Walker's Point were chosen for closer analysis. They were selected in part based on a consideration of the other ongoing efforts (MKE United and the City's TOD study) but also as places perceived to be exhibiting neighborhood change that could be considered gentrification or displacement. The following sections provide background, data and stakeholder input on the nature of change in these two neighborhoods. (see Maps 1 and 2 for greater detail and surrounding areas)

Walker's Point

Description and History

The neighborhood now called Walker's Point was the home of one of the three founders of the city, and the location of the George H. Walker Fur Trading Company. South of downtown, it was incorporated into the village of Milwaukee in 1845. It was primarily industrial but also served as the residential location of workers in the adjacent Third Ward. Urban renewal split the neighborhood with a freeway in the 1960's. Initially a neighborhood of Polish and Slovenian workers, by the 1960's Walker's Point was the home of Mexican and Puerto Rican families, and still has a higher share of Latinx residents than the rest of the city. (see Maps 1 and 2 for greater detail and surrounding areas)

The area includes industrial sections, but also has pockets of single-family and duplex housing. Reinvestment in the area began in 2000-2010. Today, the neighborhood is home to entertainment corridors, such as 2nd and 5th Street, with upscale retail, bars and restaurants. Recently this area has seen some condominium development, as well as the conversion of formerly industrial space to office and retail use. The area has experienced spill-over development from the Milwaukee River from the highly developed and gentrified Third Ward across the Milwaukee River. Assets of Walker's Point include its proximity to downtown, a strong neighborhood organization, and an alderman described by focus group and interview participants as "responsive" and "involved."

By the Numbers

The following summary is based on data provided to the Department of City Development by HR&A for the [Transit Oriented Design Study](#). The area included in the study is within a half mile radius of the planned street car expansion and is thus broader than Walker's Point proper. It includes: the Historic Third Ward, described as destination retail and affluent, with high-end multifamily units; Historic Mitchell described as the home of the city's Hispanic population; Walkers Square, described as more dense single-family homes and smaller rental units; and the Harbor District, which is transitioning from industrial use to high-end development. The broader area of Walker's Point and the Harbor District are described as having locally-owned business, limited convenience goods and services, and in need of stores offering general merchandise such as building materials, gardening supplies and personal goods.

The demographic data from HR&A covers the period from 2000-2015. While the city population was stable between 2000 and 2015, and the adjacent Third Ward experienced dramatic growth (83%), the Walker's Point and adjacent Harbor District area experienced a decline of approximately 1600 people or -15%. HR&A used estimates from the American Community Survey and adjusted for the fact that between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, there were changes in census tract boundaries. The authors report that for the broader study area, the population of both children and millennials (18-34) declined, while the number of those between 35 and 54 increased by 230 or 10% between 2000 and 2015.

The number of families living below the poverty level increased by over 100 families (roughly 20%) with the western portion of Walker's Point having the highest level of poverty (56%). Of the 750 families living below the poverty line, 50% are headed by a female, a smaller portion than the citywide rate of 68%.

Although 20% of residents of the Third Ward have a **bachelor's degree** only 9% of those in the Walker's Point/ Harbor District area do. The number of vehicles per household is highest in the southern portion of Walker's Point and relatively low in the more affluent Third Ward – as well as Walkers Square, an area of higher poverty.

The Walker's Point/ Harbor District area has 5,251 **housing units** with approximately 48% being single family units, and 52% multifamily. The **percentage of renters** (77%) increased slightly between 2000 and 2015. Median household income has risen in the larger area, but in the Walker's Point/Harbor District neighborhood, the percentage of families below the poverty level has increased.

The report also notes a **demographic shift**. In the Walker's Point areas, between 2000 and 2015, there was a population loss of roughly 1400 Latinos and 520 White people, an increase of approximately 500 Black people.

Overall, **average household income** is \$80,000 in the larger area. The HR&A data reports that one would need an annual income of \$60,000 to not be housing burdened in Walker's Point. Currently, more than 2000 households pay more than 30% of their annual income on housing, demonstrating a significant need for affordable housing. HR&A projects there will be 525 more households likely to become housing burdened.

In the Walker's Point area proper, **average household income** has declined from \$30,000 to \$23,000 from when to when. Even so, the area has added an average of 125 market-rate housing units per year. In the **Harbor District**, average household income is down from \$32,000 to \$23,000 during this same period.

There is a wide range of **monthly rental costs** in the area. Median rent north of Florida Street (which includes the northern portion of Walker's Point and the Third Ward) is more than \$1000 per month; east of 5th Street it's \$640 per month; and in other areas it's between \$500-550 per month.

There are more than 250 **Low Income Housing Tax Credits** (LIHTC) in the area expiring in the next 15 years with the greatest number (109) expiring in 2024. HR&A reports that there are more than 850 households that are rent burdened (paying 30% of income on rent) with more than a quarter of these people (220) paying between 30-80% of their income on rent. The HR&A study also noted that the majority of these units will remain subject to rent and income restrictions during the 15-year extended compliance period after the initial 15-year period of affordability. The numbers on **housing burden for home owners** show 220 households spending over 30% of their income on housing, with more than half of these paying between 30% and 80%.

Vacant land is reported to be scattered throughout the area with a total of 138 vacant properties, 124 vacant acres and totaling approximately 30,000 vacant square feet. There are 79 city-owned properties and 49 properties that are owned by other public entities.

The market analysis shows that the **multi-family vacancy rate** is 12.3% and that median sales price of a building is \$155,000 which is double the 2000 amount. In Walker's Point, 13% of the rental housing is regulated by affordability restrictions.

These numbers reflect a piece of the puzzle. Consistent with the Data You Can Use mantra of "no data without stories and no stories without data," the Turning the Corner protocol calls for a mixed-method approach, combining the quantitative analysis with the perspective and wisdom of people who have witnessed or are experiencing neighborhood change. The following section reports on the focus groups and interviews conducted in Walker's Point.

Resident Wisdom

A focus group with longtime Walker's Point residents was conducted on the evening of September 19, 2017 at Arts @ Large, a nonprofit organization located on Fifth Street in Walker's Point. The nonprofit is located along a mixed-use business corridor among restaurants and bars. A volunteer from the nonprofit and the Resident Coordinator from the neighborhood association kindly coordinated the event. Eight residents were in attendance. Participants were recruited via visits to the Walker's Point Neighborhood Association meetings, referrals from individual interviews, and word-of-mouth. Participants received light refreshments and a \$25 gift card for their time. In attendance were four males, and four females. The majority of participants appeared to be Caucasian and one member self-identified as African American/British/Latino. Several members had Latino surnames. Participants ranged in age from 23-71. They had lived in the neighborhood between 9 and 37 years. Two-thirds have been in the neighborhood for more than 30 years. They reported living in Milwaukee for a period ranging from 13 - 42 years. Seven of the eight were homeowners, with an average household size of 2.5 and a range of 1-2 minors living in the household. Half of the participants are employed full-time; a quarter were employed part-time; and the remaining quarter were retired or unemployed. Several work in the neighborhood. Income levels ranged from less than \$20,000 per year to over \$100,000 with the largest group being in the \$60,000 to \$79,900 range.

The focus group was conducted by Data You Can Use following the protocol of the *Turning the Corner* cross-site project. See the appendix for the protocol and demographic data collection form. Participants are acknowledged in the appendix.

When asked about *changing demographics* in the neighborhood, the long-term residents described an influx of young working professionals and stressed that these are individuals and not families. Others pointed out that they are seeing an increase in the number of dogs and children more recently. The new construction, primarily apartments and condos, is perceived to be unaffordable for current residents and participants associated it with a scarcity of affordable housing and high rental prices. Two older residents in the group referred to the new housing prices as "shocking."

One longtime resident came to the focus group with a newspaper clipping about a former tannery in the neighborhood that was in the process of being converted into luxury apartments. She read the part of the article that stated the developer had rejected affordable housing offers and that units start at \$2,000 per month. The article quotes the developer as saying the building is a gated-apartment "designed to preserve the urban setting but keep secure parking for residents." The developer was also quoted as saying he loves the "gritty nature" of the neighborhood. The resident lamented,

...this would never have existed before...the "have" and the "have nots," ...the gap between them was never as pronounced as the way it is today. It was a community of people who had much more similarities than differences... that is not the case now.

One participant thought that Walker's Point was still quite affordable, but a younger member of the group questioned that assertion.

When I look at the rents-- in terms of duplexes and places that are not developed apartments-- they are still pretty darn reasonable.

Really? Have you tried finding a place in Walker's Point?



When asked about *changing neighborhood conditions*, long-term residents talked about seeing change in increased rental rates, reduced cultural diversity, and increased traffic congestion, lack of parking, and increased nonviolent crime.

Walker's Point has long been known for its historic significance and its cultural diversity. Now, however, participants expressed concern that new residents are overwhelmingly young, White professionals, seeking and at the same time eroding that diversity. Residents also feared that the appreciation of the historic roots of the neighborhood was declining.

While the people came here for that diversity, and have stayed here for that diversity, the people coming in aren't diverse. When I see people walking around, people in the park, I see gentrification...that dilutes the diversity-- which is why I moved here.

The area has experienced growth in restaurants and bars and the focus group participants expressed frustration with the accompanying traffic, parking congestion, and litter that can bring. On the other hand, they described the neighborhood as more "walkable."

Parking is an issue...we have an awful lot of visitors to our neighborhood.

You have a lot of people coming [after the festivals] to drink or eat, you get a lot of red cups in the gutter, people sparking up before taking off for the night...disturbing litter like broken liquor bottles, used condoms, and crack pipes...

When I found out they were going to rip up 5th Street and lose the parking I thought it would be horrible...but when it was done...and even though I have to walk a bit to work...it is awesome to see neighbors walking up and down 5th...it's great to see people just drop in and say what is this place, it's great."

The neighborhood is more walkable.

There was also concern about absentee landlords and business owners who didn't live in the area and were simply making a profit.

Because those are being rented by landlords who aren't putting a nickel back in to fix them up! Come see me on the other side of Bruce Street, those are flop houses!

Landlords don't care about [diversity] or property upkeep, it's just a subsidy check to them.

...but I think that has a lot to do with pride, ownership. If you only have renters and tourists who is planting a tree, who is cleaning the gutter?

I have seen a lot of business moving [in] next door to us...I would like business to realize they have a huge effect on us.

According to participants, crime has cycled up and down over the past 40 years. There was a good record of reducing crime when neighborhood residents got involved. Some focus group participants were concerned that new residents who are renters may be apathetic and won't be interested in taking action to assure safety. And there was some disagreement among participants regarding whether crime is more or less severe and frequent now than it was in the past. By one account, crime was reduced when neighbors worked together to shut down the "bar block parties."

In those days, there were a series of parties sponsored by the bars on 2nd Street every other month...There was a lot of damage, drunk and abusive fights...at that time there were issues between the gay bars and straight bars. Things began to get better because people decided to get together and shut down the (bar) block parties. The police department was thrilled...

By another account, crime was reduced for a while but was now back in full swing.

...conditions were horrible twenty years ago in terms of noise and partying..., then ...for 15-20 years it was reasonable, and it is now on the upswing again, noise-wise especially.

There had been some monitoring of traffic... before there weren't stop signs, now we have four way stops everywhere, but people ignore the signs, I get an accident a year from someone running into my front yard. We've got Stenny's and the Harley Museum...they should ask bikers to respect the noise levels...that has now gotten

worse again...there is again more litter, but for a while it had improved, along with vandalism but now it is getting worse.

One conversation involved lamenting what was perceived as the loss of community policing in keeping the neighborhood safe.

I think if private business would invest in private security, then it might give us the feeling of the beat cops being back

They might, but the beat cops knew who to talk to

Yea, and they walked into businesses

Right, and if they needed information, they knew good neighbors to get it from.

Crime is a persistent problem, and there was extended discussion about policing strategies and the normalizing of hearing gunshots.

...I think there are individuals that come down here for a specific intent. So, we see more car break-ins, a lot more drug use, I see more syringes on the street. District 2 police have even said some parks are just used for [drug] drop-offs because it's so easy to get back on the freeway.

There were two murders...three blocks south of us there was an individual leaving a restaurant who was shot...the occurrences of crime have gotten less but the severity is worse...I think we are in a weird upswing...I'd like to see the beat cops back and bike cops back."

Yeah, when they [police officers] were walking around here it was much better.

I call the police now and they just ask if it's fireworks or gunshots...I looked out the window and saw the flash from the muzzle...but, whatever, I am done.

Right, I don't even hear it. I feel bad when alderman, police, and neighborhood associations say, 'call when you hear the shots because we need more spots indicated on the map' and, I'm sorry, I don't even hear it.

Yeah, I can't sleep if I don't hear gunshots.

Participants agreed that the source of crime was predominately from outside the neighborhood.

The majority of crime is committed by people from outside the neighborhood. The neighborhood is a magnet...it used to be a place to prey on drunk gay guys and now it is nice restaurants, [so its] holding up rich people on the way to their car.

The crime isn't coming from within the neighborhood, it's coming from outside...it's not our neighbors doing it...it's not kids or rooming houses".

A lot of the stolen cars are found on the north side...they use them for crime and then dump them"

There were a few, let's call them, 'problem children'...like they already had records at the age of 13-14 and were causing problems...but they are gone and dealt with, now it seems better... but we still have gunshots pretty regularly. I grew up here... This is 'mi barrio'. I am here, and I am used to it, for better or worse.

When asked about *organizational and institutional change*, the discussion focused on changes within the Walkers Point Association, and what some considered a focus on business that neglected the residential segments of the neighborhood. The group talked about changes that occurred when the freeway was constructed. Geographically, the area was split into Walker's Point and Walker Square when the freeway was built. That division and different patterns of development have created greater disparities within the area.

Walker's Point is a neighborhood of neighborhoods. Walker Square has got this ongoing combination of residential, business, UCC, churches and other groups. The federally designated historic area has a certain different flavor being east of the freeway. In the 60s, the city put a freeway straight through Walker's Point and it tore it apart. It divided a neighborhood that use to be united.

That freeway is a freaking dividing line.

One common denominator that brings people together...is [common] need.

The guy who has three cars is worried about parking. He doesn't have to worry if the bus line is going to be close enough.

The Walker's Point Association (WPA) is recognized as the agency to be credited with revitalizing 2nd Street by expanding sidewalks and encouraging development of restaurants in the neighborhood.

Walker's Point Association did an amazing job working on 2nd street ---working with the city, expanding those sidewalks...

I think that is what has made Walker's Point take off... those expanded sidewalks. You had all these empty buildings (that were industrial or office) ...you didn't have anyone in them, then all of a sudden you had these beautiful expanded sidewalks and every restaurant that though of cheap rent and a place to go...and Crazy Water was the anchor...everyone moved in right after that. And you have seen the repeat on 5th Street.

The Walker's Point Association was at the right place at the right time. They worked with city, with the federal government to get that to happen...WPA should [be] credited for changing 2nd St, which led into 5th St., and then [the grocery store] Cermak and this is why you have all these apartments filling with well- to- do White people.

Still there was concern about the changing nature of the organization.

When WPA started we had four residential positions on the board, now we have two. They [the seats] now go to a business person.

Over- representation of the businesses on the board makes me nervous. We are at the... mercy of the development of 'the Harbor District.' If you're looking for indicators, If the name comes from the residents it's not gentrification, but it is if comes from real estate developers...

Although there was appreciation of the organization's contributions, some focus group participants felt that the economic focus of the agency left people behind. The previous neighborhood association, Neighbors of Historic Walker's Point was reportedly more focused on residents than business. Their activities included promoting a positive image by sharing good news about the neighborhood, working with local artists, and addressing the frequent fighting occurring between the straight and gay establishments and their clientele.

Our Walker Square neighborhood organization grew out of the WPA. WPA was more focused on 'this side' of 6th Street...the business side...the things they were doing and trying to help out with in the neighborhood...but they didn't cover the whole neighborhood...so the Walker Square neighborhood was born out of greater need.

I'd bet money right now that none of the neighbors on my block would know that Walker's Point Association or any of those organizations existed. How do they get the community to work together? It's mothers at the church and school in PTOs, working together in grass roots organizations. I remember my dad with a clipboard getting signatures for street lights. Today it's the same...that's why you don't see a buy in from residents.

Well, when I first moved in my neighborhood I had to call, and I was glad to have the neighborhood association to ...like who I needed to email about ---like why is the baby wading pool full of glass? Stuff wouldn't get done for a long time, but if I got an email in, it got done right away...a few years ago there were gunshots on the playground equipment...but for months it wasn't fixed up...but after I messaged it got cleaned up right away...

I would bet you in your neighborhood [negative] things happen all the time...but residents like you and myself don't know how to make those connections...we don't have the resources...I bet people wouldn't even know where to begin.

Several organizations were identified as having made positive contribution to the neighborhood. The Milwaukee Public School, Bradley Tech, recruits locally and invests in the neighborhood. United Way, the Milwaukee Junior League, Rebuilding Together, Milwaukee Christian Center, Habitat for Humanity, the Southside Organizing Center, and Arts @Large were also praised. But residents also talked of other

neighborhood nonprofits that were not respectful of residents and expressed concern about the expansion of the United Community Center and the impact on congestion and parking.



There was also discussion about external organizations coming in to “help” without having an understanding of the population, the neighborhood, or its history. An example was a suburban community center that came in, asked residents what they wanted and needed, took pictures of the residents for their own publicity needs, and then gave them their used gym equipment--- passed down from their remodeling efforts-- despite the fact that that it did NOT address an identified need.

Most people here do physical labor in their day jobs. They don't need used gym equipment to get exercise.

Sometimes living in the neighborhood...a bunch of organizations get the idea of how they are going to come in and “save us.” But they don't.

When asked about the *impact of neighborhood on their personal life*, residents indicated that they continue to be exposed to and affected by crime in their urban neighborhood, but tolerance for that depends on previous exposure, expectations and family circumstances.

If I am honest, the proximity to violence has affected me...the shooting that happened outside the bar...a piece of my brick wall chipped by bullets, that didn't bother me until I had kids...We leave the lights on now.

Your comfort level changes, I knew what I was getting into but I look at things through a different lens now having a 2 1/2 year old...I have to teach them to be aware.

I have never felt unsafe in the neighborhood, but I grew up in here. We used to play “drive by shooting”, like when a car would drive by we would lay on the ground like they were going to shoot us...so I am used to it.

A lot of the shootings are crime involved shootings...just the other week, a 12-year-old got shot in a car with gang members...so things like that. So, when you hear

people are getting shot, it's like not me, not family members, its people hanging out with drug dealers.

I have never felt unsafe here, this is what I wanted-- to live in a place that is more edgy. Its real.

I loved it before even when you needed to be scared...you do need to be aware because you are in an urban environment and you will deal with crime.

They mentioned greater walkability and appreciation of the bike lanes.

[Before the bike lanes] it wasn't safe or easy to ride around, but on 2nd street and east of 6th...it's gotten a little better for bike traffic and we have had a 'Ciclovía' for two years --where they close off the street. It got more bikes into the community.

...it's very walkable now.

And finally, participants expressed uncertainty, but also hope, about whether with the new developments the neighborhood would be able to maintain its diversity and the relationships that make a neighborhood.

I find it harder to know my neighbors. You go into those buildings, whether they are gated or not...there is not that opportunity to forge relationships.

They aren't going to shovel my walk but will have a company that will come and plow in front of a business.

So far, the people with money, I like them so far...but I also love the people who have lived here 30 years, even 60 years. I like what is was and I like what is happening.

As kids, we would know everyone and now we know a dozen.

I hope we can hold on to the diversity. I don't know if we will be successful... that doesn't happen everywhere...but we have a unique opportunity...there are forces outside of us, we have to start making alliances, so things can change.

The Voice of Business Owners

Individual interviews were conducted with 15 business owners in the Walker's Point neighborhood following the protocol of the Turning the Corner cross-site project. Participants are acknowledged in the appendix. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 90 minutes and were scheduled to accommodate the business owner's schedules.

Business types included an alcoholic beverage manufacturer, architectural firms, a small advertising and marketing firm, interior designer, insurance broker, several real estate and redevelopment firms, a tire business, and reflecting the neighborhood, several restaurants, clubs and bars. The businesses have been in the Walker's Point neighborhood anywhere from 6 to 50 years. Seven of the interviewees saw themselves as part of the "new wave," six as part of the "old wave" and two as "both." Two business owners currently live in the neighborhood, two did so until recently, and the remaining nine live downtown, on the east side or in nearby suburbs. Several had been involved in the neighborhood association and have been on the board or on committees including the Neighborhood Advisory Board, the Harbor District Board, the Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) and the Business and Economic Development Committee.

The pioneers in the new wave group came to the neighborhood in the early 1990's. The developers in the group talked about the appeal of Walker's Point and what they look for in the investment. The list included a walkable neighborhood, a sense of community, a connection to jobs, mixed-use development and density.

When business owners in Walker's Point were asked about the *increase in new businesses in the neighborhood*, nearly all agreed there were "a lot" more, but the estimate of the actual number ranged from 5 to 100. Most reported on the growth of bars, restaurants and breweries, noting that these are a different type of business than had previously been in the neighborhood.

Yes, 25 years ago there were just sports bars, gay bars and hookers and very few residents.

These are a new type of business, more foodie-oriented, and whiter.

These are upscale eateries.

It's mostly restaurants—three James Beard award winners. Some come and go.

Describing the *customers of the new businesses*, the respondents referred to the area as a draw for "culinary tourism."

Breweries and more food bring new people in the area. It's a younger demographic.

More customers from higher income brackets are coming.

The area attracts local artists, engineers, architects and designers.

The restaurant business is built by female customers who work downtown and experience the restaurants on their lunch hour and then arrange weekend "urban outings" with their partners and friends from the suburbs.

Generally, respondents identified a growth in *specialty or niche stores* in the neighborhood.

There's a bike repair shop and art galleries.

Brew pubs, a day spa, a wine bar.

Craft cuisine, destination dining. This is not about the same 14 drunks at the bar you grew up with.

But specialty stores struggle, they often close after a year.

When asked about *large chain stores*, most respondents identified Cermak, the new grocery store, and hoped “that in 5 years there may be a Walgreens,” so the neighborhood has a pharmacy. Although the new grocery store is in the same location as the UPS store and a Jimmy Johns, the only other national retailers mentioned were McDonalds and a gas station. Both were blamed for much of the neighborhood litter. In general, large chain stores were discouraged by the Walker’s Point Association.

We hope to be the last neighborhood of our size to be colonized by Starbucks.

When asked about *business closings*, respondents had mixed replies. Most agreed that the nightclubs have been pushed out, and that it’s the nature of the business to see restaurants come and go. Several restaurants - Chez Jacques, Zak’s, Kana Mojito, La Perla, Blue Jacket and Lopez Bakery ---were identified as closing recently. In fact, two restaurants owned by business owners interviewed here closed between the time of the interview and writing of this report (Crazy Water and La Fuente). Business owners also mentioned a failed crab house and a blues bar. Additionally, larger paint retailers- Sherwin Williams and Benjamin Moore- left the area, but that was explained as a desire for additional space.

When asked about the *kinds of businesses that have closed*, business owners mentioned “dive bars” and less reputable clubs, a chemical company needing more space, and an antique shop.

A mom and pop grocery store closed, and a deli was replaced by a fancy sandwich shop.

Studio space used to be cheaper for artists and makers, but buildings have been sold and renovated.

I'd call it unbridled gentrification.

...but there's not a lot of displacement. These were underutilized or vacant spaces.

According to those interviewed, the *factors that made it difficult for business to stay* include the lack of industrial truck access, blight, litter, city regulations (no sidewalk seating) and continuous car thefts. Three owners mentioned increased costs and three mentioned the lack of parking.

Nearly all assessed the *change in vacant storefronts* as being reduced, commenting that the business streets are becoming more filled-in, but noting there are still opportunities.

According to the interviewees, the *businesses themselves have made significant investments*. Examples included façade cleanups, restoration, lighting, windows, repairing cream city brick, investing “hundreds of thousands of dollars,” removing graffiti and beautification efforts. Several business owners credited the city with giving grants for creative placemaking. Some asserted that it was the neighborhood

association and volunteers that created the plans for the renovation of 2nd and 5th Streets and then they worked to get the city on board.

The businesses were *motivated to make these* investments because they saw potential, had optimism, and supported those with the vision of making the neighborhood work. Many talked about the proximity to downtown, the history, the cream city brick, the coming of the street car, the proximity to interesting restaurants, and the shared camaraderie of people with a vision making investments, supporting each other and reaching critical mass.

The interviewees were asked if they had seen any changes in *requests to businesses to support local efforts* such as groups asking for donated goods or services or participation in neighborhood events. The majority reported that they had not experienced this.

When asked about *City investments in the neighborhood* over the past few years, business owners referenced the improvements on 2nd and 5th streets, particularly narrowing the streets from four lanes to two, façade improvements, the renovated viaduct and bioswales. Others mentioned the roundabout and the 6th street bridge leading to the Tannery and noted that as the starting point of the revitalization 13 years ago.

Several noted that while the City does the work, the efforts were initiated and planned by residents and business owners and that the businesses pay through increased taxes. Some complained that the City investments have been too limited and said that nothing has been done to improve Wi-Fi accessibility or to extend improvements to National Avenue. One respondent believed that city regulations had gotten in the way of development and that administrative delays for permits are costly, leading to the suggestion that there be a liaison who works with contractors and the city to “provide a voice of reason.” There have been conversations with Alderman Perez about the need for street repair and all complemented the Alderman by name for his “let’s talk” attitude.

Regarding *changes in city services*, respondents indicated that the WPA has facilitated conversations with the Police Department which some believed have led to improved communication and fewer car break-ins. Others cited the continuation of “expected” urban crime – graffiti, stealing, prostitution—and improved police visibility especially on bike patrol and police responsiveness. Businesses still expressed concern.

There was a guy robbed behind this building.

There’s prostitution in my parking lot.

It took a kid getting shot for the police to assign a tavern cop.

Where I am, car break-ins, even in broad daylight, are an epidemic.

It’s dangerous to take a stand against the club licenses.

There’s violence on the streets including [against or by] patrons of the nightclubs.

Demonstrating the range of opinions on this question, others responded:

It’s all great and it keeps getting better! There are more people on the street, more bikers, an improved bike trail...

There is still crime, but it used to be worse.

I've seen improvements in police responsiveness.

Their [the police] hands are tied, with cuts to the number of officers and closing firehouses.

People complain about a 20-minute wait for a response to a car break-in!

Regarding *changes in customer demand for goods and services*, given the diversity of business types, there was no clear pattern. Among the restaurants/bar/entertainment owners, however, there was some talk of an increase in “high maintenance customers.”

It used to be about cooking and having people enjoy it. Now there are all these food allergies.

There's increased foot traffic. More people are coming to the neighborhood.

I think the White, suburban customers are targeted [for crime]. It's an uphill battle. Around 10:00 (p.m.) they leave the neighborhood.

The clubs used to be really diverse. African American faces are more common now. The Latino population is heading south and west now... they want better jobs and education.

Regarding the *change in the customer base*, most businesses reported that their own clientele are generally higher income and “more sophisticated,” with an age ranging from millennials to baby boomers. The club owner sees a different population which is more African American and Hispanic. Most replied that the customer base of nearby businesses come from outside the neighborhood, generally from downtown and the suburbs.

When asked about *early indicators of neighborhood revitalization*, business owners and developers identified these as things they watch for – “the canary in the coal mine.”

The early developments brought more young and diverse employees to the area.

These employees saw a place they want to live... and it's affordable.

Food and beverage make a neighborhood... and the chance to dine with strangers.

Here is the checklist that emerged from business owners in Walker's Point:

- ✓ proximity to other developed areas (Downtown and the Third Ward);
- ✓ proximity to successful recent developments (Iron Horse Hotel, the Harley Davidson Museum, the Tannery);
- ✓ government infusion of dollars (infrastructure and the Global Water Center);
- ✓ private investment (Iron Horse, Tannery)
- ✓ corporate investment (the Harley Museum)
- ✓ vacant buildings being repurposed
- ✓ good attendance at Neighborhood Association meetings
- ✓ presence of food trucks
- ✓ NEWaukee (a hip meet-up group of young professionals) hosting events there

- ✓ gathering spaces like art space and coffee shops
- ✓ creativity
- ✓ entrepreneurs and likeminded people
- ✓ a buzz
- ✓ more young people in the neighborhood, with more money
- ✓ more businesses opening
- ✓ fewer vacant storefronts

Interestingly, these business owners talked about how the decision to start or keep a business in an area is based more on qualitative factors than solid data. In their view, it's based more on the presence of great people than government incentives or support.

When asked about *what made Walker's Point unique in its development trajectory*, business owners explained that in Walker's Point, people WANT change, but they also want to maintain their unique identity.

Things are going on all over the city – like Vliet street, or Bronzeville. But people from Mequon won't go there.

Walker's Point needs to retain character, not become another "Third Ward."

There's more mixed-use than Riverwest or Brewers Hill.

Walker's Point is different because it has huge industrial buildings that were vacant. But they're gorgeous.

It's not as expensive as Bay View or downtown.

Walker's Point "feels" like a neighborhood.

It's the nature of a city to reinvent. Here you see it happening.

With all the changes noted, business owners were asked to comment on the *impact of these changes on the residents*. Some noted the improvement in availability of personal services and conveniences such as a barber shop and Cermak, the new grocery store with fresh produce. Some said the work of a nonprofit developer that is bringing in affordable housing will help stabilize Walker's Point. All acknowledged that the new businesses are not aimed at current residents. They are aimed at bringing new people into the neighborhood.

New businesses are not there to serve the residents. 2nd and 5th Streets have been "playground-ized- [they] focus on breweries, restaurants, juice, coffee. It's no longer Latino.

There's more volume which the old wave residents dislike. The old wave residents want to stick to the old ways of doing things.

Residents have a lot to say but it falls on deaf ears. There's frustration. It's a small community and businesses outweigh the voice of residents.

Business owners were asked to expand on the *difference between older businesses and newer businesses* in Walker's Point. The older businesses were described as a remnant of the past, with a different orientation.

New businesses focus beyond Walker's Point. They don't see boundaries.

It's more a specialty destination now. The restaurants attract people from different neighborhoods and even out of state.

The older businesses worry about gentrification and being forced out.

The newer businesses see low costs, new markets and cheap buildings.



Business owners were asked if their judgement about whether business needs are being met depends on the age, race or ethnicity of residents. There is no disagreement that newer residents and young people are the target and the beneficiary of the changes. In turn, their presence had made the area safer according to some accounts.

Newer residents are bringing in jobs. The neighborhood is safer and cleaner, but still in transition.

Five years ago, I wouldn't walk down the street with my wife.

There was clear agreement that there are more white young people coming in. But because the neighborhood had been predominately Latino, some described this as creating more diversity. Others worried and that because there are more white people moving in, there is less diversity—that there is an erosion of the Latino base.

When asked if there are *groups that are not being served well by the changes*, business owners specifically identified tenants and families. There is acknowledgement that artists, in particular, are being pushed out. There is also concern about the Neighborhood Association's power being centered around a few people, which may not take into consideration the needs of certain groups.

Artists are being pushed out. As costs increase, they move.

Tenants are not considered. The Walker's Point Association only benefits [business]operators and owners.

Families' concerns about safety and night life are not being heard.

Finally, since this study is interested in data that can be used to explore *indicators that foreshadow neighborhood change*, business owners were asked if there was any specific data they used to identify change and make their business decisions. Some reported that they watch demographic shifts and make decisions on “pure economics” investing where there is a strong population of Latinos because they are “hard- working and love helping people.” Less generically, one long-time (Latino) business owner said that the Mexican population left the area a long time ago, seeking better homes and education. Others watch crime reports, especially car break-ins and another monitors her own personal property value. Another monitors school quality and the engagement of the school in the neighborhood and the neighborhoods in the schools.

There will never be strong neighborhoods without strong schools.

A neighborhood is about friends, relationships, and schools.

One of the business owners interviewed follows City policy and sees it as good predictor of future growth and development, particularly investment in transit. More than one business owner commented that city data is more available now, and that previous leaders who hid data held the city back.

Transit investment is a leading indicator. I follow rail, streetcars, new bus lines – this is what will make it better.

It's a big change from when all the data were secret under the reigns of [former Mayor] Meier and [former Police Chief] Brier. We were kept in the dark.

Several indicated that they follow industry trends, and market research. Another referred to local media, specifically Urban Milwaukee, as their main source of data. One mentioned frequent travel to destination cities as a basis of comparative knowledge. Many suggested that good business decision-making was really more art than science.

I use gallery visits, park involvement, and engagement in residential meetings as my neighborhood metrics.

This is more about gut sense than data.

I decide on feelings more than data.

I look at facades. I take a casual approach –drive by and observe.

This is more qualitative. Can I bike to downtown? Can I walk on a sunny day? Are there coffee shops and restaurants?

Brewers Hill

Description and History

Brewers Hill is an area to the north of downtown and bordered by the Milwaukee River. The neighborhood “boundaries” are Holton on the East, King Drive on the West, Pleasant on the South and North Avenue on the North. The historic portion of the neighborhood is mostly the southern half. The local historic designation was approved in 1985 and goes from Vine to Lloyd, Hubbard to King Drive. There was a neighborhood overlay conservation zone creating design standards in 2006. (see Maps 1 and 2 for greater detail and surrounding areas)

The German brewmasters settled in large homes built on top of the bluff along the river and walking distance to the breweries. The owners of the tanneries and breweries in the area built “worker cottages” so employees could walk to work. The workers, predominately Irish and Polish immigrants, lived in the small cottages that were the hallmark of Brewers Hill. In the 1920s, the area became increasingly diverse as the first African American families moved to the neighborhood.

After World War II, the intersection of Third Street (now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) and North Avenue was a major shopping district, rivaling the downtown shopping district. With the development of shopping malls, like Capital Count and Southgate, the Third Street and downtown shopping districts declined.

In 1967 there were the race riots with a 7:00 curfew for several days. It was a war zone. At that time the residents were all black and the business people were white. This “urban unrest” was a catalyst for people to leave. The department stores closed, and pharmacies, restaurants and taverns closed. Most businesses left. The old businesses were boarded up. Pharmacies, restaurants, taverns closed.

People who owned homes neglected them and the neighborhood was affected by white flight.

The decay in the housing stock was so bad that people were just throwing waste out of windows. In the 1980’s it bottomed out.

When automobiles and highways allowed people to move to the suburbs and still have a reasonable commute to work, the white owners fled, and property deteriorated. Redlining, southern migration, racist banking and real estate practices lead to further concentration of the African American population in the area. In the 1970’s and early 1980’s, Black property owners, particularly elderly residents on fixed incomes, began selling their homes. One resident recalled the beginning of neighborhood change when:

white speculators trolled the neighborhood offering cash for their properties.

I remember my grandma saying, “I’m not selling my house to no white people. Why do they talk to us like we’re the visitors?”

Others described it in terms of housing preservation

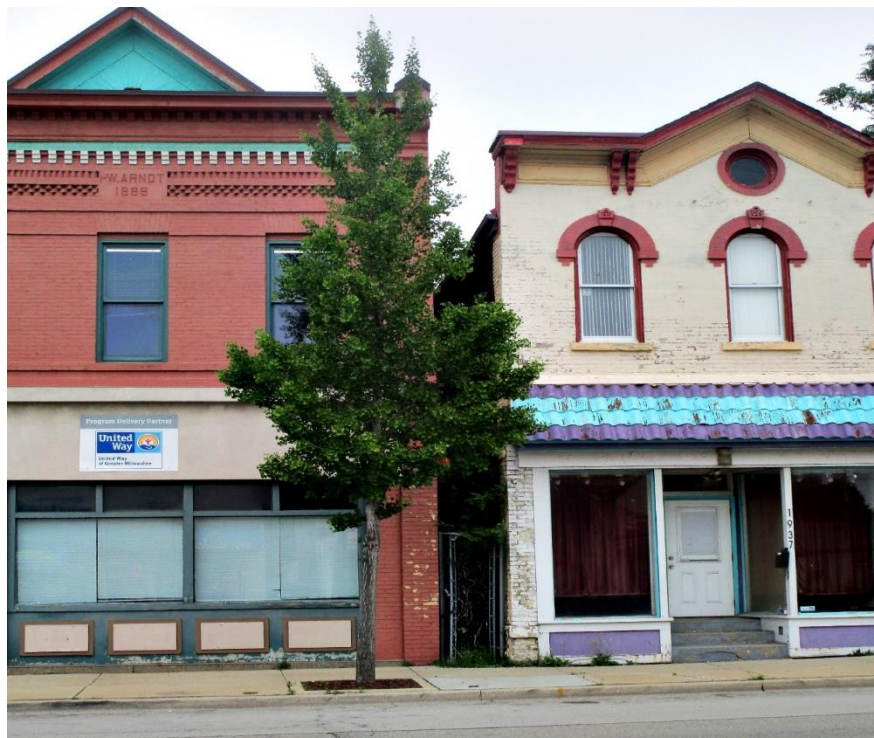
The houses that were being gentrified were on the verge of demolition.

The area’s housing stock is diverse with large Victorians alongside worker’s cottages. There are also a significant number of duplex units and apartments with four or more units in the neighborhood. Early investors came in the 70’s and were not the traditional buyers. They were members of the arts community, craftsman and carpenters. Some of these earlier “settlers” report that it was difficult to finance homes because of the lack of comparable historic properties, restrictions from the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements, and because of the city’s “overly burdensome” process of buying a vacant lot at the time.

By some accounts, the redevelopment of Brewers Hill began when BJ Sampson and Gary Grunau invested in the redevelopment of the Schlitz Brewery which “ignited” the neighborhood. There were streetlights and improvements and the Wisconsin Preservation Fund brought 16-18 properties. Interviews suggest that the neighborhood association was formed in 1982-83 by Steve Bielke and Mary Eastwood.

*The Association started as a way for residents to express their voice to the City.
[Today] we have the ear of the Alderwoman, and the Mayor shows up for events. It’s
a way to get people to be neighborly.*

Today, the greater Brewers Hill area is a neighborhood of younger, White and Latinx residents, and predominantly older African-Americans; mostly single-family homes and duplexes; and a relatively high share of renters. Portions of the neighborhood are designated a Local and National Historic District, and while some residents report growing interest from investors in purchasing and renovating homes, others suggest that the majority of home sales are to home owners rehabbing of updating previously rehabbed homes.



By the Numbers

The following data were provided to the Department of City Development by HR&A for the Transit Oriented Design Study. The study includes the area within a half-mile radius of the planned street car expansion and is thus broader than Brewers Hill proper. Surrounding neighborhoods include: Harambee, an area of single-family housing; Halyard Park, a historically middle-class African American neighborhood with single-family and suburban style housing; Brewers Hill—which the report describes as having experienced "some gentrification over the past decade;" and Hillside, a public housing development. The area is surrounded by the Lower East side described as multi-family, mixed-use area; Eastown, a central business district; and West Town, a more commercial area. Residents point out that all of these neighborhoods have multi-family and/or duplex units. (See Maps 1 and 2 for greater detail on the study and surrounding area.)

According to HR&A, the area was settled in the late 1800's by German immigrants. By the 1900's, the proximity of rail and the river brought industrial development. The first African Americans came to the area in the 1920's. In the mid to late 1900's there was disinvestment with transportation, highways, cars, and suburbanization. In the 1960s, property along Walnut was demolished for the freeway in the name of urban renewal. North Third Street redevelopment began in the 1990's. The last 15 years have brought renewed interest, new developments, supported by private funding.

Demographic change: According to the HR&A report, the greater Brewers Hill area includes approximately 20,000 residents in roughly 9000 households. Their analysis of the demographic change between 2000 and 2015 finds a net increase of 1,565 people in this area. The African American population is down by 1,200, while the White population is up by 2,300 with change unevenly distributed. The increase in the African American population is in Brewers Hill, Westtown and the Haymarket area while the decline in the African American population is in the western part of the Harambee neighborhood. HR&A concluded that "the only indication of displacement is in eastern Harambee where the African American population is down, and the White population is up."

According to the report,

these trends may not be uniformly due to displacement. In Brewers Hill, Westtown, and Haymarket, the total African American population has increased despite the share of the population declining. In western Harambee, the African American population has fallen, but so too has the overall population. Only in eastern Harambee are there indications of displacement, with the African American absolute population and share falling substantially while the White and Hispanic population increased.

The broader study area has higher levels of poverty (33%) when compared to the City (25%) as a whole.

Multifamily development is primarily occurring in the Lower East Side, Brewers Hill, and Westtown, averaging 170 new units per year since 2012 and may be seen as building a pipeline to the area. The area has a significant supply of **affordable housing**, with both naturally-occurring affordable and 2,400 subsidized housing units. Nearly 4,000 households (45%) are **housing burdened** (paying more than 30% of their income on housing). Among these, more than 45% fall into the category of "heavy housing burdened" where more than 50% of income goes to housing costs. About 540 more households are likely to become housing burdened over the next ten years if rents increase due to continuing market trends and the extension of the streetcar.

According to the HR&A report, the **business anchors** in the neighborhood are locally-owned beauty and barber shops, restaurants and a grocery store. Nation-wide chains include a gas station and fast food outlets. The report indicated a lack of neighborhood-serving businesses, but resident reviewers indicate there are now sit-down restaurants, a coffee shop and “local businesses selling eclectic furniture, handmade jewelry, and curated home goods.” Business needs in the area include general merchandise, building and garden supplies, and electronic appliances. Consultants project that the revitalized Black Holocaust Museum will be an anchor for the nearby Bronzeville area.

In the larger Brewers Hill study area, the **overall population** is up 1,565 between 2000 and 2015. The White population is up 2,300 people and the black population is down 1,200 people. The number of school-children (age 5-17) is down 20%, while the category of those between age 18-24 is up 26%, and those between 35-54 years of age is also up.

Using ESRI 2017 using 2000-2015 data by tract, they report there is a higher percentage of those at the **poverty level** (33%) than the city (25%) and a rate higher than the city average of families in poverty headed by a female householder, (86%). HR&A reports that for the larger area, the **median household income** is \$32,000 but notes that for Brewers Hill, the number is substantially higher, \$73,000. The percent of those below poverty in Brewers Hill declined from 36% in 2000 to 33% in 2015.

In Brewers Hill 34% of the population has a **bachelor’s degree or higher** compared to 23% for the city.

Recall that HR&A defined gentrification as displacement of lower income, non-White households by higher income households. Here they see a decline in the total low-income population and a decline in the non-White population and decline in their (low income and non-White) share in an area.

Of the 8,800 units, 79% are **renter occupied**, 62% are **multi-family units**. The average rent in the multi-family units in Brewers Hill and Westtown is \$1,169.

In 2000, there were 5,775 **renters** in the area (82%) compared to the City average of 55%. By 2015, the number increased to 6,923 but the percentage went down to 79% while the city as a whole went up (58%). There are nearly 750 **Low Income Housing Units Tax Credits** (LIHTC) in the area that will expire before 2030. Between 2025 and 2026, 320 (43%) will expire.

There are 4,000 renter households in the Brewers Hill area that can be classified as **housing burdened** (paying over 30% of their income for housing costs.) The report states there were more than 130 **foreclosed properties** between 2007 and 2017.

Vacant land in the area is described as scattered with 344 vacant properties or 64 vacant acres. The city owns 272 of the properties while other public entities own and additional 51.

The area also has **naturally occurring affordable housing**. Using HUD2014 area median income for household size of 4 in Milwaukee MSA, they find 1306 naturally affordable rental units.

Resident Wisdom

These numbers from the TOD study reflect a piece of the puzzle. Consistent with the Data You Can Use mantra of “no data without stories and no stories without data,” the *Turning the Corner* protocol calls for a mixed-method approach, combining the quantitative analysis with the perspective and wisdom of

people who have witnessed or are experiencing neighborhood change. The following section reports on the focus groups and interviews conducted in Brewers Hill.

A focus group with twelve longtime Brewers Hill residents was conducted on the evening of June 5th, 2018 at Dr. George Washington Carver Academy of Math & Science, an elementary school in the Milwaukee Public School system. It overlooks a large parking lot, one of the few open public spaces in the neighborhood. The school is centrally located in the neighborhood and the early evening session was held in the school library and coordinated by the Parent Coordinator. The focus group was conducted by Data You Can Use. Questions followed the protocol of the Turning the Corner cross-site project. Participants are acknowledged in the appendix.

Residents were recruited via visits to the Historic Brewers Hill Association (HBHA) meetings, referrals from individual interviews, and word of mouth. Participants received light refreshments and a \$25 gift card for their time. The session lasted two hours. In attendance were six males and six females. All appeared to be Caucasian, with reported ages ranging from 25-70 years. They had lived in the neighborhood between 9 and 37 years. They reported living in Milwaukee for a period ranging from 13 - 42 years. All were homeowners, with an average household size of 2.5. Eleven are employed full-time and one is employed part-time. Only one works in the neighborhood. Ten reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more, one was in the \$80,000 - \$99,999 range, and one was in the \$40,000 - \$59,999 range.

When asked about *changing demographics* in the neighborhood, the long-term residents described the shift from a predominately African American neighborhood to one that is now predominately White. They spoke of the influx of younger professionals, African American renters, and people with young children. There was considerable discussion of the fact that most families in the neighborhood do not send their children to neighborhood schools. There was concern that young families are moving out when their children reach school age.

Yes, I've seen change, mostly on our block. When we moved in, there were only two White people, but [the] block is now mostly White and younger as well.

I've also seen a lot more African American[s] renting in the neighborhood recently.

There are more kids now than before. You see more people walking with their dogs and kids.

There are tons of families on my alley, but they send their kids to different schools. It's hard to form a community because of this.

I agree, we lost a lot of families. It's clear they're moving because of the school district. There are long-term sustainability concerns.

Gentrification? I don't see it. Good development is sometimes labeled gentrification.

There is gentrification in the area that doesn't recognize the neighborhood boundaries—primarily in the Harambee neighborhood north of North Avenue.



When asked about *changing neighborhood conditions*, long-term residents talked about seeing change in crime, housing, public space and traffic safety. According to participants, blatant prostitution and drug dealing were more common 15-20 years ago although there were current concerns about Brewers Hill being the scene of car break-ins and “mobile drug dealing” where people come to the neighborhood to meet dealers who are also coming into the neighborhood for the exchange because the neighborhood is perceived as safe.

Drug dealing scares me, once dealing starts, shooting can start.

There used to be prostitution, now it's drugs.

Crime has gone down, but mobile drug dealing has gone up.

Buyers are more suburban. They come here because it's safe.

Resident reviewers noted that mobile dealing has been fueled by the opioid crises, affecting people of all ages, and that proximity to the freeway is also part of the explanation.

Commenting on changes in the [housing stock and market](#), participants noted a decline in vacant properties, an increase in rehabs, and relatively quick sales.

When we first moved here, it was mostly vacant.

The biggest change where I live is empty homes are being occupied after being vacant for so long.

Families are buying old houses and doing the rehab. I've seen people buying old homes and putting in \$100,000 to make it livable.

Concerns about the lack of public space and traffic safety were also discussed. The only public space in Brewers Hill is the cement playground adjacent to the public school. Although the neighborhood organization has invested in this lot, it can only be used “informally” and when school is not in session. Similarly, while Carver Park is in close proximity to the neighborhood, access requires crossing a busy street where someone was hit by a car. The neighborhood association and private developers have been pro-active in investing in speed bumps, other traffic calming devices and street signs. In working with government officials, however, they report having been met with delays and reports of depleted city funds for street safety.

When asked about [organizational and institutional change](#), the discussion focused on the schools and the neighborhood organization. As they were convened in the library of the George Washington Carver Elementary School (previously known as the Palmer Street School), the focus group participants recalled that they had made decisions, earlier on, not to send their children to the school because of violence. They indicated they had attempted to hold meetings at the school, but school insurance requirement made it difficult for the building to be used for evening meetings. They mentioned the improvements the neighborhood organization had made to the teachers’ lounge and to the parking lot playground area. They noted that there had been additional improvements recently because the principal had become more involved in the neighborhood; even so, they indicated that the relationship between the school and the neighborhood association was not what they wanted it to be.

I didn't want to send my kids to Carver 37 years ago due to violence.

Students used to scream at people.

The students are more disciplined, but it's still problematic.

Carver... was rocky when I first moved here. I've noticed change in Carver. The current principal tries to reach out and go to our neighborhood meetings.

We've raised money, we tried to read [with students] and we tried to get security clearances to access the school. We tried to get the school involved with the neighborhood.

Regarding changes in the Historic Brewers Hill Neighborhood Association, participants acknowledged that attendance by residents is inconsistent and that meeting turnout is highly dependent on major development projects and crime. Representatives of the neighborhood organization, however, indicate

that records show consistent attendance over the past 5-6 years.

Residents indicated that although there was a previous board member who is African American, participation by Black residents is generally very low.

[Proposals for] major development and crime drive neighborhood association meeting turnout.

Although the neighborhood association is open to all, the organization isn't really for all, it's more for homeowners.

It's hard to get anybody engaged. The ones that volunteer just happen to be white, we had an African American serve on the board, but our African American neighbors don't volunteer.

When asked about the *impact of neighborhood safety on their personal lives*, residents indicated that they generally feel safe in their neighborhood, that parking and traffic congestion are becoming more of a problem. Some residents indicated that the closing of bars in the neighborhood is welcome change as it reduces noise and trash. Similarly, the opening of near-by grocery stores where fresh food is available is a welcome sign of positive change. The downsides are the lack of greenspace and high performing public schools.

I walk my dog every morning.

Because its smaller, we get to know the people, and their cars.

I never had a disturbance.

Wolf Peach [restaurant] closed so it's a lot quieter.

I try to go to Pete's [grocery store] but there are options.

I like that it's walkable.

We can't keep young families without a good neighborhood school.

Overall, residents have a positive outlook for the neighborhood and enjoy their experience living in Brewers Hill. They recognize strengths outside of but near the neighborhood including access to: parks, the freeway, the downtown area, and Lake Michigan. They also seem to enjoy the fact that visitors are drawn to the unique atmosphere of Brewers Hill and its amenities.

It's a place to raise family so close to downtown.

I like the access to the freeway.

There's a sense of diversity, a range of ages, and different demographics.

We moved here for diversity, and to be close to the lake.

There are a lot of Airbnb's popping up and spreading. People are coming up from Chicago for urban spelunking.

The Voice of Business Owners

As previously noted, the cross-site research protocol calls for interviews with business owners in the area, to gain their perspective on the surrounding neighborhoods. Individual interviews were conducted with business owners on the King Drive Corridor. Participants are acknowledged in the appendix. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 90 minutes and were scheduled to accommodate the business owners' schedules. Business types included real estate brokers, a hardware store owner, a specialty lingerie store, as well as an educator, urban planner, developer, retail owner, an Airbnb operator, BID director and a retired non-profit executive.

The businesses have been in the Brewers Hill area anywhere from 4 to 61 years. All but one of the interviewees saw themselves as part of the "old wave." Four currently live in the neighborhood, one did so but moved recently because of increased prices, and the remainder live in nearby suburbs. Five identify as African American. Several are, or had been, involved in the neighborhood association and have been on the board or on committees, and three are associated with the Business Improvement District (BID).

When business owners in the Brewers Hill area were asked about the *increase in new businesses in the neighborhood*, people mentioned the bike store which opened 5-6 years ago, restaurants, Alexander and Company's conversion of the Fortress Building, and, especially, an increase in Black-owned businesses.

In 2003-2008, it was a ghost town. Now, there are all kinds of businesses.

Opening Pete's [grocery store] brought tears to my eyes.

The BID is active with businesses they know have potential.

The bike store is helpful to the neighborhood. So is the coffee shop.

There is growth on Second and Lloyd where approximately 60% of the businesses are African American owned.

There're two soul food restaurants, a clothing store, Jujube, a Cajun restaurant, a bakery rented to a Black baker, Voluptuous Secrets, Keys, a hair salon, and a home health care business.

Pete's Fruit Market is African American owned,² Bayou is African American owned.

Pete's [new grocery store] is great. The Cajun restaurant and Mi Casa are great.

On MLK and Lloyd the businesses abut an alley. There are vacancies and a handful of day care centers.

The BID [membership] is all white. It's mostly meetings with a lot of bickering over plans...

² Although one the respondents made this statement, it has been pointed out that the developer of the grocery store, not the owner, is African American.

Describing the *customers of the new businesses*, the respondents said they served local residents, that there weren't enough businesses to draw outsiders into the neighborhood, especially in the evening because there is still a perception of danger.

Generally, respondents identified little growth in *specialty or niche stores* in the neighborhood. A specialty lingerie store that draws customers from throughout the city, has been in the neighborhood for 15 years. Now there's Gee's Clippers, Pete's grocery store, a coffee shop and an eatery across from the coffee shop. There's a chocolate store that's been there for decades but "is not very welcoming to strangers."



When asked about *large chain stores*, few could identify any. One respondent reported that there is a Walgreens, a JJ's Fish and Wong's Wok. Another recalled that there was a big sports apparel store that closed after a killing there three years ago.

When asked about *business closings*, a longtime resident described local corner stores, butchers, taverns, a bank and book stores that have closed.

It used to be that new businesses would open and then they'd close. Now businesses are staying open.

There was a big sports apparel store that closed after a killing there three years ago.

There was a business called "Super Dope Closet" – it closed—it was a really bad name.

The "Big Easy" restaurant closed because the overhead was high.

Wolf Peach [a recently closed restaurant] was never a good neighbor and never served the neighborhood. They only wanted suburban people to go there.

The smoothie shop with Growing Power was a bust – who did they think would go there?

Restaurants come and go.

The bookshop closed.

When asked about the *kinds of businesses that have closed*, business owners mentioned restaurants, local corner stores, butchers, taverns, book stores, and a bank that was there for 43 years.

According to the business owners interviewed, the *factors that made it difficult for businesses to stay* centered around two common themes or explanations. According to these interviews, business viability depends on housing and schools.

Housing stock deteriorated, and demolition led to making vacant lots available to adjacent properties to expand lot size and assure ownership and upkeep. That, according to many, limited housing options and reduced the density of the neighborhood and its potential to support a business district.

The housing stock is actually a liability. These are old houses with bad insulation, old roofs and old systems. They are expensive to repair.

Redevelopment efforts are downtown. Brewers Hill is close to downtown, convenient, and beautiful, making it an attractive neighborhood. But historic designation makes rehab so expensive. There's not much naturally occurring affordable housing.

A lot of houses in bad condition are owned by people who aren't residents. These are investment properties for people who live elsewhere.

Now we have fewer housing options because the city created vacant lots with demolition and sold them to adjacent homeowners.

Housing stock had deteriorated so no one could live in many houses. Some people have stepped up to help people find money to fix stuff up.

The lack of a quality neighborhood school was the second explanation offered by respondents. They explained that neighborhoods without schools are neighborhoods without families; and neighborhoods without families limit business options and opportunities.

No one from Brewers Hill sends their kids to Carver. Kids are bussed to Carver. The school is in the bottom 10% of MPS schools, with 40% student turnover and 50% teacher turnover. It's a challenge to have no neighborhood school.

Families don't have control over education and aren't coming together to change schools.

Carver [formerly Palmer Street School] used to be a place where everyone knew each other. The Hispanic families came from the east and the Black families came from the west. The School was a place that brought people together without friction. The teachers were Black. Now, there is no PTA and none of the people who go there live in the neighborhood.

Beyond these major factors, other barriers to business sustainability mentioned by the interviewees include: the historic designation which limits signage; the perception that the neighborhood is unsafe; the lack of proper modern lighting; the lack of reliable trash pick-up; and the sense that the area is cut off from downtown. Others mentioned the lack of appeal of the businesses themselves.

Nearly all assessed the *change in vacant storefronts* as being negligible.

[Historic Martin Luther] King [Drive] and North [Avenue] haven't really pursued efforts to address vacant store fronts. King is basically a highway.

According to the interviewees, the businesses themselves are not making *significant investments in the infrastructure or improvement in the facades*. The businesses are not *motivated to make these investments*. Some business owners see signs of growth and expressed a sense of hope stemming from the establishment of Pete's and the expected expansion of the streetcar.

We want to move from surviving to thriving.

The interviewees were asked if they had seen any changes in *requests for business to support community efforts* such as groups asking for donated goods or services or participation in neighborhood events. One participant talked about the religious and educational institutions in the neighborhood and whether they preserved or changed the diversity in the neighborhood. Although one respondent stated that the Neighborhood Association had "no people of color involved," representatives commented that this was "false."

There are 4-5 Black Churches, the Zion Home is not integrated, St. Marcus (Lutheran School and Church) is integrated.

Carver [the elementary school] has been haunted since the turn of the century. No local people or white people send their kids there. Some kids go to Golda Meier or St Marcus, or Shorewood, or the German Immersion School.

People want better schools, walkable schools. Kids in MPS take an hour-long bus ride to get to school.

The Neighborhood Association has no people of color involved. They pick and choose the history they care about based on what they want the neighborhood to be.

When asked about *City investment in the neighborhood* over the past few years, business owners talked about the importance of honoring the design of the neighborhood. Some, however, suggested that the City should be more attuned to design standards that promote accessibility and allow aging-in-place. Others acknowledged that the City is in a tough position, given the mix of institutions and interests. Some blame the City for inaction in the early 90's, saying the City could have provided more resources for people to stay in their homes and avoid displacement. As the range of responses show, there is a diversity of opinion on this question of City investment in Brewers Hill. For example, while one respondent said the City added traffic circles and speed bumps, another clarified that it was actually the developer that did it through the TID.

The City has added two traffic circles and two speed bumps.

The City sets the design standards. Can't they make these new buildings attractive?

Mostly what the businesses need from the City is snow-plowing, police and fire services. The neighborhood does the rest.

The City can- and should-- go further to get business in empty spaces. Look for catalytic projects.

Tax credits need volume to work.

The City needs to plan and think ahead. What is the plan for the next 5-10 years?

How can we see what the City plans? All the money goes downtown. Secrets are kept from stakeholders.

The alderwoman has a tough job, but she thinks helping Brewers Hill means she's just helping white men.

It's very difficult to get responses from the City. We'll need investments in street care over the next five years, but the city won't do anything for a long time.

Bringing the trolley here will be great.

For a large city, the City has been responsive.

There's power in numbers but it's risky to organize people and hard to raise funds.

The design guidelines are good for historic preservation. People want their property to look good.

Residents and businesses need to demand better city services. People pay high taxes and there is no good public education.

We need salt on the streets, streetlights that work, trash collection and police responsiveness.

Regarding [changes in city services](#), respondents talked almost exclusively about crime and police.

There used to be prostitution every night. Police would say, "we can't come for that."

Police patrol is good. The Captain comes to meetings.

District 5 Police are responsive.

Car break-ins are the largest problem.

The Police don't come often because there isn't much going on. Not many safety issues now. There are random car break-ins, but people leave things in their cars.

The police service is wonderful. They ride bikes and stop to talk to people.

Regarding [changes in customer demand for goods and services](#),

Pete's [fresh market] and Gee the Barber are both viable businesses.

There are more restaurants that are open after 5:00 but it's a double-edged sword. People won't go where they don't feel safe.

It would be great if the people in condos would shop in the neighborhood.

We now have Bublr Bikes in Brewers Hill!



Regarding the *change in customer base*, most business owners took the opportunity to comment on the demographic make-up of the neighborhood. As the comments suggest, there was a wide range of opinions.

There are probably more black people than white people. But there is a mix. White people are buying property now.

The older generation didn't like white people.

There's fewer Latino or mixed families—mostly black and white.

Diversity depends on what block you live on.

[The boundaries] Holton Ave and MLK Drive are like edges separating two communities.

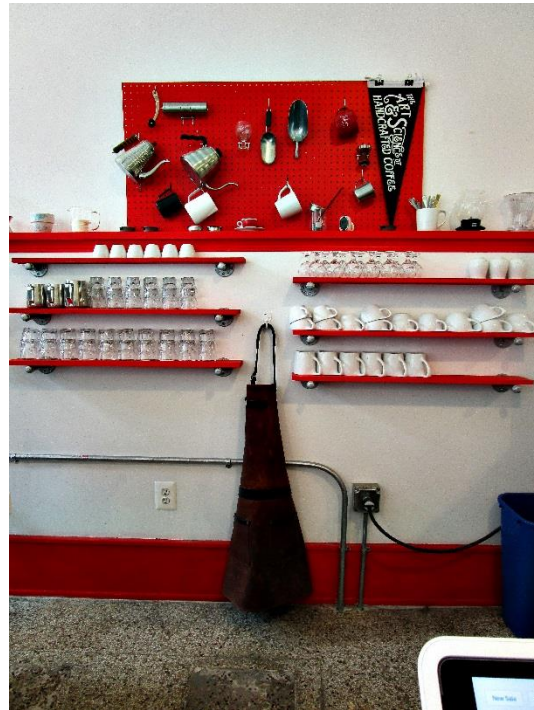
I think there's racial and economic diversity.

It's just not a community where there are families. Not a lot of black moms and black dads.

There are not many kids in the neighborhood. Some families move out when kids age. Kids who do live here all go to other schools. There is no neighborhood connection to the schools.

Brewers Hill residents used to be mostly gay neighbors, but some have moved. Gays and artists were the anchor neighbors. They make other people feel at ease...

When asked about *early indicators of neighborhood revitalization*, business owners and developers identified a range of things they watch for – “the canary in the coal mine.” Today, the neighborhood is appealing to businesses because of its proximity to downtown, affordability and diversity. But the early indicators of change, from the eyes of a life-long resident, were different. One longtime resident indicated that, in the 1980s the neighborhood had Latinx and black families attending the school. The teachers at Palmer Street School (now Carver Elementary) were black, and at the end of the school day, the black children would head west and the Latino children would head east. The only time a white man was in the neighborhood was when a utility worker came to shut off electricity, or a landlord came to collect rent. From this perspective, the first sign of gentrification was in the 90’s with white men driving through the neighborhood and shouting out the window to people on their porches, asking if they wanted to sell their homes.



When asked about *what made Brewers Hill unique in its development trajectory*, business owners frequently commented on what was happening in other neighborhoods and compared it to the demographic changes in their neighborhood.

Changes have been developing for the past 20 years. In the mid- 80’s, Brewers Hill was an all minority neighborhood. Now there are white, middle class families.

When I was growing up, the only white people I saw were landlords and cops.

Brewers Hill has hospitals, grocery stores, entertainment. You can bike or walk where you want to go. You can see every building downtown.

In Brewers Hill, it's mostly about improvements to vacant spaces. It's not blatant gentrification.

Walker's Point has a large gay community and a stronger Latino community; here in Brewers Hill, there was more of a gay presence in the late 1980's and 90's, [now] its more black and white.

Walker's Point had vacant warehouses—you can't displace people when things are vacant. Brewers Hill displaced people who shouldn't be there [referring to drug dealers and prostitutes].

The Third Ward is all white.

Business owners were asked to comment on the [impact of these changes on the residents](#). The responses again reflect the diversity of opinions on the subject.

Home values are increasing, which pushes people out. Especially older African Americans, people living in poor conditions, and people on fixed incomes.

The homes that don't look up to par are often the houses where black people live, they don't have the money to invest in the homes.

Drug houses are shut down, prostitution used to be rampant.

I don't know about racial displacement. It's not an issue to me.

The neighborhood is now more integrated. For some black people who grew up here, it's displacement.

There's been a decline in the black middle class. Blacks who had property and money—doctors, lawyers—moved out to Ozaukee (a wealthy northern suburban county).

Business owners were asked to discuss the [difference between older businesses and newer businesses](#) in Brewers Hill. The older businesses that remain (Crowne Hardware, Fein Brothers) were described as a remnant of the past, with a different orientation that contributes to the appeal of the neighborhood.

Fein Brothers and Crowne Hardware were there before the riots and stayed, but most businesses left, and the buildings were boarded up.

Fein Brothers is really cool, and the hardware store serves mostly [companies that do] maintenance and repair, but it doesn't draw people from the neighborhood.

The older businesses took a risk—like pioneers in a covered wagon heading west. I took a risk and I was fortunate but every day is a struggle to fight the perception of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood has a bad reputation and an inferiority complex. But I'd put it up against any other neighborhood in the city. It's viable. It's safe. There is less crime in Brewers Hill than on Bluemound (a business strip in a wealthy western suburban county).

It's been a slow process to reactivate the business community since then. There have been many starts and stops over the past 20-25 years, but people need to feel they can invest in the neighborhood.

The 1990s saw the closing of some of the problematic businesses—liquor stores and bars. The City cleaned up the street and addressed prostitution. They tore down a lot.

Business owners were asked *if business viability depends on the age, race or ethnicity* of residents.

Business support is more about class than it is about race. Race drives but class connects people who have something in common. A black middle-class person has more in common with a white middle-class person.

We need a yoga studio and a quality shoe store. The neighborhood does NOT need another day care center, clothing store or hair salon.

There's not enough to draw people into the neighborhood. Not enough interesting options. We need something more eclectic.

When asked if there are *groups that are not being served well by the changes*, business owners indicated that low-income families are suffering and that newer residents need more green space.

Poor families are not faring well. They have only poor housing choices available to them.

We need pocket parks, green space and dog parks.

Finally, since this research is interested in data that can be used to explore *indicators that foreshadow neighborhood change*, business owners were asked if there was any specific data that they used to identify change and make their business decisions. Business owners complained that it's hard to get accurate data on the neighborhood. They pointed out that Commerce Street (an adjacent area filled with new condos and apartments) is not part of Brewers Hill, but the reports commonly include that area, thus skewing the picture of what is happening in Brewers Hill. Most indicated that there was no particular source of data they use. Instead, they reported their judgements were informed by:

- walking the neighborhood
- driving around
- traveling to other cities
- talking to others and
- reading publications like "*Urban Living*."

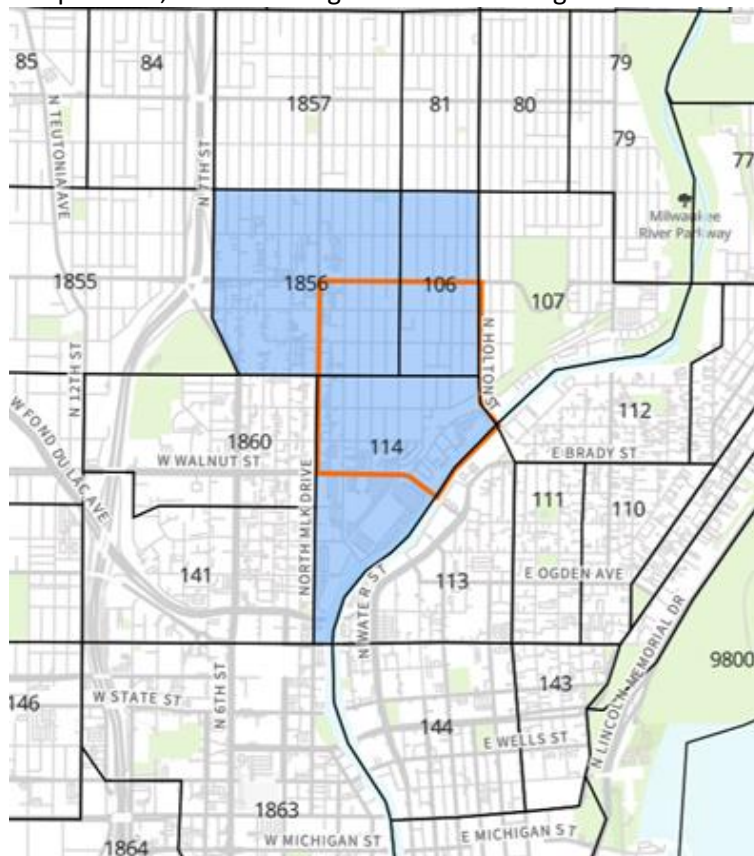
(See the list of resident generated indicators at the end of the report.)

Changes in population, education and housing burden

Although the study design relies heavily on the quantitative data provided by the Department of City Development from both the TOD study and the Anti-Displacement Plan, Data You Can Use also created data profiles of each of the two neighborhoods similar to those prepared for other neighborhoods in the city and hosted on our [website](#). The neighborhood data profiles are included in the appendix and accessible in the following links, respectively. The reports were a welcome contribution as residents from both [Walker's Point](#) and [Brewers Hill](#) lamented the previous lack of data relevant to their specific neighborhoods.

As noted above, members of the neighborhood association for Brewers Hill reported that data analyses often include information about recent development on Commerce Street, an area technically outside of Brewer Hill. Neighborhood association members in Walker's Point similarly complained of being "lumped in" with the Third Ward, which is quite different than Walker's Point proper. The Data You Can Use convention in the neighborhood profiles is to consider the census tracts as within the boundaries of the neighborhood if roughly half or more of the physical tract is within the boundary. Conversations with neighborhood groups are held to determine the final inclusion of tracts in the analysis.

The following maps show the areas included but also recognize that neighborhoods can overlap and even block level data may be misleading. The shaded blue areas are complete census tracts included in the analysis for the data portraits, and the orange lines are the neighborhood boundaries.



1: Map of Brewers Hill study area for neighborhood data portrait



2: Map of Walker's Point Study Area for neighborhood data portrait

Because we have seen that neighborhood change, especially as it relates to gentrification and displacement can occur in hyper-local geographies, Data You Can Use also reviewed change at the block group level between 2000 – 2015 for Brewers Hill and Walker's Point in indicators identified as most compelling in explaining change. These are compared to the City as a whole. Both Brewers Hill and Walker's Point neighborhoods exhibit signs of change that are different from the city as a whole. Block group level indicators also suggest just how different these two neighborhoods are from each other. The methodology is included in the appendix.

OVERALL INDICATORS OF GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Based on the analysis of the other studies and the incorporation of the qualitative data, the following indicators were chosen to explore change at an even more micro level. The block groups included are identified in the methodology section.

- Gentrification indicators are increases in:
 - Percent of the population that is White; and
 - Percent of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- Risk of Displacement indicators are an increase in:
 - Rental housing burden—renters paying more than 30% of their income for housing; and
 - Homeowner housing burden—households that pay 30% or more of income for housing.

	Evidence of Gentrification		Risk of Displacement	
	RACE % white	EDUCATION % w/ college degree	RENTER HOUSING BURDEN % renter housing burdened	HOMEOWNER HOUSING BURDEN % homeowner housing burdened
City	-3.7%	+5%	+16.3%	+14%
Brewers Hill	+31.8%	+23.3%	+1.7%	+4.8%
Walker’s Point	-12.8%	13.0%	+33.6%	25.3%

Evidence of Gentrification at the Micro level

RACE

Data from the profiles show that in 2015 there were approximately 4,200 people in the larger Brewers Hill geography, with a remarkably even distribution of Blacks (45.4%) and Whites (44.2%) and 3% being two or more races. Seven percent of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino.

In Walker’s Point, 22% identified as White alone, 8% Black alone and 68% identified as Hispanic or Latino. (See table 1 in the profiles)

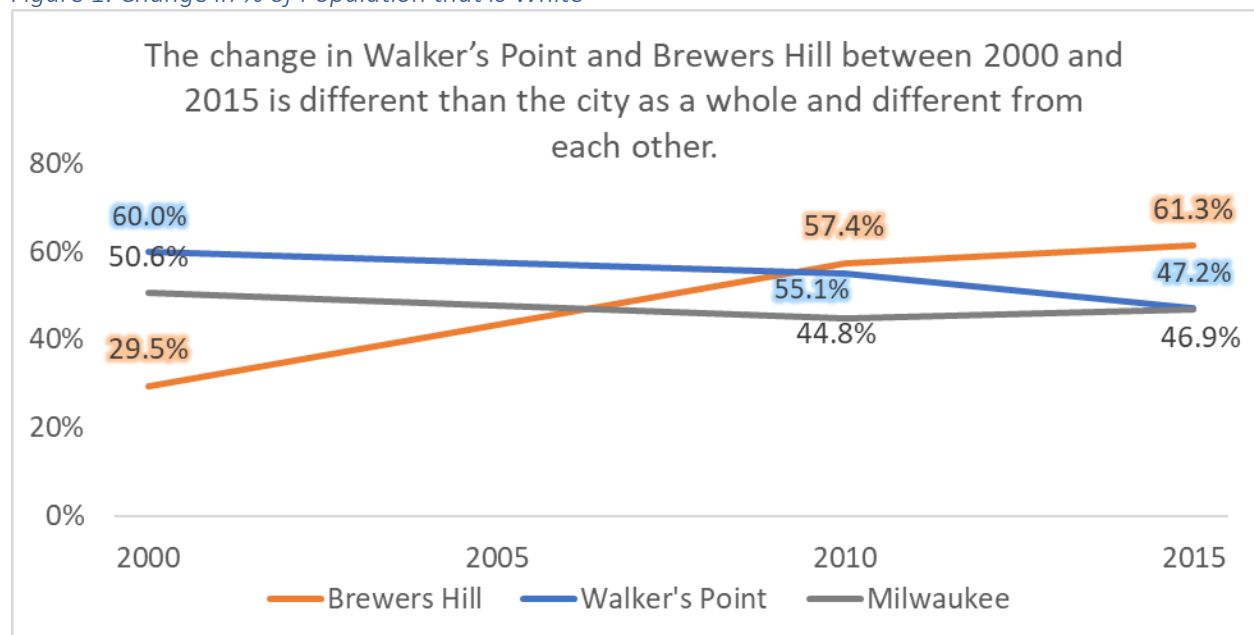
In 2000, roughly half (50.6%) of Milwaukee’s overall population was White and non-Hispanic. After declining slightly (44.8%) in 2010, it rose to 46.9% in 2015. Overall, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of the population that is White, which dropped 3.7% between 2000 and 2015.

RACE Percent of Population that is White (block group level)

	2000			2015			Percent change over time
	Total Pop	White	Percent	Total Pop	White	Percent	
City	614,529	310,734	50.6%	599,498	280,922	46.9%	-3.7%
Brewers Hill	1,912	564	29.5%	2,748	1,684	61.3%	+31.8%
Walker's Point	3,119	1,872	60.0%	2,413	1,140	47.2%	-12.8%

Looking at the micro (block group) level, in both neighborhoods, the percentage of the population that is White has changed more drastically than the City overall. The share of White residents in Brewers Hill doubled from 29.5% in 2000, to 61.3% in 2015, an increase of 31.8%. In contrast, in Walker's Point the percent of the population that is White decreased by 12.8%, from 60.0% in 2000 to 47.2% in 2015. The following graph shows that the most dramatic change in Brewers Hill was between 2000 and 2010.

Figure 1. Change in % of Population that is White



EDUCATION

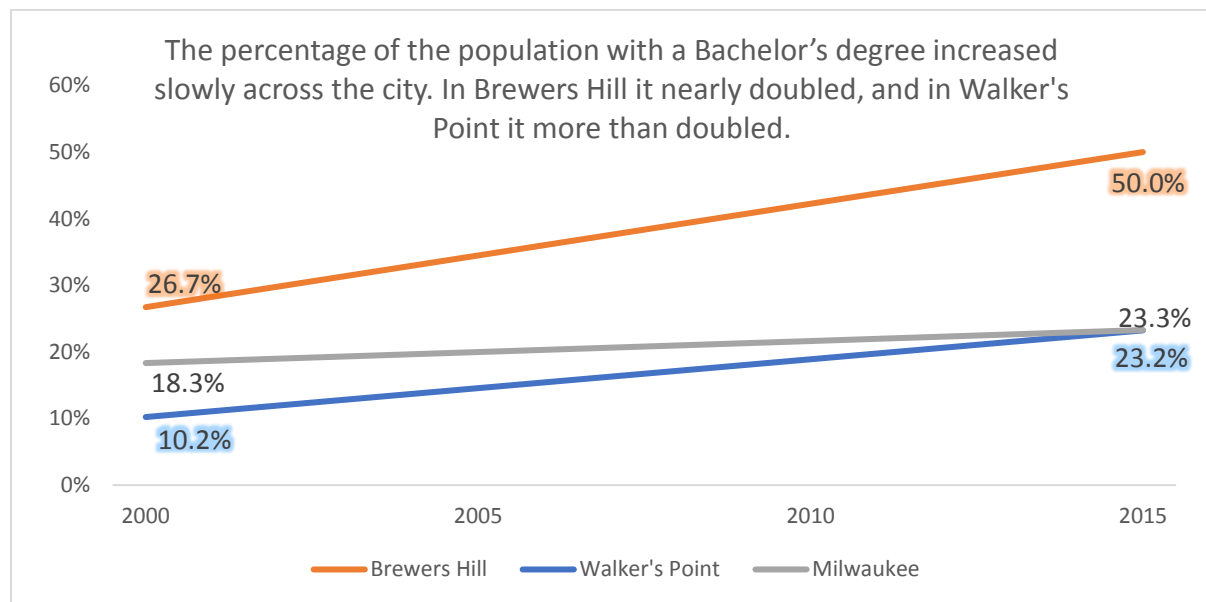
Based on the neighborhood data profile, in Brewers Hill, the percent of residents who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher is greater in all age groups when compared to the city. The difference is greatest among the younger population (age 25-34). While overall educational attainment is lower in Walker's Point than the city as a whole, data from the neighborhood profiles indicate that, in Walker's Point, among those age 25-34, the percent with a bachelor's degree is similar to the city average. (see Table 9 in the Walker's Point profile) The percentage of Milwaukee residents with a bachelor's degree and higher increased from 18.3% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2015, a 5.0% increase.

EDUCATION Percent of Population over 25 with a College Degree (block group level)

	2000			2015			Percent change over time
	Total Pop over 25	College Degree	Percent	Total Pop over 25	College Degree	Percent	
City	353,505	64,742	18.3%	364,339	84,836	23.3%	+5.0%
Brewers Hill	992	265	26.7%	2,102	1,050	50.0%	+23.3%
Walker's Point	1,781	182	10.2%	1,524	354	23.2%	+13.0%

At the micro (block group) level, the percent of Brewers Hill residents with higher education degrees saw dramatic change from 2000 (26.7%) to 2015 (50.0%), an increase of 23.3%. A smaller percentage of residents of Walker's Point had a bachelor's degree than across the City in 2000, but after rapid increase it more than doubled and was nearly equal to the city rate in 2015.

Figure 2: Change in % of the population with a bachelor's degree



Evidence of Risk of Displacement at the Micro Level

HOUSING BURDEN

A household is considered "housing burdened" if the residents pay 30% or more of household income on rent or a mortgage. Housing burden differs in renter and owner-occupant households. Milwaukee's population of renters with housing burden in 2000 was 40.9%, but increased to 57.2%, an increase of 16.3% in 2015.

Data from the neighborhood profile indicate that in 2015, there were 2,282 housing units in Brewers Hill and a vacancy rate of 12%. Most (45%) homes are single-family, two-bedroom detached units built before 1939. From 1940 to 1979, the pace of new construction was significantly lower in Brewers Hill than elsewhere in the city. New construction at a pace higher than the city rate of growth began in the

1980s and continues in the 2000-- 2015 time period. (see tables 9-12 in the profiles). The majority (69%) of housing units are renter-occupied compared to 58% city-wide. The most frequent range of rental rates is \$1,250 to \$1,499, higher than the mode city rate of \$800-\$899. There are 626 owner occupied units. Monthly mortgage costs for nearly 40% of those with a mortgage are over \$2000, again higher than the city average.

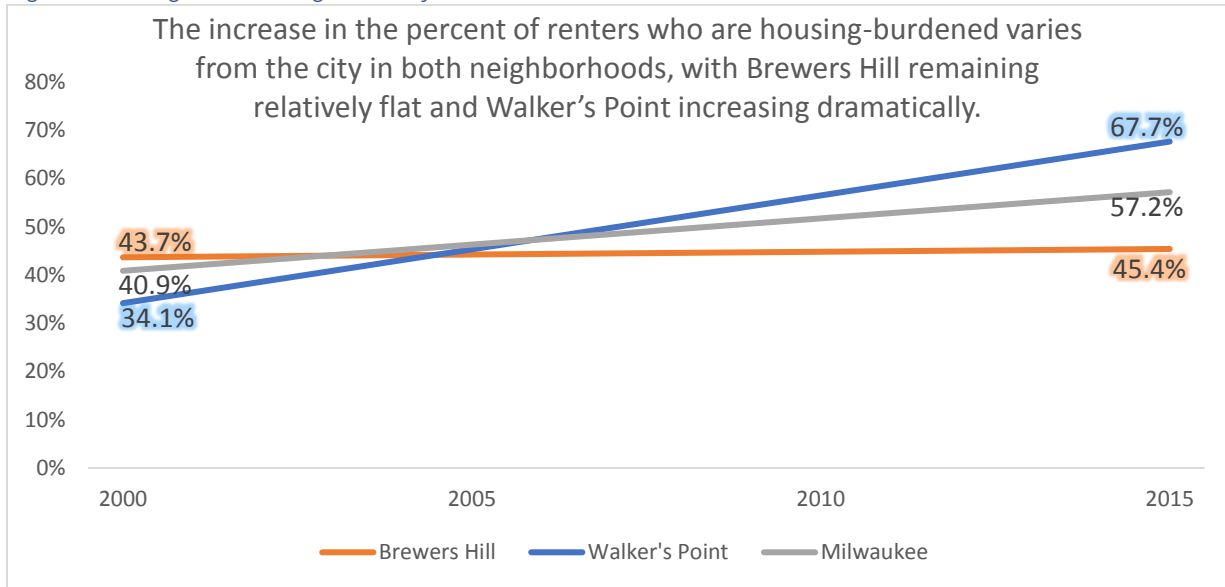
In Walker’s Point, data from the neighborhood profiles indicate that in 2015, there were 1,888 housing units and a vacancy rate of 17%. Homes are most commonly single family (47%), three-bedroom detached units built before 1939 (68%). The pace of new construction has been significantly lower than the city rate of growth. The majority (74%) of housing units are renter occupied compared to 58% city wide. The most frequent range of rental rates is \$800-899 per month, the same as the mode rate for the city. There are 411 owner-occupied units. Monthly mortgage costs for 44% of those with a mortgage are between \$1,500 and \$1,999, significantly higher than the city average. (see tables 9-14 in the profiles)

Renters who are Housing Burdened (block group level)

	2000			2015			Percent change over time
	Total renter households	Housing burdened	Percent	Total renter households	Housing burdened	Percent	
City	120,830	49,376	40.9%	127,436	72,844	57.2%	+16.3%
Brewers Hill	623	272	43.7%	857	389	45.4%	+1.7%
Walker’s Point	735	251	34.1%	708	479	67.7%	+33.6%

At the micro (block group) level, the percent of renters who are housing- burdened in Brewers Hill was relatively stable during this time period; with 43.7% in 2000 and 45.4% in 2015, representing a slight increase of only 1.7%. In comparison, the percent of renters in Walker’s Point who were rent burdened grew from 34.1% in 2000 to 67.7% by 2015, an increase of 33.6%.

Figure 3 Change in Housing Burden for Renters



HOUSING BURDEN AMONG HOMEOWNERS

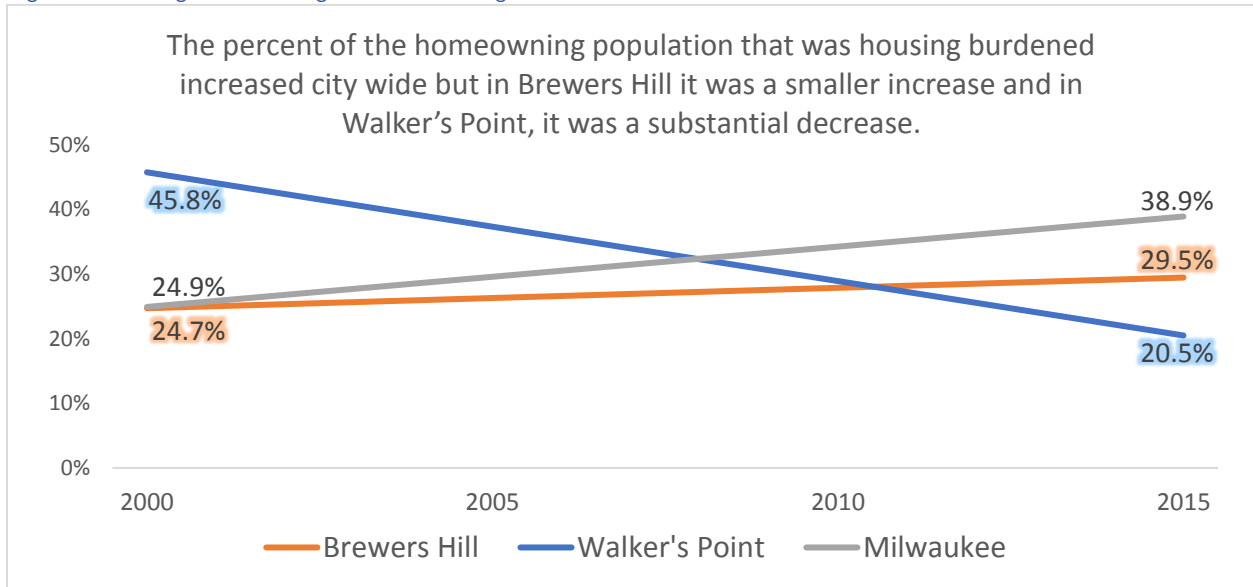
Overall, a greater percentage of Milwaukee renters are housing burdened (57.2%) than homeowners (38.9%). The percent of housing-burdened homeowners in Milwaukee was 24.9% in 2000 and 38.9% by 2015, an increase of 14.0%.

Homeowners who are Housing Burdened (block group level)

	2000			2015			Percent change over time
	Total homeowner households	Housing burdened	Percent	Total homeowners	Housing burdened	Percent	
City	56,351	14,051	24.9%	68,141	26,534	38.9%	+14.0%
Brewers Hill	93	23	24.7%	502	148	29.5%	+4.8%
Walker's Point	83	38	45.8%	156	32	20.5%	-25.3%

At the block level, Brewers Hill homeowners experienced less of an increase than the City with 24.7% in 2000 and 29.5% in 2015, a 4.8% increase. Walker's Point did not follow the same trend as the City and Brewers Hill, but instead saw a substantial downward trend in housing burden for homeowners from 2000 (45.8%) through 2015 (20.5%), a 25.3% decrease.

Figure 4. Change in housing burden among homeowners



Looking ahead

As Milwaukee continues the conversation about neighborhood change and designs strategies to promote equitable development, there are some additional concepts and indicators that could help elevate the conversation and sharpen the strategies. These are discussed below.

Class

One avenue to continue to pursue would be a conception of class regardless of color. While the concepts are inextricably intertwined, there are undeniable class differences among racial and ethnic groups. Gentrification may be tied to income, but it is also tied to education. The percent of the population with a bachelor's degree is a commonly used indicator, while indicators of wealth are generally not included. It's also possible that changes in indicators of occupation might be under-analyzed indicators with respect to gentrification and displacement.

In the Brewers Hill neighborhood, people identified middle-class Black professionals who live there for its proximity to downtown but have little interest in getting involved in neighborhood organizations. In Walker's Point, middle class Latinx business owners live in the neighborhood because their family still lives there or to be close to their business operations.

While some dismiss the concept of class as being equal to income, others take a more sociological or anthropological view and note that middle and upper class black and ethnic minorities are also part of the gentrification movement. For example, Mary Pattillo, author of [Black on the Block](#), in her book on changes in Chicago's South Side, posits the existence of "middlemen" and "middle women," and discusses the roles that Black professionals play in either mediating or exacerbating racial and class differences.

Further, academics, artists and entrepreneurs are often early adopters in neighborhoods that are later labeled gentrified, and these groups may have an elevated status not reflected in their income. Both Trotter in Black Milwaukee and Jones in the Selma of the North, in describing the history of Milwaukee's Black population, stress that the Black community was not monolithic. Within the inner core, there were sharp class divisions between proletariat and bourgeois Black workers who were caught in a mutual struggle against racial inequality.

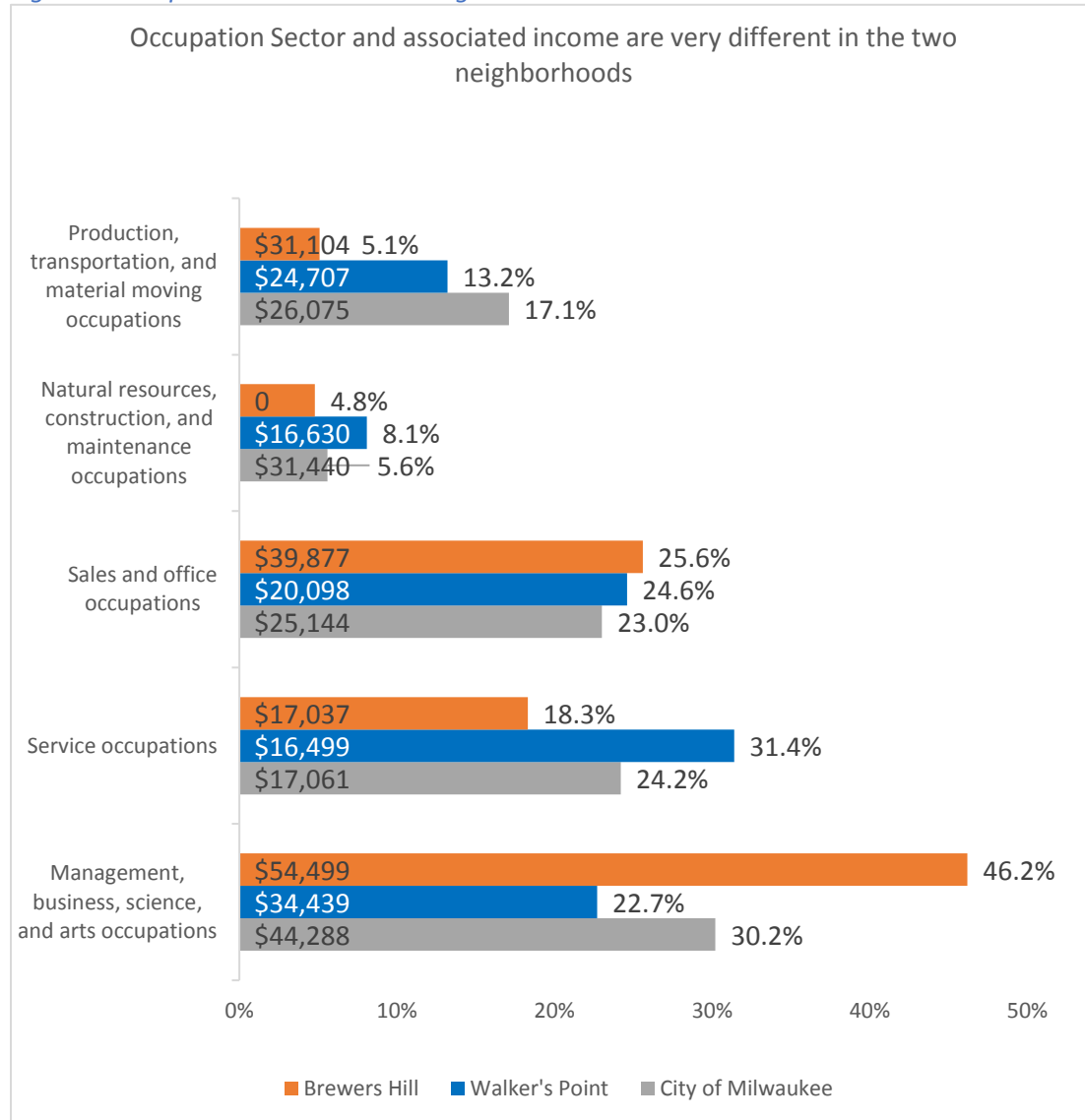
From its origins in England in the 1960's, the term gentrification referred to "people of good social position" in the UK, the class of people next below the nobility in position and birth, the privileged upper classes. While we shy away from the concept of class in the US, the indicators which are generally included in its assessment might be informative here. Traditionally, the concept of class includes consideration of occupation, education, income and wealth. Differences in wealth may be reflected in investments in housing, education and health care. Acknowledging that class and race are often closely intertwined, there are some who say gentrification is more about class than race and that what distinguishes gentrification from normal migration is the displacement of lower-class populations with the replacement of higher-class populations.

Research also suggests that the concept of class may be more relevant in Milwaukee than in other cities. Starting in 1910, Milwaukee was the only major city in America where a Socialist was elected to serve as Mayor. With the exception of a brief stint during the depression and World War II, Socialist leaders ruled Milwaukee until 1960. Nearly fifty years of socialist leadership put class, not race, at the center of the model of urban development.

Because class was their primary mode of analysis, the Socialists did not have a significant or sustained program to address the discrimination and inequality faced by Milwaukee's small black population. (Jones p. 17: emphasis added.)

As class is often associated with occupation, a point-in-time look at the two neighborhoods of interest shows further differences between them. Based on the neighborhood profiles, nearly a third (31.4%) of the workforce in Walker's Point is employed in the service sector where median earnings are just under \$16,500 annually. The service sector is followed by sales and office occupations, employing a quarter of the workforce, with median earnings of \$20,098. In Brewers Hill, by contrast, 46% of the employed population is working in management, business, science, and arts occupations with median earnings just under \$54,500. Like Walker's Point, 25% of the population in Brewers Hill are in sales and office occupations but their median earnings are almost double what Walker's Point residents in this sector earn (\$39,877). (see table 7 in the data profiles).

Figure 5 Occupation sector and earnings in Walker's Point and Brewers Hill



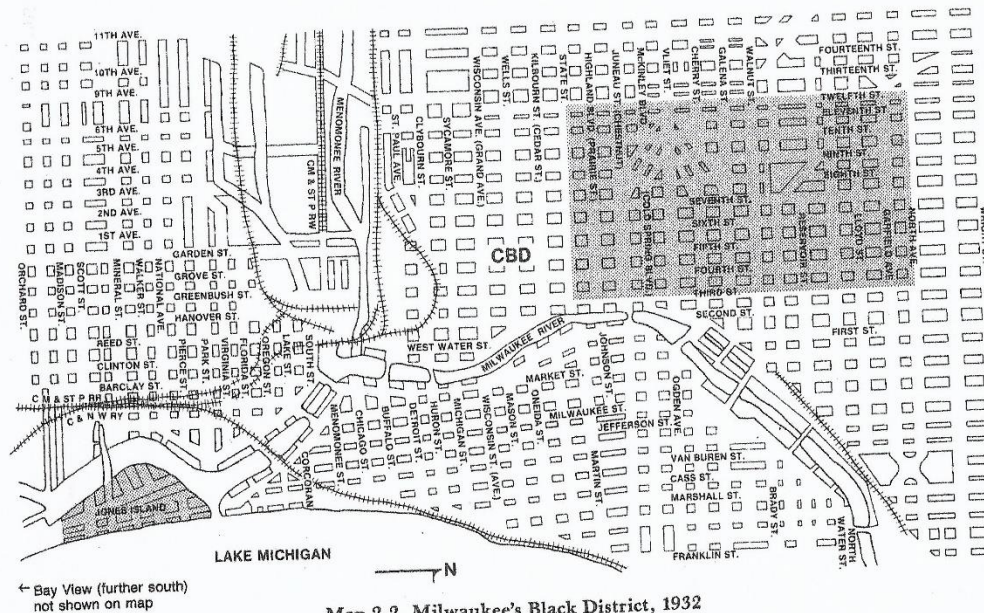
The percentage on the right is the percent of population in each area who work in that sector. The income at the base of the bar is the median income of residents who worked in that sector

Historic Legacy

In 1910, the time of the first Socialist Mayor in Milwaukee, there were 980 Black residents in the city, comprising less than a quarter of 1% of the city's population. By 1920, the Black population had doubled to 2,229, and then tripled with 7,501 Black residents by 1930, still making up less than .015% of the city's total population. Only 1,000 more Black inhabitants came during the 1930's and early 1940's. (Jones)

Jones (p19) points out an area known as the "inner core," which became an identifiable seventy-five block "Black District" through "a mixture of choice, economic necessity, restrictive housing covenants,

discriminatory real estate and loan practices, and overt racism.” By 1940, more than 90% of Milwaukee’s Black population lived there.



Map 2.2. Milwaukee's Black District, 1932

Source: Wright Directory Company, *Wright's Map of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1918); Milwaukee City Engineers Department, *Map of Milwaukee Ward Boundaries, 1937* (City of Milwaukee, 1931); Paula Lynagh, "Milwaukee's Negro Community" (Milwaukee: Citizen's Government Research Bureau, 1946), p. 2.

Map 7 Milwaukee's Black District -1932

Source: "Housing of Negroes: Milwaukee Problem" Blade 16 Oct 1926, referenced in Trotter p 70

Racial segregation also meant inferior housing for the majority of Milwaukee Blacks. Housing in the inner core was among the oldest in the city. As Milwaukee's resident historian John Gurda points out, "the newest immigrants get the oldest housing." Germans and Jews occupied the area prior to the influx of African Americans during World War I. The area was originally an extension of Milwaukee's "Gold Coast," but as wealthy people left the area, the large homes were sold to loan associations, realtors and other "slum investors," and subdivided into rooming houses or one- and two- bedroom apartments. By the 1940's the homes were often absentee-owned, neglected and deteriorating. Roughly 3% of local African Americans owned their home. (Jones: 19)

A study conducted by the Milwaukee Urban League in 1926 identifies housing as "one of the greatest problems confronting the Negro in Milwaukee." The conclusion was based on a WPA study of 275 homes, the majority of which were found "inadequate for average comfort." Recorded problems included "no gas or bath," "dampness on account of water standing in the basement," "roofing in bad order," and "dark rooms in need of plastering." More than 90 years ago, noting the important connection between health and housing, the Urban League study goes on to point out, "Rats, a health hazard for all, but especially dangerous for small children, infested several of the homes. Overall... there is a high incidence of disease, declining births and rising death rates accompanied poor housing conditions among Milwaukee Blacks."ⁱⁱ

As we consider the legacy of these entrenched problems, we have to consider their contemporary impact.

The quagmire of “diversity”

Complicating the conversation around gentrification, is the cacophony around the word “diversity” with little agreement about what it means. For example, there was clear agreement that there are more White young people coming into Walker’s Point. Because the neighborhood had been predominately Latino, some respondents describe this as creating more diversity (moving away from a single race or ethnicity), while others worry it is eroding the “diversity” that exists. Similarly, the influx of White people in Brewers Hill made the neighborhood population more diverse (not all a single race). Others worried that because there are more White people moving in, that there is less diversity—that is the erosion of the Black or Latino base which some see as making the neighborhood less diverse.

Brewers Hill, a neighborhood that was once nearly all White, then predominantly Black, then Black and Latino, now Black, White, and Latino, complicates the question of diversity. A neighborhood that was predominately African American is seeing an increase in White residents which makes, by some definitions, the neighborhood itself more diverse. Its losing African Americans, however, and other people often tagged as “diverse.”

The conversation around diversity, in interviews and focus groups, raised interesting questions:

If a neighborhood is primarily African Americans and White people move in, is the neighborhood more diverse or less diverse?

If a neighborhood is primarily Latino, and White people move in, is the neighborhood more diverse or less diverse?

If diversity means a neighborhood with a range of races, it’s diverse. If it’s only nonwhites, it’s not diverse.

The neighborhood IS more diverse, the people in it are not. It used to be all African American, or at least people of color and now there are more White people.

Some of the young people coming in are White, but there’s a lot more Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. No one even talks about Asians.

African American faces are more common now. The Latino population is heading south and west. They want better jobs and education. The first generation grew up with gang-on-gang violence, the next generation doesn’t want that.

Is it only gentrification if its white people integrating a neighborhood of color? What is it when young White people go into a White ethnic neighborhood? Bay View is gentrified, and no one is complaining.

In Public Housing, bringing market-rate residents into highly subsidized developments is considered a good thing. Is that gentrification?

Protective Factors

To reduce both the fear and the reality of displacement, there are several “protective factors” that can be put in place. Some of the important protective factors that were identified include:

- Informed conversations—making sure the “right” people (not just the usual suspects) are included
- Active neighborhood organizations—providing a forum for residents and businesses alike to engage in the dreams, the discussion and the debate
- Responsive political representatives—local elected leaders who pay attention to constituents
- Neighborhood schools that are actively engaged in the community, and community development efforts that are actively engaged in schools
- Diversity of housing options—focusing not only on low-income housing options but options that promote a diversity of housing opportunities.

Voice and Participation

Concern regarding gentrification is a concern regarding displacement, a concern regarding change, and a concern that people have not been involved or informed. It’s interesting, for example, that several of the local studies discussed earlier consistently pair the words “fear of” with the word “gentrification.” By several accounts, this “fear” is a result of the failure to engage the right people at the right time.

Residents are worried that something will change and concerned that they weren’t involved. People resist change. Gentrification is really a voice and participation issue—not an economic one.

Neighborhood Schools

Initially to promote integration and desegregate public schools, beginning with a court order in 1976, Milwaukee bussed children from their neighborhoods to public schools in other neighborhoods. The 1979 integration plan required that 75% of Milwaukee Public School students attend schools that were desegregated. **By 2010, only 20% of children attended neighborhood schools and 20% of children in neighborhood schools come from the immediate neighborhoods.** On the historically Black north side of the city, this left Black children riding school busses to other parts of the city and contributed to the dissolution of Black led local schools and removed an institution known for uniting diverse populations. On the southside, where historically white European immigrants were replaced by Hispanic families, there was more dependence on Catholic schools. Children remained in their neighborhoods and neighborhoods preserved stronger neighborhood ties. With the explosion of choice and charter schools, the private schools replaced public neighborhood schools without displacing the neighborhood context.

This may help explain the different look at “gentrification” in the two neighborhoods under study. In Brewers Hill, residents explained that the initial wave of “gentrifiers” came in the 1990’s and included families that had young children. Initially new white families enrolled their children in the neighborhood public schools (Palmer Street School later had its name changed its name to Carver) but concerns about quality left them sending children to multiple alternatives—parochial schools, Montessori schools, and “magnet” schools of MPS. Black respondents complained that if “gentrifiers” truly wanted to improve the neighborhood, they would have helped build and lift the local public school. Meanwhile, white parents argue that the quality is no good and that they are now forced to send their children to multiple schools. The fact that children went to so many schools—not even benefitting from the unifying effect of car-pooling and further eroding opportunities for neighbors to come together. The neighborhood association in Brewers Hill reported that they worked to remodel the teachers’ lounge at the school and feel that they have made significant outreach efforts to the school. The ultimate fear for the neighborhood, according to interviews and focus groups respondents, is that young families will move away when their children turn school-age and that the neighborhood will always be comprised of young

professionals and empty-nesters. In effect, the neighborhood lacks the unifying effect of young children that also spurs business growth.

As one respondent quipped,

You don't need a family restaurant if there aren't any families.

In Walker's Point, by contrast, the neighborhood is rich with young children. Parents united by common interest in the well-being of their children and the quality of their schools increase neighborhood cohesion and ultimately produce more stability for a neighborhood. One Walker's Point respondent recommended that the best indicators of neighborhood change would be the:

- quality of the schools,
- engagement of the school in the neighborhood, and
- engagement of the neighborhood in the school.

Historic Districts

Both Walker's Point and Brewers Hill are formally designated historic districts. The neighborhoods were attractive to early settlers because of their location. For Brewers Hill, it was the rivers for the city's early beer barons and their workforces, and for Walker's Point their proximity to the tannery and jobs in the adjacent produce district. Recognition of their early influence on and significance to the city is assured to the neighborhoods through their designation as historic districts. The designation process is arduous and takes commitment and a level of dedication and expertise. It also affects the amount and rate of change that can occur in a neighborhood. In both Walker's Point and Brewers Hill, the process was initiated and undertaken by interested neighborhood groups, further building their ability to influence future development (or restrictions) of the neighborhood. Several business owners indicated that they see the presence of historic markers as signs of strong neighborhoods.

Leadership, Strength and Nature of Neighborhood Organizations

In both Brewers Hill and Walker's Point, this research was aided by the local neighborhood associations. Although they differ in size and structure, both Walker's Point Association and Historic Brewers Hill Association are regarded as relatively influential. Interviews included both founding and current leadership, business representatives and resident members. (A listing of participants is found in the appendix). Interestingly, both neighborhood organizations are led by people who have strong backgrounds in urban planning, architecture and development. Like many things in Milwaukee, despite shared interests and concerns, the north side group is not actively connected to the south side group.

Perhaps because there is an active Business Improvement District (BID) in Brewers Hill, the focus of the [Historic Brewers Hill Association](#) is less on connections and relations with businesses than in Walker's Point, although there is overlapping leadership on the BID Board and the neighborhood association. Association members comment that they have "gone to great lengths to engage the residents with the local businesses and vice versa." Some residents contend that in addition to the pursuit of the historic designation, what originally drew the Brewers Hill neighborhood association together was a concern about crime (primarily prostitution and drug dealing which were reportedly blatant and uncontrolled by local law enforcement). Others report the impetus was the proposed prison to be built nearby. The organization was founded by a resident couple with strong interest in historic preservation of the original homes. Today, the neighborhood association members primarily rally around proposed development efforts. Drug dealing remains a concern among residents in the neighborhood association,

with fairly open trade by buyers who are willing to meet dealers in the neighborhood—ironically, because it is perceived as safe.

As neighborhood organizations go, both are more organized and “sophisticated” in membership and structure than many more grass-roots neighborhood groups. The Historic Brewers Hill Association’s website describes its governance structure, history, membership dues structure, and calendar of events, and includes resources such as important contacts for crime and traffic calming devices. Several observers indicated that they believe this is due to the urban planning background of its leadership.

Members of the neighborhood association, who are primarily homeowners, indicate that they are attracted to Brewers Hill because of its diversity while others argue that that diversity has been lost through the displacement of Black families and increased costs due to gentrification. The association acknowledges that despite outreach efforts to Black and Hispanic residents, membership in the association is almost exclusively White.

The [Walker’s Point Neighborhood Association](#) has its roots in a 1980’s neighborhood development corporation which was intended to promote business development and investment in the area. That organization evolved over time to having a dual focus on residents and businesses. The redesign of the organization was pioneered by a female architect with strong roots in urban planning and an affordable office in the neighborhood. The organization prides itself on its knowledge of activities affecting the neighborhood and welcomes new businesses and new residents with personal visits intended to transmit the standards of the neighborhood.

Interaction with City Government

The Walker’s Point Association has an active resident component and an active business component; while the two are not always in agreement, they are continually engaged in efforts to balance what can sometimes be competing needs and preferences. The Association also has a strong link to the Department of City Development; is considered a resource in neighborhood knowledge; and is thought to have an inside track to City officials. When asked why development or displacement did or did not happen in Walker’s Point, the answer was either the Neighborhood Association or the active Aldermanic presence.

No feature stands out more strongly than the fact that the Alderman representing the Walker’s Point neighborhood was a visible and active player. In every interview and throughout the focus group discussion, he was mentioned by name and credited with advocating for the interests of the residents and businesses of the area.

Honoring the Wisdom of the Residents

Interestingly, interviews and discussions with neighborhood residents about indicators of gentrification, displacement, and neighborhood change did **not** focus on race or education. Nor were they much interested in the data points that might readily be pulled from the census. Instead, they offered a range of more “everyday indicators” that could change perception. As the canary in the coal mine warns of danger, residents of neighborhoods perceived to be gentrifying offered the following advice on things to watch for as potential precursors of displacement:

“Everyday indicators” suggested by residents

- An increase in establishments that have kale on the menu

- An increase in the availability of espresso at coffee shops
- Closing of pawn shops
- Increase in number of people walking dogs
- An increase in populations known to be willing to take risks—
 - young creatives
 - artists
 - musicians
 - hipsters
 - photographers
 - entertainment owners
 - bar and restaurants staff and
 - people who identify as LGBTQ

Gay neighbors make a neighborhood feel hip and trendy.

Gays and artists are the anchors. They make other people feel at ease.

Watch for more young people in the neighborhood, with more money.

- Change in kinds of trash

There's a difference in the kinds of trash we see. It used to be empty Mad Dog bottles, now its chardonnay.

I'm still cleaning up red cups, syringes and condoms.

- Change in types of crime

It used to be more prostitution and violent crime, now its crimes of convenience and arranged drug sales.

- Good attendance at Neighborhood Association meetings—watch who shows up
- Events attracting hip meet-up groups (e.g. New-aukee)
- Presence of food trucks

Food trucks give people a chance to dine with strangers

- Murals, banners and public art

- Growth in the food and beverage industry.

Food and beverage establishments make a neighborhood.

Employees see a place they want to live and its affordable.

- Historic integrity

I look for historic tax credits, historic markers, people who appreciate the neighborhood's roots.

You can tell a lot from the name of the neighborhood. If the name comes from history or the residents, it's not gentrification, but it is if it's from real estate brokers ..."

- People who use words like
 - buzz
 - edgy
 - earthy
 - grungy and
 - vibe

The following word cloud depicts the residents' suggested indicators.



Figure 6 Word cloud of resident identified indicators

The Last Word

While the presence of people who use these words may indicate gentrification, there are other words that summarize the lessons of this study. Perhaps the most insightful comment from hundreds of hours of interviews came from someone who has worked in Walker's Point for nearly 40 years. "The nature of a city" he said, "is to reinvent." Milwaukee has the opportunity to continue to reinvent. Informed by data, and with an understanding of history, the wisdom of those with lived experience, and thoughtful partners, Milwaukee can do so in a way that monitors neighborhood change, drives informed government action, and supports displacement prevention and inclusive revitalization.

The nature of a city is to reinvent.

Thank You

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To participants in interviews and focus group

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Terry Mambu Rasch, Brewers Hill
Paul Mattek, Walker's Point
Rosemarie Moser, Brewers Hill
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Ann Pieper, Walker's Point
Jim Pogorelc, Walker's Point
Guy Rehorst, Walker's Point
Scott Richardson, Walker's Point
Larry Roffers, Brewers Hill
Jose Salazar, Walker's Point
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For questions or comments, please email her at katie@datayoucanuse.org

Appendices—

Neighborhood data profiles (see separate attachment)

Brewers Hill <https://www.datayoucanuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brewers-Hill-Neighborhood-Portrait.pdf>

Walker's Point <https://www.datayoucanuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Walkers-Point-Neighborhood-Portrait.pdf>

About the Data

The study design calls for a mixed-method analysis, looking not only at the quantitative data points but also at the wisdom and experience of those who provide qualitative accounts to explain (or refute) the numbers. Consistent with the Data You Can Use mantra-- “no data without stories, no stories without data,” -- this approach provides opportunities to judge the weight of the evidence in exploring neighborhood change. The study calls for gathering information using focus groups and key informant interviews applying a common set of questions and probes in each of the neighborhoods. In both the Walker's Point and Brewers Hill neighborhoods, residents and business owners who have been in the area for a minimum of five years participated. Additionally, interviews with policy makers were conducted to put the neighborhood information into the context of broader city change. Along with these interviews, a photo-journal of key landmarks mentioned in the interviews was created and pictures are included in this report. The summary of the qualitative work will be presented to and vetted by business owners, residents and the neighborhood associations who participated in the research.

The quantitative data incorporates data from MKE United, the Milwaukee Department of City Development's Oriented Development (TOD) grant, data from [A Place in the Neighborhood: An Anti-Displacement Plan for Neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown Milwaukee](#), regarding race and economic changes, information from multiple studies from other cities, and adaptations based on suggestions raised in the qualitative interviews and additional literature review. The TOD data comes from national consultants who worked with the city to conduct a market and affordability study of neighborhoods adjacent to the areas being considered for future extensions of the streetcar, including Brewers Hill and Walker's Point. Data You Can Use is incorporating the TOD project's quantitative analysis of the economic and racial changes in Walker's Point and Brewers Hill. Sources of the quantitative data include:

- HR&A for the Department of City Development as part of its Transit Oriented Design study;
- the Department of City Development for its Anti-Displacement Plan; and by
- Data You Can Use for its established neighborhood data portraits

The qualitative data stems from focus groups and interviews with residents, policy makers and business owners, and leaders in the neighborhoods of interest. They are acknowledged in the appendix.

Primary data sources:

1. *The NNIP Turning the Corner cross-site community* via phone and in-person -convenings and shared materials including early materials provided by Twin Cities, the group meeting in Indianapolis. Check-in calls coincided with updates to the group, experience of Detroit, particularly the conversations around the more uncommon indicators.
2. *Quantitative Data Resources*

- a. From the Department of City Development’s contract with HR&A. As an in-kind contribution to the project, the data collected by HR&A in conjunction with the Transit Oriented Design (TOD) study (participated in the site tours, report outs, and received the reports)
 - b. From the Department of City Development’s Anti-Displacement Plan, data compiled at the request of the City Council to create a policy to address gentrification and displacement
 - c. DYCU analysis of additional variables associated with neighborhood change both in the profiles and the block level analysis
 - d. MKE United data from an analysis of neighborhoods surrounding Downtown Development.
3. *Qualitative Data Resources*
- a. Focus groups following the research protocol with longtime residents of Brewers Hill and Walkers Point
 - b. Individual interviews following the research protocol of business owners in the Brewers Hill and Walker’s Point neighborhoods
 - c. Individual interviews with neighborhood association leaders
 - d. Individual interviews with city officials and policy makers.
4. Photographic resources
- Sites mentioned in interviews and focus groups were photographed by Casandra Leopold and archived in a directory accessible to the neighborhood organizations with the provision that they credit the photographer.

Methodology and Data notes for DYCU Data pull:

Data comes from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Data was pulled at the census block level, for a best approximation of the neighborhood. Because of the census redistribution every 10 years, different blocks were pulled for differing decades, but the area of coverage is similar, or includes only non-resident areas, like Jones Island in Walker's Point.

After identifying appropriate block groups that are representative of each neighborhood, the corresponding data was aggregated. Figures presented in the line graphs were calculated based on total populations that fit the identified indicators (e.g. White populations) and divided by the total neighborhood population.

Data Source:

Available census data for populations with a bachelor's degree and higher, and Housing Burden for
Year of data with corresponding ACS table ID:

1. *Percentage of White Population: 2000 P009, 2010 P3; 2015 B02001*
2. *Percentage of Population with bachelor's degree and Higher: 2000 P037, 2015, B15003*
3. *Housing Burden for Renters: 2000 H069, 2015 B25074*
4. *Housing Burden for Homeowner: 2000 H094, 2015 B2509*

Census Blocks and Groups Used for Analysis:

Brewers Hill (2000): Tract 105, Group 2; Tract 106, Group 2, Tract 114, Group 1

Brewers Hill (2010 & 2015): Tract 106, Group 2; Tract 114, Group 1; Tract 1856, Group 2

Walker's Point (2000): Tract 154, Group 1; Tract 155, Group 1; Tract 156 Groups 1 & 2;
Tract 165 Group 3

Walker's Point (2010 & 2015): Tract 1865, Groups 1 & 2; Tract 165 Group 3

*Note: In 2000 Tract 154 included Jones Island

Figure 3: 2000 P009, 2010 P3; 2015 B02001

Figure 4: 2000 P037, 2015, B15003

Figure 5: 2000 H069, 2015 B25074

Figure 6: 2000 H094, 2015 B2509

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For more information

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