



DRAFT

IMAGINE WESTWOOD

Neighborhood Plan 2024



Acknowledgments

Many people throughout Kalamazoo volunteered their time and expertise to help with the creation of this plan.

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Penny Thompson, VP and Treasurer
Marti Nuyen, Secretary and IK 2025 Steering Committee Chair
Vice Mayor Jeane Hess, Member
Katherine Mills, Member

Angie Ponzini

Angie Ponzini served with the Westwood Neighborhood Association for many years. Most recently she chaired the Association's Safety Committee, updating residents of local crime statistics and crime prevention tips. Mrs. Ponzini built strong relationships with Township and City staff in an effort to advocate for neighborhood improvements.

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Kalamazoo County Road Commission
KRESA
Kalamazoo Public Schools
Build Up Kzoo
Metro

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KALAMAZOO PLANNING COMMISSION

KALAMAZOO CITY COMMISSION

FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE

RESIDENTS OF WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

WESTWOOD BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Thank you to all of the residents and businesses who helped inform this plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Activating Westwood

Since the adoption of the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 Master Plan in 2017, the City of Kalamazoo has reinforced its commitment to developing complete neighborhoods, a goal that aims to foster connectivity and resource availability that supports the full range of people's daily needs within walking distance of where they live.

To this end, eight of the city's 22 neighborhoods have gone through the engagement and approvals processes to create plans that reflect their priority needs across infrastructure, programming, and policy.

Imagine Westwood 2024 will be the city's ninth plan as part of the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 initiative. It will also be its first joint effort to include Kalamazoo Township, providing a more full representation of the neighborhood known as Westwood, which covers both city and township areas.

Aligning Resources

Neighborhood plans are intended to be used as a planning tool by

residents, city staff, funders, and other partners to prioritize the investment and implementation of projects most important to stakeholders. Designed at the neighborhood scale, this tool also assists with aligning the input and implementation of other planning efforts - Master Plan, Parks & Rec Master Plan, HUD Consolidated Plan, other grant-awarded initiatives, etc. to the priorities outlined in the neighborhood plan.

The plan, itself, is made up of four chapters - Introduction, Existing Conditions, Engagement & Outreach, and Goals & Implementation. Each chapter provides important context for readers to understand the history and current state of the neighborhood, and what neighborhood stakeholders envision the area where they live, work, and play to look like over the next 5-10 years. The projects outlined in the Goals & Implementation chapter were created to serve as the bridge between the neighborhood as it is today, and the neighborhood we hope it is tomorrow.

To ensure the appropriate staff, resources, and funding are dedicated to the successful implementation of these projects, city staff help facilitate the neighborhood planning effort through a process that aligns the neighborhoods goals to the city's

strategic vision goals.

Neighborhood Association

The Westwood Neighborhood Association is a 501(c)(3) organization that is made up of volunteer residents that represent the city and township parts of the neighborhood.

The Association formed a steering committee to lead the neighborhood

planning effort. The committee worked with city staff to engage neighbors, promote public feedback opportunities, and provide direct input towards the creation of goals and projects.



The City of Kalamazoo's Strategic Vision, adopted in 2017.



Imagine Kalamazoo Strategic Vision Alignment



Westwood Neighborhood Goals

Strategic Vision Goal	SP	CC	IPP	ER	SC	YD	CN	SD	EV	GG
Shared Prosperity										
Connected City										
Inviting Public Places										
Environmental Responsibility										
Safe Community										
Youth Development										
Complete Neighborhoods										
Strength Through Diversity										
Economic Vitality										
Good Governance										
IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL USERS		●	●		●		●			
ENHANCE THE PUBLIC REALM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
CHAMPION COMMUNITY BUILDING			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PROMOTE A SAFE COMMUNITY		●	●	●	●		●			●
FOSTER A SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOOD	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

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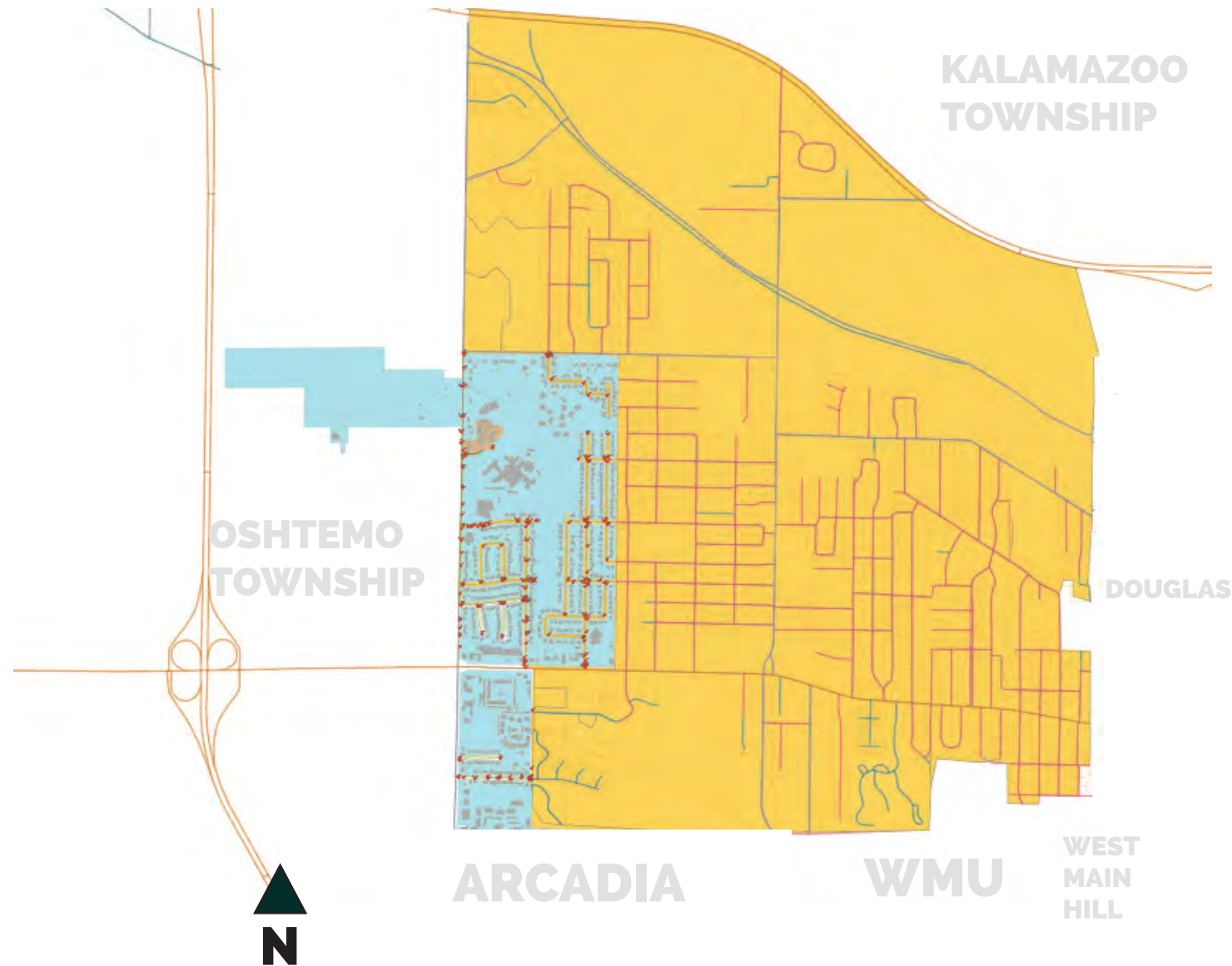
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Site Area

Westwood Neighborhood Snapshot

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

● TOWNSHIP ● CITY



Total Population*
Median Age
Disabled Population** (%)
Median Household Income**
Employment Rate** (%)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher*
Avg. Travel Time to Work (Min)
Total Housing Units
Homeownership Rate (%)
Median Gross Rent

	Westwood (City)	Westwood (Township)	Kalamazoo City	Kalamazoo County
Total Population*	3,291*	9,621	73,598	261,670
Median Age	32.2**	34.8	25.9	34.6
Disabled Population** (%)	13.6%**	11.8%	11.1%	10%
Median Household Income**	\$63,452**	\$61,348	\$43,509	\$69,584
Employment Rate** (%)	60.4%**	64.3%	63.2%	64.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher*	54.7%**	54.8%	41.1%	40.6%
Avg. Travel Time to Work (Min)	15.7**	20.5	19.2	20.9
Total Housing Units	1,713*	4,755	32,443	114,021
Homeownership Rate (%)	N/A*	57.8%	40.4%	63.6%
Median Gross Rent	\$1,215**	\$1,110	\$1,058	\$1,085

* - Data taken from 2020 U.S. Decennial Census

** - Data taken from 2022 American Community Survey

Neighborhood History

Long before there was a Westwood neighborhood, there was an indigenous population.

Pre-European Settlement

Historians estimate that people first moved into what is now known as the Southwest Michigan region about 11,000 years ago. Indian mounds present at Bronson Park in downtown Kalamazoo only date back 1,000 years.

By the time French and British fur trappers and traders first explored this region, the Potawatomi had been living here for centuries.

1800s

In 1821, the U.S. government and Potawatomi chiefs signed the Treaty of Chicago, in which the U.S. government obtained title to almost all the land in Michigan Territory south of the Grand River. As part of that treaty, an Indian reservation was established in present-day Kalamazoo city and township, a decade before Titus Bronson founded the village of Kalamazoo. The northwest corner of that nineOsquare-mile reservation is roughly where the Westwood Fire Station stands today.

Did You Know?

Fun Neighborhood Facts

In telling the story of the Westwood Neighborhood, here are a few quick facts:

Westwood is the home of Christmas Card Lane, in which most of the four dozen households along Lauderdale Drive display giant holiday cards in their front lawns during December. This tradition dates back to 1965.

The neighborhood's most famous former resident is New York Yankee superstar, Derek Jeter, who grew up at 2415 Cumberland Street and began his athletic career with Westwood Little League. The Jeters' backyard adjoined Kalamazoo Central High School's campus, where Jeter graduated in 1992.

The reservation was the home of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band, known today as the Gun Lake Band of Potawatomi. The reservation was disbanded in 1827, as the U.S. government amped up efforts to move Native Americans west of Mississippi River.

Meanwhile, pioneer settlement of Michigan was beginning in earnest, due to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, and the influx of families from New England and upstate New York in search of work.

The first permanent pioneer settlements in Kalamazoo County occurred in 1829-30 and present-day Westwood was among the first areas to be settled. As Titus Bronson was staking out a new village along the Kalamazoo River, others had their eyes on nearby prairieland considered ideal for farming. That included roughly 800 acres about four miles west of the village - a tract named Grand Prairie, which covered the western part of the present-day Westwood and the eastern edge of Oshtemo Township.

Early 1900s

A century later, in the 1920s, Westwood was once again in transition, a sleepy farming community on the verge of explosive

growth and suburbanization. The area was called Grand Prairie going into the early 20th Century. Use of the "Westwood" moniker started in the late 1930s and was solidified with the creation of the Westwood Fire District in 1939.

Today

Another 100 years forward and Westwood is continuing to evolve. The population is growing - and growing more diverse. In recent years, there's been new commercial development, new upscale housing, and a bike-hike trail developed along the neighborhood's northern border.



People of Westwood

The number one thing that I love about raising our children in Westwood is the sense of community that we feel here. So many incredible people live here and to be able to stop and talk while walking down the street, meet at the park to laugh and play, borrow a mower from a neighbor, get advice, ride bikes to the ball fields and overall, the joy that comes from sharing our lives together has been the greatest gift. In this neighborhood, we are all here for each other and it shows. Our family has been blessed to be a part of it.

- Rebecca Mitchel, Westwood resident



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ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Outreach Strategy

As outlined in the Master Plan, the neighborhood plan process is inclusive of six steps that include activities that help organize the neighborhood, identify past and present community plans, connect with city staff, build a neighborhood coalition, engage community to establish neighborhood goals, develop a plan, review for feedback, present to Planning Commission for approval, and implement neighborhood projects.

Since 2021, the Westwood Neighborhood Association has embarked on a collaborative effort with city staff to connect with residents and businesses to identify the neighborhood's goals and specific actions to help improve the area.

To reach these stakeholders the Associations Steering Committee supported several ways to provide public input, including in-person events, an online survey, and focus groups with key stakeholders.

Through this engagement, four topics emerged - Open Spaces, Safety, Community, and Street Infrastructure. These initial areas of concerns helped shape ongoing community

conversations, which led to the development of clear goals that captured what was most important to neighborhood stakeholder to invest in and improve.

2021-23 Engagement Activities

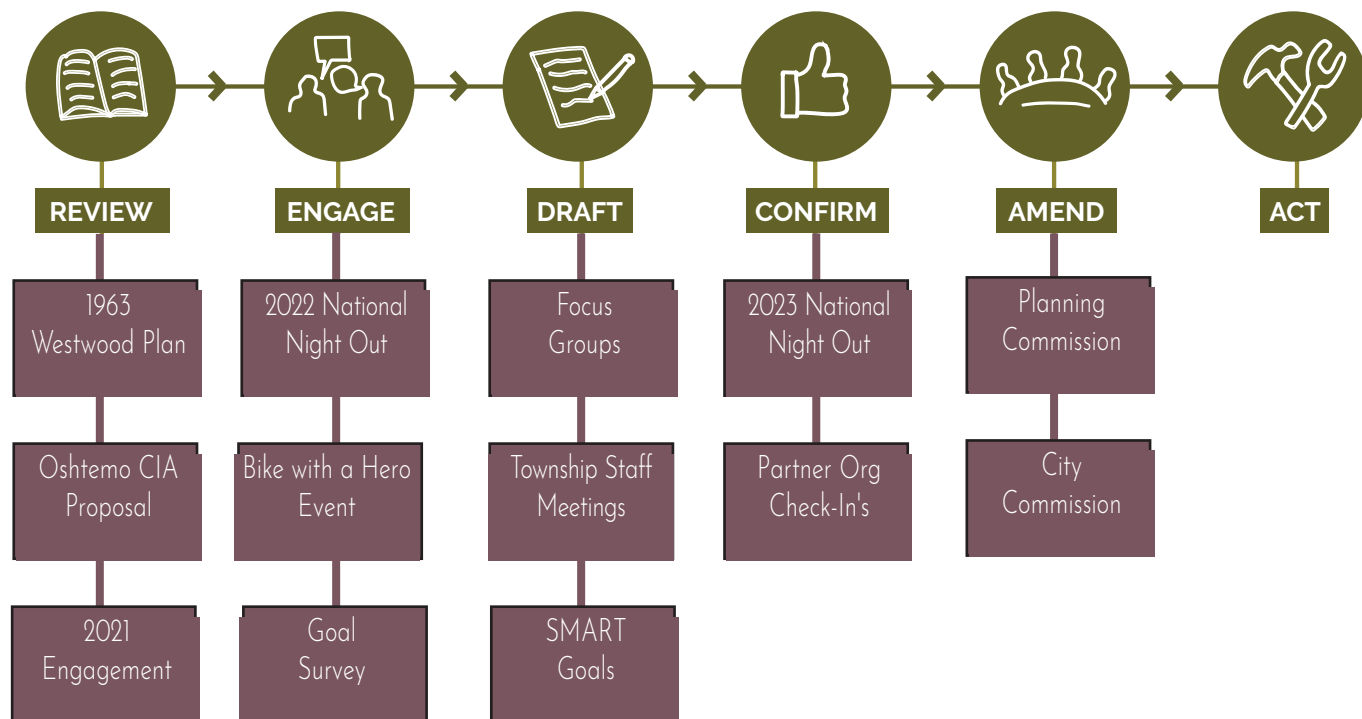
During the course of this process, the Association hosted community events with hundreds of neighbors in attendance. At these events, residents had the opportunity to review others' suggestions while also providing their own ideas and comments. With each event, proposed goals and projects built upon the feedback gathered from previous events and other engagement activities.

The Association resumed engagement in August of 2022 by participating in the National Night Out initiative, drawing crowds of up to 300 people representing both city and township.

The Association quickly followed up with the Bike with a Hero event in partnership with the City's Public Safety Department that Fall, focusing on conversations related to bike safety, youth development, and community partnerships.

A year later, at the Association's 2023 National Night Out celebration, residents had a final in-person opportunity to comment on proposed projects and suggest any additional activities that could make progress on the Neighborhood's five goals.

Westwood Neighborhood Planning Process



Neighborhood plan engagement kicked off in October 2021 at the Meet Us In The Park Day at Frays Park. Community stakeholders were asked to vote for their top topics of interest.



Goal Survey

The Association launched a survey in 2022 to reach more residents across the neighborhood. 35 responses were received, with the majority of respondents being from the township.

The survey was used to collect specific program ideas and locations for improvements based on the top topics of interest determined from the 2021 Kick Off.

Focus Groups

Meetings were held with small groups of residents that attended the neighborhood association meetings and city offices to further explore topics such as safety, connectivity, and mixed-use development.

The Neighborhood Activator conducted 1:1's with over 20 businesses located in the Westwood city limits, with special focus on Westwood Plaza. These conversations covered topics such as access to open space, tree canopy coverage, parking demand, security, and business supports.

Cross-Departmental Engagement

The City's Neighborhood Activator is the lead contact with the neighborhood association to facilitate the neighborhood planning process. The Neighborhood Activator is responsible for coordinating with relevant city departments to review and provide feedback on the projects and ideas brought forth by the neighborhood. Staff from these departments also connected with residents directly at the neighborhood engagement events

and set up site specific reviews.

Planning staff attended neighborhood walks that were held on the weekends throughout 2022, to connect with residents and assess street infrastructure conditions. The Parks and Recreation Department has also worked directly with the Association to collect feedback for park improvements that will be used for planning purposes both in the Imagine Westwood 2024 Neighborhood Plan and the 2024 Parks & Rec Master Plan.

Plan Review, Feedback, and Approval

Review of the proposed plan is a critical step in the process to ensure there is a shared understanding of expectations and alignment between the neighborhood, city staff, and other partners on which projects the neighborhood plan will include.

After review of the initial ideas and concerns, staff worked with the neighborhood association to refine these thoughts into actual projects that are specific, measurable, and realistic. A draft of the neighborhood plan is then created and shared out to the community, staff, and partner organizations to review and provide additional feedback to be integrated into the final version.

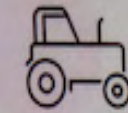
After a 2-3-week review period open to the community, the neighborhood plan is presented to the Planning Commission for consideration of approval. Once approved, the neighborhood plan is officially adopted under the City's Master Plan as an amendment. The plan will also be presented to the City Commission following Planning Commission approval.



National Night Out 2023:
 (Left) Resident giving feedback on proposed neighborhood projects.
 (Above) Resident signing up to receive more information about the Association.
 (Right) Assistance City Planner, Bobby Durkee, collecting feedback from Westwood youth.



FRAYS PARK POLLINATOR GARDEN TIMELINE



Summer/Fall 2023

Till and smother garden bed to remove all unwanted plants.



Growing Season 2024

Continue to smother for one full growing season to ensure that there is no growth of unwanted seeds and plants.



Late Fall 2024

Plant native pollinator seeds.



2025/2026

Mow native seedlings to promote root growth and weed out non-native competitor plants.



Spring 2025

Allow native pollinator seeds to grow and take root.



Spring 2027

Allow Pollinator Garden to grow to full potential!

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GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

Goals, Strategies, and Projects

Each neighborhood’s plan is unique based on its residents, geography, land use, and history.

Westwood's five goals were shaped by the feedback collected from the various outreach events and engagement activities. They represent the areas of great interest where residents wanted to see further investment and improvement.

As progress is made towards achieving each goal, Westwood becomes closer to being a complete neighborhood to support the full range of people’s daily needs.

Strategies

While the goal is 'what' the neighborhood would like to accomplish, the strategy is the 'how.' Every goal has a set of strategies; they are the pathways chosen to reach the goal. Each strategy explores different aspects of the goal to drive specific outcomes most desirable to the neighborhood.

Westwood Neighborhood Goals

Increase Connectivity
for All Users

Enhance the Public
Realm

Champion Community
Building

Promote a Safe
Community

Foster a Sustainable
and Resilient
Neighborhood

Projects

Projects are the specific, tangible activities or initiatives that are undertaken to implement the strategies and ultimately achieve the goals. They have a start and end,

specific objectives, and allocated resources. Below is an example of how goals are broken down into strategies and projects.





Goal: Increase Connectivity for All Users

Westwood stakeholders support improvements to county-wide transportation and broadband networks that will increase their connectedness to the workplace, local attractions, critical services, and most importantly - to one another!

Increase Connectivity for All Users Goal's Strategies and Actions	Project Lead
Strategy #1: Increase multi-modal options for commuters and customers.	
Provide information at events and in neighborhood welcome packets about Metro and how to access it.	Metro
Explore ways to encourage using public transit like workshops, awareness campaigns, etc.	Metro
Install a demo bus bike rack near the plaza for commuters to practice.	Metro & CPED
Improve user friendliness of public transit maps for all users.	Metro
Ensure all bus stops have consistent signage.	Metro
Incentivize electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations along W Main St. Corridor.	CPED
Work with businesses to receive the designation of Bike Friendly Business through the League of Bicyclists.	CPED
Install bike racks and repair stations at all neighborhood parks.	Parks & Rec
Explore bike storage options at bus stops.	Metro & CPED
Strategy #2: Strengthen transportation networks.	
Replace damaged sidewalks and install new sidewalks where applicable, ensuring ADA accessibility, prioritizing Nichols, Solon, Gorham, Cherokee, Canterbury, and Devonshire.	Public Works, KCRC
Enhance bike route signage and lane markings, prioritizing Grand Prairie, Nichols, and Alamo.	Public Works
Reroute semi-truck traffic from Grand Prairie Ave.	KCRC
Strategy #3: Improve the accessibility and reliability of broadband for residents and businesses.	
Conduct a survey to understand broadband needs for residents and businesses.	CPED
Partner with the South Central Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) to prioritize investment into broadband improvements.	CPED
Advocate for state funding support to implement broadband enhancements in the area.	CPED & SCRPC
Assist businesses and local agencies to ensure websites are user friendly and accessible for both desktop and mobile devices.	CPED & SCRPC
Underground Right of Way utilities where feasible to increase reliability and safety by minimizing outages and accidents.	Public Works & Utilities

Strategy #1: Increase Multi-modal Options for Commuters and Customers

Supporting multimodal options with a focus on the transition between using different modes will help residents feel safe and confident in moving around their neighborhood and the rest of the city. This investment will also help Westwood business attract more customers who choose range of modes to travel.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City's Master Plan and Community Sustainability Plan promote public transit as an environmentally friendly and sustainable way to travel. However, according to the 2020 US Census, public transit ridership only makes up 2% of the mode share for Westwood commuters despite the neighborhood featuring a major commercial corridor and several large multi-family complexes. Residents believe that attention to improving public transit infrastructure along bus routes and educating users about local public transit options will help increase ridership.

Ensuring all bus stops have

consistent signage and improving user friendliness of public transit maps will help prospective riders plan their commuting and shopping trips more easily. The Association will add information about Metro services in welcome packets for new residents to learn about their transit options in the area. They will also work with Metro to plan ongoing education such as workshops to promote the benefits of choosing public transit.

Often commuters are utilizing multiple modes of transportation to get from home to work or school. To support these mode transitions, installing a demo bus bike rack at a key location along West Main St. will allow residents to practice loading their bike to a bus rack in preparation for the real thing.

BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Speaking of bikes! Depending on availability or interest, bringing your bike along with you on the bus may not be an option. Residents would like to see bike storage made available at or nearby bus stops, so commuters can securely store their bikes on their route to work/school. This may look like bike lockers located along bus routes or an area dedicated to safe bike parking like carpool lots along highways.

The installation of additional bike racks at other popular destinations within the neighborhood, such as public parks, will further improve connectivity. At these locations, repair stations can also serve as an important amenity for cyclists who may be in need of filling up their tires or making a quick repair before continuing their ride.

Westwood businesses have cited a need for supporting their customers who come by bike with secure parking and other amenities. Businesses can become a designated Bike Friendly Business through the League of American Bicyclists to further promote accessibility for all customers.

EV-CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Another desirable amenity that is emerging in parking lots across the country are Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. The installation of these stations in convenient locations such as shopping plazas allow people to charge their car while shopping and running errands nearby. Dedicating a few parking spots at along W Main St may incentivize more drivers of these type of vehicles to choose this area over others to meet their shopping and business needs.

Strategy #2: Strengthen Transportation Networks

Strong transportation networks can improve circulation and access for everyone, regardless of mode choice. Moreover, strategic coordination of freight can reduce noise pollution and excessive wear on streets in residential areas.

NON-MOTORIZED IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to the non-motorized network in the neighborhood will help strengthen connections to key destinations for both pedestrians and cyclists. Residents would like to prioritize the replacement of damaged sidewalks along Nichols, Canterbury, and Devonshire to be ADA accessible. The installation of new sidewalks along Solon, Gorham, and Cherokee would also help address gaps in the existing pedestrian network.

Solon St in particular serves as an important connection between West Main shopping plazas and Western Michigan University via Howard St and several apartment complexes that predominately houses college students. Currently there is no safe option for pedestrians to walk along Solon leading to W Main St, as the brief section of sidewalk on this street

ends at the roundabout. Those who ride bikes around the neighborhood also have requested specific improvements to the existing network. Cyclists rely on clear signage and lane markings to stay safe and easily navigate while on the road. Special attention to enhancing wayfinding and pavement marking along Grand Prairie, Nichols, and Alamo will help address this concern on main routes.

SEMI-TRUCK TRAFFIC

The Association advocates for semi-truck traffic to be rerouted from using Grand Prairie Ave. By law, semi-trucks cannot be banned from using this street, however, signage can be strategically placed to encourage this type of traffic to choose alternative routes. Further, coordination with trucking companies and local employers who utilize them will be needed to determine better routes that balance residents' preferences, companies' needs, and the impact this will have on overall traffic patterns.

Strategy #3: Improve the accessibility and reliability of broadband for residents and businesses

Networks are not only for the

connectivity and circulation of transportation. The Westwood Neighborhood also views broadband as a critical network for residents and businesses to connect with one another, as well as important resources.

In 2021, the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity released its update to the State's Broadband Roadmap. It makes the case that investments into strengthening broadband network across all Michigan communities is critical for families' ability to thrive in this global economy, especially due to the shift to more work-from-home employment opportunities since the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADVOCACY

In today's digital age, reliable broadband internet is essential for residents and businesses to thrive. Even with infrastructure for high-speed internet in place, other factors may serve as access barriers, such as affordability, and poor user experience when navigating information on local organizations' websites.

By conducting an in-depth survey among residents and businesses to understand specific broadband needs the Association can gather

valuable data for service providers and government agencies. Partnering with the South Central Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) on this initiative, we can help prioritize advocacy efforts around specific investments to address local broadband needs.

The Association will support advocacy efforts at the state level for ongoing funding to help implement these improvements through continued relationship building with local representatives, as well as writing letters of support and providing feedback on state-wide broadband plans.

ACCESSIBILITY

Broadband connectivity goes beyond the need for physical infrastructure. Supporting access to affordable internet can be accomplished by continued access for additional funding, as well as, developing key partnerships that can help offer spaces for residents to access internet outside of the home. However, once residents gain access to the internet, challenges with connecting to the information they're seeking can still arise on websites that do not consider all users. This especially impacts those with low-vision, other disabilities, and users who need content translated in another

language.

Furthermore, more and more users are accessing the internet via mobile devices, like their phones and tablets. Websites are not always optimized for the mobile experience creating another layer of difficulty for residents to navigate sites and use certain media and tools.

The user experience is just as an important factor as having reliable and affordable internet. Recently CPED and United Way have offered technical assistance grants to support businesses with various activities, including website design and maintenance. Continued funding with an emphasis on improving websites with all users in mind can help businesses and local agencies ensure websites are user friendly and accessible for everyone, on both desktop and mobile devices.

RELIABILITY

Rural communities are often thought of regarding campaigns to expand reliable internet infrastructure. However, broadband reliability can also be an issue for suburban and urban communities as well. Undergrounding Right of Way utility lines is not just a matter of aesthetics - it's a crucial step in enhancing the reliability and safety

of neighborhoods. By burying power lines, we can significantly reduce the risk of outages caused by severe weather, fallen trees, or accidents. This means few disruptions to our daily lives, businesses, and emergency services.

In effort to increase reliability, undergrounding utility lines can improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood. Unsightly power poles and wires can detract from the beauty of our communities, while buried lines offer a cleaner, more streamlined look. When feasible, coordinating with utility companies to underground lines during street construction can save costs and reduce road closures for commuters.



Goal: Enhance the Public Realm

Westwood residents, ages 1-92, love to play outdoors! The neighborhood has expressed a desire to see more quality amenities at parks that facilitate community gatherings, and offer activities for each generation to connect with nature year-round.

Improvements to open spaces also include Right of Way enhancements that encourage people to use local trails and make public areas accessible to everyone.

Enhance the Public Realm Goal's Strategies and Actions	Project Lead
Strategy #1: Upgrade Park Amenities	
Create a sheltered gathering space at Frays Park, like a pavilion or gazebo.	Parks & Rec
Install a Children's Traffic Playground to help neighborhood youth to learn how to safely cycle.	Parks & Rec
Explore the addition of a sports field/court for activities like Wiffle Ball, Bocci Ball, or Basketball.	Parks & Rec
Install play equipment including monkey bars, swings, and exercise stations that is accessible for all users, with emphasis for disabled residents, toddlers, and adults/seniors.	Parks & Rec
Partner with Grand Prairie Golf Course to offer wintertime activities.	Golf Course
Add ADA parking spots at Frays Park.	Parks & Rec
Incentivize walking activities with the installation of mile markers along trails and tracks in parks.	Parks & Rec
Maintain access to trails during winter.	County
Strategy #2: Create Opportunities for Residents to Interact with Nature and Support Biodiversity.	
Promote the City's tree planting guide that supports best practices for tree planting and care.	NA
Create a tree registry to raise awareness and celebrate the value that mature public trees provide to the neighborhood.	NA
Host a workshop to help educate residents on tree care & maintenance.	ReLeaf
Offer a fishing clinic with resources on supporting natural fish habitats locally.	Parks & Rec
Create and maintain a pollinator garden to strengthen the local ecosystem.	NA
Promote 'No Mow May' with yard signs and coordinate city enforcement activities.	CPED
Host an annual neighborhood clean up event in celebration of Earth Day.	NA
Redevelop the vacant lot off of Piccadilly into an open green space for nearby customers to visit while shopping.	NA & CPED

Strategy #1: Update Park Amenities

The aspiration to enrich the public domain by enhancing park amenities promises to serve as a cornerstone for community engagement and healthful living.

FRAY'S PARK

Within the verdant bounds of Fray's Park, the implementation of a sheltered space such as a pavilion or gazebo emerges as a beacon of communal harmony, offering a serene refuge for family picnics, social gatherings, and a reprieve from the elements of weather.

The prospect of integrating a programmed sports field or court for activities like waffle ball, bocci ball, or basketball stands as a testament to our commitment to physical fitness and social interaction, catering to a diverse range of interests and age groups.

The parkscape of Fray's Park is poised for a transformation with the addition of more playground equipment, including monkey bars, swings, and exercise stations that not only comply with the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) but are also designed to be universally inclusive, ensuring that the joys of play and the benefits of physical activity are accessible to all. Furthermore, the incorporation of additional ADA accessible parking spaces ensures that Fray's Park is a welcoming neighborhood feature for every individual, regardless of mobility.

TRAFFIC GARDEN

The vision of a safer and more educated future for our neighborhood's youth is encapsulated in the proposed installation of a children's traffic playground at Fray's Park. This innovative space serves as a miniature cityscape where children can learn the rules of the road and the responsibility that comes with riding a bike in a controlled and engaging environment. Not only does this initiative promise to instill a sense of road safety from a tender age, but it also encourages outdoor activity and independence among our young residents.

The traffic playground becomes an invaluable educational tool that complements the traditional classroom setting, fostering practical life skills and situational awareness that will resonate with children throughout their lives. In essence, this project is not merely an investment in

infrastructure; it is an investment in the future of our children, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to navigate the world safely on two wheels.

ALL YEAR ROUND ACTIVITIES

Enhancing the public realm through the upgrading of park amenities is a crucial endeavor that can significantly improve the quality of life for residents in our neighborhood. By investing in projects that focus on improving park facilities and promoting outdoor activities, we can create a more vibrant and healthy community for all. Two key projects that exemplify this effort are maintaining access to trails during winter and incentivizing walking activities with the installation of mile markers along trails and tracks/paths in parks.

The spirit of collaboration shines through in the proposal to partner with Grand Prairie's Golf Course for wintertime activities, broadening the scope of year-round recreational opportunities.

During the winter months, many outdoor enthusiasts face the challenge of accessing trails due to snow and ice. By prioritizing the maintenance of these trails, we can ensure that residents have year-round

access to safe and enjoyable outdoor spaces. Not only does this promote physical activity and overall well-being, but it also encourages a sense of community and connection with nature. Whether it's for a peaceful walk, a brisk jog, or a leisurely bike ride, well-maintained trails can be enjoyed by individuals of all ages and fitness levels.

In addition to maintaining access to trails, incentivizing walking activities during any season through the installation of mile markers can further enhance the park experience for visitors. Mile markers not only provide a sense of accomplishment and progress for those engaging in physical activity, but they also serve as a helpful navigation tool for users exploring the park. By strategically placing mile markers along trails and tracks/paths, we can encourage residents to set and achieve personal fitness goals while enjoying the beauty of our parks.

These projects not only enhance the public realm but also contribute to the overall health and well-being of our neighborhood. By investing in park amenities that promote outdoor activities and community engagement, we can create a more vibrant and connected neighborhood for generations to come.

Strategy #2: Create Opportunities for Residents to Interact with Nature and Support Biodiversity

In our bustling neighborhood, the push to enhance the public realm and create opportunities for residents to interact with nature while supporting biodiversity is gaining momentum.

Through a series of thoughtful projects and initiatives, we aim to not only beautify our surroundings but also foster a deeper connection with the natural world that surrounds us. By promoting sustainable practices and engaging the community in these efforts, we can create a more vibrant and ecologically diverse neighborhood for generations to come.

NEIGHBORHOOD TREES

To kickstart our mission, we are launching projects aimed at promoting tree planting and maintenance as crucial elements of our neighborhood's green infrastructure. Firstly, we will promote the City's Tree Planting Guide that outlines best practices for tree care, ensuring that residents have access to essential information for fostering healthy urban forests. Additionally, a tree registry will be

established to raise awareness about the value that mature trees bring to our neighborhood's ecosystem, encouraging residents to celebrate and protect these vital assets. To further empower our community, a workshop will be hosted to educate residents on tree care and maintenance, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to nurture our urban forest effectively.

WILDLIFE

In collaboration with the Parks & Recreation department, we are committed to providing residents with opportunities to engage with nature and support local biodiversity. Through a day clinic on fishing, residents will learn how to enjoy this recreational activity while also supporting natural fish habitats in our community.

Furthermore, the creation and maintenance of a pollinator garden will serve to strengthen our local ecosystem by providing essential habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. To encourage sustainable lawn care practices, we will promote 'No Mow May' with yard signs, advocating for the importance of allowing native plants to flourish and support local wildlife.

INVITING PUBLIC PLACES

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the public realm and promote biodiversity, we will host an annual neighborhood clean-up event in celebration of Earth Day. This collaborative effort will not only beautify our community spaces but also instill a sense of environmental stewardship among residents, fostering a culture of care and respect for our shared environment. Additionally, the redevelopment of the vacant lot off of Piccadilly St into an open green space will provide a welcoming oasis for nearby shoppers to visit, offering a tranquil retreat amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life.

In conclusion, by embracing these projects and initiatives, our neighborhood is poised to become a thriving hub of biodiversity and community engagement. Through a shared commitment to nature, sustainability, and environmental stewardship, we can create a more resilient and harmonious urban environment that benefits both residents and the natural world. Together, let us work towards a greener, healthier future for our neighborhood and all who call it home.



Goal: Champion Community Building

The Association and its residents want to increase its focus and investment in community building activities that continue to improve neighbor relations, while also building capacity for the organization to carry out new programs and initiatives in the neighborhood.

Champion Community Building Goal's Strategies and Actions	Project Lead
Strategy #1: Strengthen neighbor relations and neighborhood identity in Westwood with emphasis on bridging the city and township parts of the neighborhood.	
Explore adjusting neighborhood boundaries to include the housing communities north of Arboretum Parkway.	NA & City
Sponsor events throughout the year that take place at different locations around the neighborhood.	NA
Offer skill-based programming, such as gardening, sewing, canning, etc.	NA
Offer attractive programming for all ages, including Yoga/Pilates, Concerts, and Movie Screenings.	NA
Partner with KYD Network to build capacity around youth development opportunities for neighborhood youth.	NA
Host a Bike Rodeo or similar event in celebration of National Bike Month (May).	NA & City
Strategy #2: Welcome new homeowners and tenants that relocate to Westwood.	
Develop a welcome kit that includes information on city and township services, local activities, and metro.	NA
Connect with apartment complexes and landlords to identify ways to greet new tenants and share ongoing updates on future neighborhood events and opportunities.	NA
Establish a neighborhood coalition of businesses, churches, and other organizations to plan opportunities to welcome new and connect with existing residents.	NA
Strategy #3: Sustain neighborhood leadership through capacity building, recruitment, and strategic marketing.	
Explore renting/owning a space in the neighborhood to serve as a center for Neighborhood Association activities.	NA
Develop a marketing plan and branding/identity for the Neighborhood Association.	NA
Install Neighborhood Banners throughout the neighborhood, prioritizing West Main St Corridor.	NA & CPED
Explore professional development and other training opportunities for the Association to build skills and capacity around topics such as community building, crime prevention, and outreach.	NA
Recruit more Association members to fulfill volunteer roles, such as a National Night Out Coordinator, etc.	NA

Strategy #1: Strengthen neighbor relations and neighborhood identity in Westwood with emphasis on bridging the city and township parts of the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

Adjusting the boundaries of the Westwood neighborhood to incorporate Drake Pond apartments and Walden Woods community is crucial for several reasons.

First and foremost, expanding the boundaries will create a stronger sense of community and unity among residents of these areas. By being included in the Westwood neighborhood, residents will have access to resources, support, and a voice in local decision-making processes that they may not have had before.

Additionally, incorporating these communities into Westwood will improve overall safety and security, as neighbors will be more likely to look out for one another and work

together to address any issues that may arise.

Overall, adjusting the boundaries of the Westwood neighborhood to include Drake Pond apartments and Walden Woods community will benefit all residents involved and create a more cohesive and thriving community.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Association would like to collaborate with local partners to host events that bring residents together and create a sense of unity and connection.

The Association will support events throughout the year that take place at different locations around the neighborhood. By hosting events in different parts of Westwood, residents from both the city and township areas can come together and interact, bridging the divide between the two. These events can include community picnics, block parties, and cultural festivals that celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood.

Additionally, offering skill-based programming, such as gardening, sewing, and canning, can provide residents with opportunities to learn new skills and connect with their

neighbors. These workshops and classes can be held at community centers or local parks, making them easily accessible to residents from all parts of Westwood. By participating in these activities, neighbors can bond over shared interests and develop a sense of camaraderie.

Furthermore, offering programming for all ages, such as Yoga/Pilates classes, concerts, and movie screenings, can bring residents of all generations together. By providing a variety of activities that cater to different interests, the neighborhood can create a vibrant and inclusive community where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Hosting a Bike Rodeo or similar event in celebration of National Bike Month in May can also promote physical activity and sustainable transportation options, while bringing residents together in a fun and engaging way.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In addition to these programs, partnering with organizations like KYD Network to build capacity around youth development opportunities for neighborhood youth is crucial in fostering a sense of community and belonging. By providing young residents with access

to educational and recreational programs, mentoring opportunities, and leadership training, the neighborhood can empower its youth to become active and engaged members of the community. This partnership can also help bridge the gap between the city and township parts of Westwood by bringing together young residents from all backgrounds and fostering relationships that transcend geographic boundaries.

These new opportunities for residents to come together, learn from each other, and build connections that transcend differences, can help Westwood create a vibrant and cohesive community where everyone feels a sense of belonging and pride in their neighborhood.

Strategy #2: Welcome new homeowners and tenants that relocate to Westwood

To continue fostering this welcoming environment, the neighborhood has created a strategy that will actively welcome new homeowners and tenants who choose to make Westwood their home. Two key projects have been identified to help achieve this.

WELCOME ALL RESIDENTS

Firstly, the Association plans to develop a welcome kit that includes information on city and township services, local activities, and public transportation options. This will ensure that new residents are well-informed and equipped to fully engage with the resources and opportunities available in our neighborhood.

Additionally, we aim to connect with apartment complexes and landlords to identify ways to greet new tenants and share ongoing updates for future neighborhood events and opportunities.

COALITION BUILDING

Establishing a neighborhood coalition of businesses, places of worship, and other organizations is another important initiative that will help us achieve our goal of championing community building in Westwood. By working together, these diverse entities can plan opportunities to welcome new residents and connect them with existing members of the community. This collaborative effort will not only help new residents feel more at home in Westwood, but also strengthen the bonds between current residents and foster a greater sense of unity and belonging.

By actively reaching out to new

homeowners and tenants, providing them with valuable information and resources, and facilitating connections between residents, we can ensure that Westwood remains a vibrant and thriving community where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Strategy #3: Sustain neighborhood leadership through capacity building, recruitment, and strategic marketing

To reinvigorate the Neighborhood Association, residents are looking to create a new space, new face, and new place.

NEW SPACE, NEW FACE, NEW PLACE

First, renting or owning a new space for the Neighborhood Association will allow for consistent neighborhood meetings and create a home for community activities. Second, rebranding the association will create a new face for Westwood that aligns it with the community's values and style. Lastly, taking this new image and using it to designate neighborhood locations will help create and identify a shared place. Reinvigorating the space, face, and place of Westwood will create a strong identity with which the

community can connect.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Additionally, increasing the capacity of the Neighborhood Association through recruitment and skill-building is crucial for the ongoing success of neighborhood programs. The City has already begun work on building the skills of neighborhood leadership by connecting them with experts from different fields to learn about crime statistics, funding mechanisms, and City procedures.

Continued professional development will help leaders navigate the complex world of non-profit community building. Of course, seeking strength in numbers by recruiting more members onto the association will make event- and program-planning more manageable. Increased recruitment will also broaden the viewpoints brought to the table in association meetings, better reflecting the neighborhood.



Goal: Promote a Safe Community

A neighborhood where people can live, work, and play, requires an essential ingredient - safety! Westwood residents and businesses want to invest in more programming and shared information models that help them feel safe in their home, while shopping, and out in the neighborhood.

Promote a Safe Community Goal's Strategies and Actions	Project Lead
Strategy #1: Enhance Pedestrian Safety and Visibility at Key Crossings.	
Upgrade crosswalks, prioritizing intersections at Solon & W Main, near King-Westwood school, Tiffany's Village Plaza, and bus stops along W Main Street.	TBD
Explore traffic calming measures, prioritizing Picadilly, Turwill, Nichols, and Clarendon.	TBD
Trim trees and brush that obscure traffic control signage in the Right of Way.	Public Works
Host a Bike Rodeo in the neighborhood for safety and bike maintenance.	Parks & Rec and KDPS
Install additional speed limit signs along streets that experience speeding.	Public Works & KCRC
Maintain clear sidewalks from bus shelter to street for safe access.	Metro
Pilot additional led-lit stop signs, prioritizing intersections near schools.	TBD
Evaluate access management concerns along W Main Street, such as prohibiting left turn lanes, etc.	TBD
Strategy #2: Promote Safety Info and Resource Sharing.	
Reinstate the Neighborhood Watch team.	NA
Share regular updates on neighborhood crime statistics and safety tips.	KDPS
Promote the Citizen Academy to Westwood residents and business owners.	KDPS
Regular attendance of the Community Policing Officer at Association meetings.	KDPS
Establish an effective feedback loop for the Association to share concerns with Public Safety.	NA & KDPS
Host National Night Out activities annually.	NA
Host CPR/First Aid training sessions in the neighborhood in partnership with Public Safety.	NA & KDPS
Promote helpful resources and services on Association website on topics such as car theft, domestic violence, vandalism, etc.	NA
Strategy #3: Deter Crime through Environmental Design Interventions.	
Explore the installation of security cameras at bus stops, businesses, and homes.	CPED, KDPS, Metro
Host Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design workshops for residents.	CPED & KDPS
Partner with apartment complexes to identify improvements to reduce crime.	NA & KDPS
Enhance the lighting and security of park entrances and trail heads.	Parks & Rec

Strategy #1: Enhance Pedestrian Safety and Visibility at Key Crossings

The neighborhood's goal to promote a safe community by enhancing pedestrian safety and visibility at key crossings is paramount to ensuring the well-being of all residents. By implementing various projects aimed at improving pedestrian safety, we can create a neighborhood that is not only safe for pedestrians but also for cyclists and drivers.

TRAFFIC CALMING

One of the key projects that the neighborhood would like to see undertaken is the upgrading of crosswalks at key intersections such as Solon & W Main, Northampton & W Main, near King-Westwood school, Tiffany's Village Plaza, and bus stops along W Main Street. These upgrades will include improved signage, crosswalk markings, and potentially pedestrian-activated signals to alert drivers of crossing pedestrians.

In addition to upgrading crosswalks, the neighborhood also plans to explore traffic calming measures on streets such as Piccadilly, Turwill,

Nichols, Clarendon, and Drake. These measures may include speed humps, raised crosswalks, or other physical measures to slow down traffic and make the streets safer for pedestrians.

Furthermore, the neighborhood will apply for safe routes for all KPS buildings located in the neighborhood to ensure that students can safely walk or bike to school. This will involve working with the school district to identify safe routes and potentially implementing additional safety measures such as crossing guards or traffic signals.

To address issues of speeding, the Association would like additional speed limit signs installed along streets that experience high levels of speeding, prioritizing Hillsdale and Ferndale. These signs will serve as a reminder to drivers to slow down and adhere to the speed limit, ultimately making the streets safer for pedestrians.

Lastly, residents have expressed in installing LED-lit stop signs at key intersections near schools to improve visibility and alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians. These stop signs will be equipped with LED lights that flash ensuring that drivers notice the traffic control and come to a complete stop at the intersection.

MAINTENANCE

In addition to these projects, the neighborhood requests that trees and brush that obscure traffic control signage in the right of way be trimmed back. Residents would also like to see more consistent sidewalk clearance from bus shelters to the street for safe access. By ensuring that signage is visible and sidewalks are clear, we can create a safer environment for pedestrians to navigate.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Lastly, the neighborhood will evaluate access management concerns along W. Main St., such as prohibiting left turn lanes, and adjusting driveways to reduce the potential for accidents. By implementing these changes, we can create a neighborhood that is safe and welcoming for all residents.

Strategy #2: Promote Safety Info and Resource Sharing

The safety and well-being of our neighborhood is a top priority for all residents. In order to promote a safe community, it is essential to implement initiatives that focus on sharing safety information and resources with the residents

and businesses from trusted law enforcement agencies.

SAFETY PROGRAMMING

One way the Association would like to achieve this is to reinstate the neighborhood watch team. By having a group of dedicated volunteers who are committed to keeping an eye out for any suspicious activities, the neighborhood believes it can create a sense of security and deter potential crime from occurring in the neighborhood.

Another important initiative is to host National Night Out activities annually. This event not only brings the community together but also raises awareness about safety issues and provides valuable information on how residents can protect themselves and their property. Additionally, promoting helpful resources and services on the Association's website can provide residents with easy access to information on topics such as car theft, domestic violence, vandalism, and more.

The City's Community Policing unit is now trained as instructors for CPR and First Aid. The offering of CPR/ First Aid training sessions in the neighborhood in partnership with public safety can equip residents with life-saving skills and knowledge in

case of emergencies.

COMMUNITY POLICING RELATIONS

Public Safety will ensure regular updates on neighborhood crime statistics and safety tips are provided to residents through the Association at meetings, as well as online channels. By keeping residents informed about the current safety situation in the neighborhood, they can take necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families. Promoting the Citizen Academy to Westwood residents and business owners can also help educate the community on crime prevention strategies and empower them to take an active role in keeping the neighborhood safe.

Furthermore, having the community policing officer regularly attend association meetings can help establish a direct line of communication between residents and law enforcement. This can facilitate the sharing of concerns and feedback with public safety officials, allowing for a more collaborative approach to addressing safety issues in the neighborhood.

Strategy #3: Deter Crime through Environmental Design Interventions

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a strategy that aims to reduce crime and improve safety by designing the physical environment in a way that deters criminal activity. This approach focuses on creating spaces that are well-lit, easily monitored, and have clear boundaries, in order to increase the visibility and natural surveillance of an area.

CPTED principles include elements such as proper lighting, natural surveillance (e.g. clear sight lines and unobstructed views), territorial reinforcement (e.g. clearly defined property boundaries), and access control (e.g. controlled entry points). By designing spaces in a way that incorporates these principles, it is believed that the opportunity for criminal activity is reduced, as potential offenders are less likely to target areas that are well-guarded and easily monitored.

Overall, CPTED is a holistic approach to crime prevention that emphasizes the importance of the physical environment in deterring criminal behavior and promoting safety and security in communities.

SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS

In order to promote a safe community and deter crime, it is essential for neighborhoods to

implement environmental design interventions. One effective project is the installation of security cameras at or near bus stops, businesses, and homes. These cameras act as a deterrent to potential criminals, as they know they are being watched and are less likely to commit crimes in these areas.

Additionally, enhancing the lighting and security of park entrances and trail heads can also help prevent crime. Well-lit areas are less attractive to criminals, as they prefer to operate in dark and secluded areas where they are less likely to be seen or caught.

TRAINING & OUTREACH

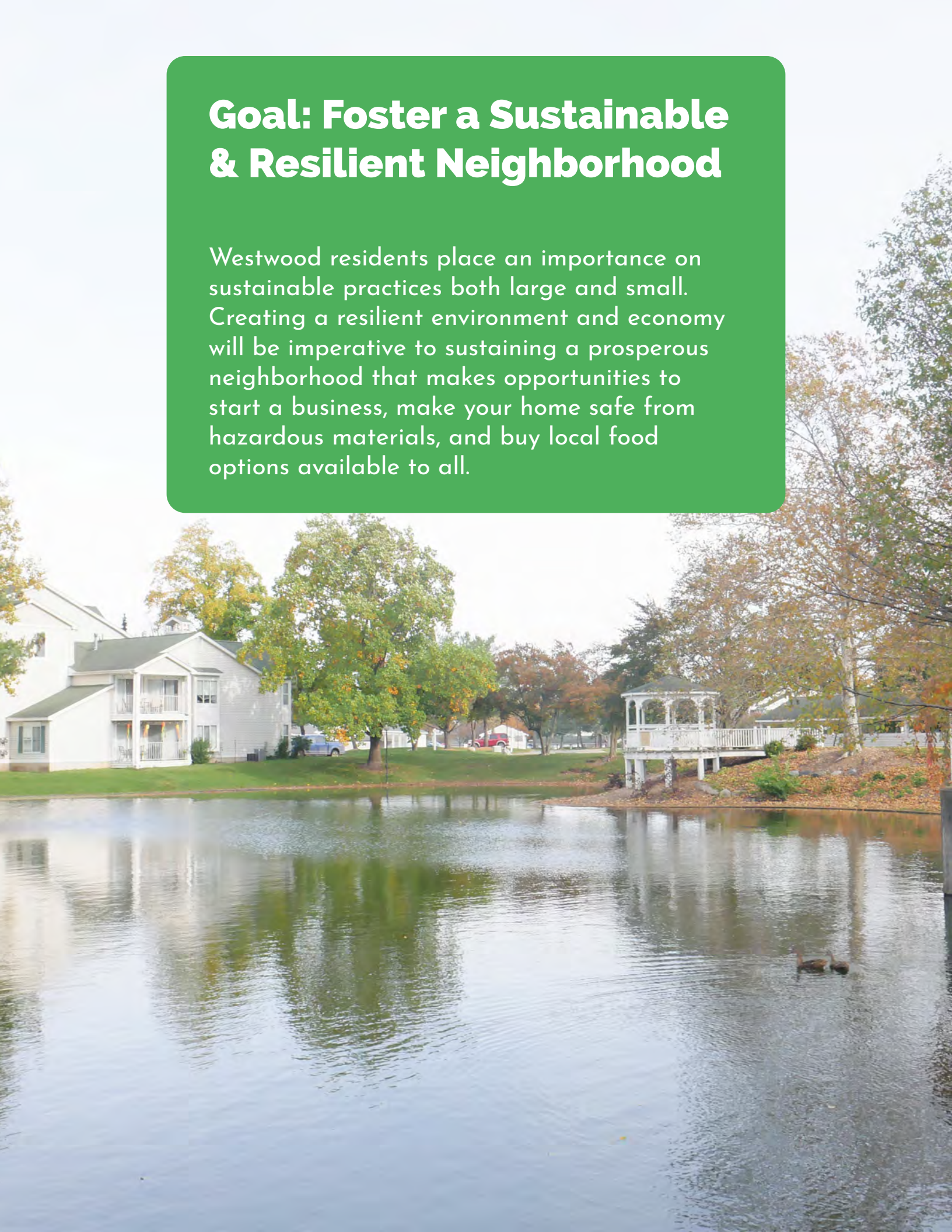
The Association would like to host CPTED workshops for residents. These workshops educate residents on how they can make their neighborhoods safer through simple changes in design and layout. By empowering residents with knowledge and resources, they can take an active role in deterring crime in their community.

Furthermore, partnering with apartment complexes to identify improvements to reduce crime can also have a significant impact. By working with property managers and residents, neighborhoods can identify areas of concern and implement

changes to make these complexes safer for all residents.

Goal: Foster a Sustainable & Resilient Neighborhood

Westwood residents place an importance on sustainable practices both large and small. Creating a resilient environment and economy will be imperative to sustaining a prosperous neighborhood that makes opportunities to start a business, make your home safe from hazardous materials, and buy local food options available to all.



Foster a Sustainable and Resilient Neighborhood Goal's Strategies and Actions	Project Lead
Strategy #1: Invest in Green Infrastructure initiatives and policy	
Explore funding mechanisms to support green construction.	CPED
Encourage homeowners to get a home energy audit.	NA
Develop information materials that promote home weatherization upgrades.	NA
Host an annual info session for residents to raise awareness of home energy efficiency upgrades.	Consumers
Distribute Rain barrels throughout the neighborhood for two years.	NA
Install bioswales in curb lawns with identified flooding issues.	NA
Strategy #2: Encourage emergency preparedness and safe remediation of hazards in homes	
Conduct a Threat & Hazard Identification and Readiness Assessment (THIRA)	KDPS
Promote ways for individual households to improve indoor air quality at home.	NA
Promote the Tire Blitz and other existing City & County program that supports recycling hazardous materials.	NA
Plan neighborhood recycling days to collect and dispose of hazardous materials.	NA
Host neighborhood clean up events.	NA
Promote upcycling by hosting neighborhood garage sales.	NA
Strategy #3: Increase access to local food options.	
Study the feasibility of planting edible landscaping on city-owned property.	CPED & PW
Distribute home compost tumblers throughout the neighborhood for two years.	NA
Raise awareness of local food producers and distributors.	NA
Advocate for policies that support better access to affordable, good quality, healthy food.	NA
Strategy #4: Grow the neighborhood's economic vitality	
Explore the feasibility of a Corridor Improvement Authority and other economic development tools along W Main St in partnership with neighboring township jurisdictions.	CPED
Increase the presence of local micro businesses along the W Main St corridor, with emphasis on independent and diverse restaurants.	CPED
Create and maintain a neighborhood business directory.	NA
Connect with home-based businesses to identify specific needs for growth and retention.	CPED
Attract day care centers to the neighborhood to support working families with young children and serve as a feeder to schools in Westwood.	NA
Incentivize mixed-use development along the W Main corridor and other vacant commercial lots - Northampton, Piccadilly.	CPED & Township
Assist with forming a platform for Westwood businesses to network regularly and discuss opportunities and resources for businesses.	CPED & SWMF

Strategy #1: Invest in Green Infrastructure Initiatives and Policy

As our neighborhood strives to become more sustainable and resilient, investing in green infrastructure initiatives and policies is crucial to achieving this goal.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES

Two key projects that can help us move in the right direction include exploring funding mechanisms to support green construction and encouraging homeowners to get a home energy audit.

By exploring funding mechanisms to support green construction, our neighborhood can incentivize developers and homeowners to prioritize sustainability in their building projects. This can include offering grants or tax incentives for projects that incorporate green building practices such as energy-efficient materials and renewable energy sources. By investing in green construction, we can reduce our carbon footprint and lower energy costs for residents in the long run.

Encouraging homeowners to get a home energy audit is another important step towards fostering a sustainable neighborhood. A home energy audit can identify areas where energy is being wasted and recommend upgrades to improve energy efficiency. By educating homeowners about the benefits of a home energy audit and providing resources to make these upgrades more affordable, we can reduce our overall energy consumption and decrease our impact on the environment.

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

In addition to these projects, hosting an annual info session for residents to raise awareness of home energy efficiency upgrades and developing information materials that promote home energy upgrades can further support our sustainability efforts. These initiatives can help residents understand the importance of energy efficiency and provide them with the resources they need to make positive changes in their own homes.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Furthermore, distributing rain barrels throughout the neighborhood for two years and installing bio swales in the curb lawns with identified flooding issues can help us manage

stormwater runoff more effectively. By capturing and storing rainwater with rain barrels and directing excess water into bio swales, we can reduce the strain on our existing drainage systems and prevent flooding in our neighborhood.

Overall, investing in green infrastructure initiatives and policies is essential for our neighborhood to become more sustainable and resilient. By prioritizing projects that promote energy efficiency, water conservation, and green construction practices, we can create a healthier and more environmentally friendly community.

Strategy #2: Encourage Emergency Preparedness and Safe Remediation of Hazards in Homes

A sustainable and resilient neighborhood is essential for the well-being and safety of its residents.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

One step in achieving this goal is to conduct a Threat and Hazard Identification and Readiness Assessment (THIRA). By assessing potential threats and hazards, such as natural disasters or environmental risks, the neighborhood can be better

prepared to respond effectively in times of crisis. This assessment will not only help identify areas for improvement but also allow for the development of emergency preparedness plans to protect the community.

HOME SAFETY

In addition to conducting a THIRA, there are several other projects that can contribute to fostering a sustainable and resilient neighborhood. One such project is promoting ways for individual households to improve indoor air quality at home. By educating residents on simple steps they can take to reduce indoor air pollution, such as proper ventilation and regular maintenance of HVAC systems, the neighborhood can create a healthier living environment for all.

Another important project is promoting the Tire Blitz and other existing City and County programs that support recycling hazardous materials. By encouraging residents to properly dispose of hazardous materials, such as old tires or household chemicals, the neighborhood can prevent environmental contamination and reduce the risk of health hazards. Planning neighborhood recycling days to collect and dispose of

hazardous materials can further promote a culture of responsible waste management within the community.

Lastly, upcycling by hosting neighborhood garage sales can also contribute to a sustainable and resilient neighborhood. By giving residents the opportunity to sell or donate unwanted items instead of throwing them away, the neighborhood can reduce waste and promote a circular economy. This not only benefits the environment but also fosters a sense of community and collaboration among neighbors.

Strategy #3: Increase Access to Local Food Options

In order to foster a sustainable and resilient neighborhood, residents would like to take positive actions towards increasing access to local food options as a strategy for fostering a sustainable and resilient neighborhood.

GROWING FOOD AT HOME

One way to achieve this goal is by distributing home compost tumblers throughout the neighborhood for two years. Composting is a simple and effective way to reduce waste

and create nutrient-rich soil for growing food. By providing residents with the tools and knowledge to compost at home, we can reduce the amount of food waste that ends up in landfills and help to create a more sustainable food system in our neighborhood.

FOOD NETWORKS

Another initiative to consider is raising awareness of local food producers and distributors. By highlighting the benefits of supporting local farmers and businesses, we can encourage residents to purchase locally grown and produced food. This not only supports the local economy, but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting food long distances. Connecting residents with local food sources, would help build a more resilient food system in Kalamazoo that is less vulnerable to external factors.

FOOD POLICY

In addition to distributing compost tumblers and raising awareness of local food sources, it is crucial to advocate for policies that support better access to affordable, good quality, healthy food. This could include initiatives such as community gardens, farmers markets, and food

cooperatives. By working with local government and organizations, we can ensure that everyone in the neighborhood has access to fresh, nutritious food options.

Furthermore, residents would also like to determine the feasibility of planting edible landscaping around the neighborhood. This could involve converting unused green spaces into community gardens or planting fruit trees along sidewalks. Not only would this increase access to local food options, but it would also improve the overall aesthetic and sustainability of the neighborhood.

Strategy #4: Grow the neighborhood's economic vitality

As a community, it is imperative that we work together to foster a sustainable and resilient neighborhood by growing the Westwood neighborhood's economic vitality. One of the key projects that will contribute to this goal's success is determining a combination of economic development tools to help drive growth and coordinate improvements along the W Main St corridor. A Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) is one of many tools city staff, in partnership with neighboring Township jurisdictions, can explore to help revitalize the

area and attract new businesses and customers. Additionally, creating and maintaining a neighborhood business directory will make it easier for residents to support local businesses, while assisting with forming a platform for Westwood businesses to network regularly will encourage collaboration and growth opportunities.

MIXED-USE INCENTIVES

Furthermore, incentives for mixed-use development along the W. Main St. corridor and other vacant commercial lots will help fill empty spaces with businesses that can contribute to the economic vitality of the neighborhood. The attraction and retention of daycare facilities into these commercial spaces can both support those who live and work in the neighborhood. By supporting working families with young children, these centers will not only serve as a vital resource for the community but also as a feeder to schools in Westwood.

DIVERSIFYING OPTIONS

In addition to these projects, increasing the presence of local micro businesses along the W. Main St. corridor, with an emphasis on independent and diverse restaurants, will add to the vibrancy and

uniqueness of the neighborhood. By supporting these small businesses, we can create a more dynamic and attractive community that draws in visitors and residents alike. Furthermore, connecting with home-based businesses to identify specific needs for growth and retention will help ensure that these businesses have the resources and support they need to thrive.

Implementation

The plan does not end with ideation. One of the most important phases is Implementation! During this stage of the plan, we not only see the fruits of our labor, but we also get to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of these ideas to inform future planning efforts.

This is a great time for residents to be reengaged with opportunities where they can take action and finally experience the improvements or activities they've envisioned throughout earlier stages of the process.

Project Leads & Support

The neighborhood projects outlined in this plan will be implemented by the assigned lead organization and supported by relevant partners. The project lead is expected to champion and steward the execution of the project. Their responsibilities may include initiating and coordinating neighborhood and partner meetings; creating a budget and soliciting necessary quotes; and promoting engagement opportunities, meeting/events, and project updates.

Supporting partners may aid in connecting the lead organization with additional partners or key stakeholders; sharing promotional materials; and providing relevant information and guidance on project implementation.

Funding

A range of funding sources will need to be sought out and leveraged to complete these projects. Neighborhood projects that are described in this plan may be eligible for neighborhood planning dollars distributed by the City of Kalamazoo's Community Planning & Economic Development Department, as funding allows. This funding is meant to support implementation of projects that serve as 'quick wins' for the neighborhood.

Quick win projects are generally activities that can be done within a one-year time frame and engage residents in participating in the implementation of the project as a community event.

Timing

Neighborhood Plans should be used as a short-range planning tool. While some goals or projects may take longer to complete due to available

Who is funding your project? Examples of Sources

- Federal & State Grants (MSHDA, MEDC, USDA, etc.)
- Non Profit In-Kind Services
- Local Business Sponsors
- Neighborhood Fundraising Campaign
- Association Revenue

funding sources, laws & regulations, and other external factors, most the project outlined in the plan are designed to be implemented within 3-5 years of the plan's adoption.

Any projects that are considered as city core services, will be integrated into city departments' Capital Improvement Plans and budgets as timing and funding allows.

Communications

Once the plan has been adopted, frequent updates to the neighborhood will remain important in building interest among volunteers and thought partners to get started on the implementation phase.

The Association and city staff will

continue to meet on a regular basis to ensure there is regular monitoring of projects' progress and open dialogue regarding next steps. The neighborhood association will continue to explore and put in place best practices for communicating with residents and other key stakeholders, with the support of City Staff and other partner organizations.

The City will share ongoing project updates on its websites and social media pages to help document and track neighborhood plan progress.

Evaluation

Each project has success metrics tied to them (see Appendix 1 for project summary chart). In addition to achieving these metrics, the impact of projects that have been initiated or completed will be evaluated at the end of each calendar year.

Neighborhood engagement tools such as surveys, focus groups, and testimonials will be used to capture this impact along with quantitative methods to help discern trends and patterns.

The feedback and other data collected for evaluative purposes will be used to optimize project delivery and help inform us of more effective practices to be on future projects.

Plan Updates/Amendments

Most projects should fall within the 3-5-year implementation phase. As such, updates post-plan adoption should be done sparingly to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood plan. In the event, that a project is deemed no longer feasible upon further study, and there is a consensus among the Association and affected stakeholders, the project may be eliminated. A summary of changes will be provided in the next major update of the neighborhood plan. Based on this, project that is considered infeasible would meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A. After conducting a study/assessment, it has been determined that either:
 - i. This activity would result in a negative impact to the neighborhood and no reasonable accommodations can be made; or
 - ii. It is no longer physically feasible due to new or unforeseen spatial or other engineering constraints, and no reasonable alternative exists; or
 - iii. Cost estimates are so exorbitant, and no funding mechanism exists to properly finance the project, the project will be deemed 'indefinitely postponed.'
- B. The partner/lead organization dissolved or discontinued their service/product, and a peer organization does not exist.
- C. A change to legislation has resulted in a ban or regulations that significantly alter the project/activity and no alternative or accommodations can be made.
- D. Other external factors that significantly alter a project or project site and there exists no reasonable accommodation or alternative. This may include:
 - i. Demolition or redevelopment of property
 - ii. Natural disasters
 - iii. Public health outbreaks

The project status should be determined at the end of the year during the annual evaluation and documented appropriately by city staff. Since neighborhood plans are adopted under the City's Master Plan, changes should go before the City Planning Commission as a proposed amendment. If an amendment is deemed necessary the Association must facilitate and document the engagement activities held with residents, including attendance, contact information, and feedback. This could be in the form of a petition, survey, recorded neighborhood meetings, or an assessment.

Stay Connected

There are many ways to remain involved with your neighborhood association and keep informed about upcoming events and projects,

Westwood Neighborhood Association meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at Westwood United Methodist Church on Nichols Road.

For meeting updates and more neighborhood info visit the Association's website:
WestwoodNeighborhoodKalamazoo.com

See a problem in your neighborhood? Solve it with 311 on your computer or from your phone.

For more info about this city service, visit KalamazooCity.org

