



AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this revitalization plan is to provide the Amani neighborhood of Milwaukee with a resident-informed path to an improved quality of life. It identifies goals and corresponding actions that will help to realize a vision for the future investment in and development of the Amani neighborhood.

Milwaukee's Amani neighborhood partnership, known as **Amani United**, represents a network of residents, community stakeholders, faith-based communities, local businesses, organizational partners and public and private funders that have embraced a collaborative theme of "resident-led" positive change. These partners influenced this plan by coming together to use their collective resources on behalf of and informed by the neighborhood.

As residents identify their needs, partners join in support by aligning resources, skills and services that address these needs. It is important that change is done in partnership with the residents, not *for* or *to* them. This creates a community in action, working to ensure that the Amani neighborhood is an inclusive, vibrant community of choice, made up of families and partners building toward the betterment of the neighborhood.

INTRODUCTION



In 2012, the Obama administration launched the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) to catalyze community-driven change in neighborhoods that have historically faced barriers to revitalization. Created to address poverty and underlying critical issues of education, employment, housing, health and safety in distressed neighborhoods, the program called for the design and implementation of a resident-led revitalization plan.



Through the BNCP, the Dominican Center was designated as the neighborhood partner, or “anchor” for the neighborhood, to support resident decision-making and involvement in the program. The Dominican Center works with Amani residents and partners to build a better future. In addition to supporting the implementation of this revitalization plan, it is a resource in the areas of adult education, housing and building neighborhood capacity.

The organization was founded in 1995 to engage women in the Amani neighborhood in activities to build relationships that would help the founders understand the women’s circumstances and desires for their families. Through its alignment with Amani United, the Dominican Center supports resident-led revitalization efforts to foster social change. Over the past 25 years, the role of the Dominican Center has shifted from an organization that provides services to one that also convenes partners together with residents in support of the priority areas outlined in this plan.

Over the last two decades, four different community development/revitalization plans have been created for Amani.¹ While the goals and direction of the work has remained the same throughout the evolution of these plans, the neighborhood has continued to develop efforts with increased resources, as well as increased involvement from residents and partner organizations. This plan builds upon these previous iterations, as well as residents’ hopes to establish a path to reunite Amani residents and reestablish Amani as a welcoming neighborhood with opportunities for all.



COMMON THEMES IN PAST PLANS:

CHALLENGES:

- Education
- Affordable housing
- Youth development
- Crime and safety
- Economic development and joblessness

GOALS TO IMPROVE:

- Amani housing stock
- The supply of decent, affordable and safe housing
- The unemployment rate
- Participation in crime prevention and safety programs

SHARED RESULTS:

- Quality housing
- Positive changes in neighborhood perception
- Youth involvement in community planning
- Resident voices at decision tables with agencies, officials and the greater community



PLANNING METHODS TO GATHER RESIDENT INPUT:



SURVEY

In April 2015, Housing Resources, Inc., conducted the Community Impact Measurement Project. The project evaluated the neighborhood for quality and affordable housing, desirable neighborhood services and amenities, resident engagement and confidence. 253 resident surveys were completed with the help of resident volunteers who were trained in the data collection process.



COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS

BNCP staff hosted three community input sessions in August 2014, April 2015 and July 2015. Residents were asked questions, including: *What got us here? What does a successful Amani look like? What will get us there? What is driving you?*



MONTHLY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The planning process built upon existing neighborhood structures: Dominican Center's First Saturday Amani Action Group, a monthly meeting of homeowners and residents interested in Amani revitalization; Amani United, a monthly meeting of residents and partners; and the Amani United Education and Family Well-Being committee meeting at Auer Avenue Community School.



DOOR-TO-DOOR CAMPAIGNS AND CANVASSING

Door-to-door campaigns were used to deliver information to residents about meetings, activities and community resources.



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Block parties, back-to-school events and community celebrations, such as the opening of Moody Park, were all intentional activities to build relationships between BNCP staff and residents to further understand and develop Amani priorities.

AMANI: PAST AND PRESENT

We believe people's lives are powerfully shaped by the neighborhoods in which they live.





Amani means “peace” in the Swahili language; this name can be seen as both an admonition to and plea for a community that has been characterized as among the least safe and resourced neighborhoods in Milwaukee. Peace is what Amani residents are working toward; the peace that signals a healthy and strong community for its residents.

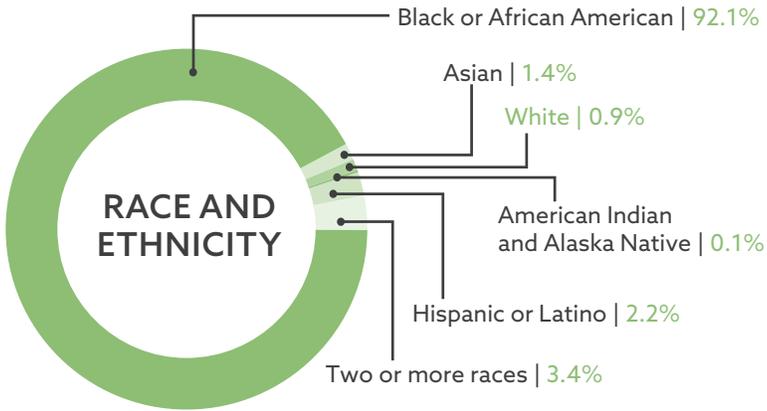
Understanding Amani’s history of differing fortunes over the years requires analyzing how racial and economic segregation combined to restrict opportunity. Between the mid 1800s and 1900s, the Amani neighborhood thrived as industrial development attracted workers to Milwaukee, which reached its peak in the 1960s. But, once prosperous and vibrant centers of neighborhood commerce and social interaction fell victim to significant disinvestment, public policy, rising crime and high vacancy rates as more and more companies downsized or closed their doors.

Manufacturing growth along the 30th Street Corridor, just outside the boundaries of the Amani neighborhood, had been characterized by the A.O. Smith company, an automobile manufacturer that at one time employed over 300 engineers in its research building alone. But the company, which was the largest remaining employer of neighborhood residents, sold its automotive division in 1997 to Tower Automotive, which closed down in 2006. This loss to the neighborhood was compounded by the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent recession, which led to massive job loss and foreclosures.

AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

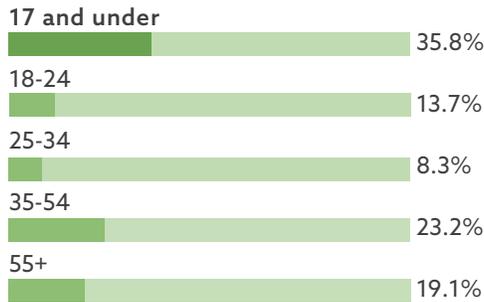
NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATION: 8,369

MEDIAN EARNINGS: \$19,636



Male

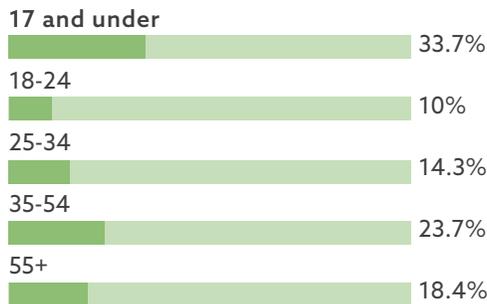
AGE



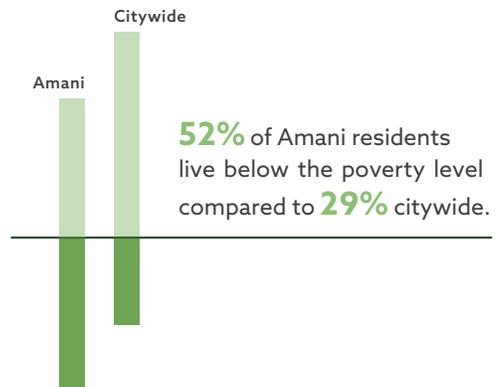
EDUCATION



Female



35% of people 20-64 years old in Amani are unemployed and actively seeking employment, compared with **12%** citywide.



* Amani BNCP Profile, Data You Can Use 2016. This neighborhood report is based primarily on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 5-year estimates.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES

Amani lies in the heart of the 53206 zip code and is one of Milwaukee's most challenged neighborhoods. Amani's residents are eager for both investment in their neighborhood's renewal and the recognition that their neighborhood matters to the greater Milwaukee community.

As a result of the historical and cultural events outlined in the previous section, Amani residents face many economic and educational barriers. Today, over half (52 percent) of Amani residents live below the poverty line. Thirty-five percent of those ages 20-64 are unemployed and actively seeking employment, compared to 12 percent citywide. In an economy where two wage earners are often

needed to make ends meet, 51.6 percent of Amani households are headed by single parents, nearly double the citywide rate of 28.3 percent. Many residents struggle to cover the cost of food, housing and other basic needs with a median income of \$19,636, compared to \$27,285 citywide. A large percentage of Amani residents who are employed work in



service occupations (42 percent compared to 24 percent city-wide) and lack the training and education to qualify for higher-paying jobs due to poor school quality and the absence of training programs in the neighborhood.

About one-third (31 percent of males and 30 percent of females) ages 18-24 in Amani have no high school diploma or equivalent (compared to 21 percent of males and 13 percent of females citywide). And, less than 3 percent of males and 5 percent of females between ages 25-34 have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Despite these challenges, or perhaps because of them, many Amani residents believe in the potential for change; that if they work with each other and partner with neighborhood organizations and city-level stakeholders, they can bring attention to the policies and practices that hold back progress - while simultaneously coming together as neighbors for mutual support.



DEVELOPING A FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE

The Milwaukee neighborhood boundaries for Amani are not consistent in city documents. According to Milwaukee journalist John Gurda,² the neighborhood currently known as Amani was given its name by Project Respect in 1997 when the city divided the north side into smaller neighborhoods to create a sense of community for residents. The Amani boundaries are recognized as Keefe Avenue to North Avenue and 20th Street to 30th Street.

BNCP site coordinators and organizers, through their canvassing activities, were disturbed to find great numbers of people in the neighborhood who did not recognize “Amani” as the name of the place where they lived. They also saw apathy and social distance among residents who kept to themselves or their blocks. In response, a number of activities were engaged to support resident connectedness, cohesion and ownership of their neighborhood, including “**I AM AMANI**,” a neighborhood branding campaign created in 2014.



"I AM AMANI" CAMPAIGN

The "I AM AMANI" campaign was a resident mobilization effort to **promote a more positive, cohesive neighborhood identity**. Prior, many residents identified themselves by the block they lived on, rather than as part of a larger Amani community. Through this campaign, the idea of unifying as a neighborhood began.

This movement was community-led, promoted through t-shirts and yard signs provided to residents in a public declaration of one unified neighborhood. A city hall event, which residents attended with Amani signs to advocate for their

community's needs, cemented the name of the neighborhood and its residents in the public's mind, and, in turn, attracted attention from civic, philanthropic and neighborhood partners.

The campaign also energized previously uninvolved residents, who, together with the existing groups, decided to **come together as one group**. This led to the development of the following vision and values statement for the Amani neighborhood and a **resident-led** space where important neighborhood issues could be discussed, decisions could be made and resources identified and collected.

VISION

Amani United is a diverse group of residents determined to move forward toward a healthy and sustainable community.

VALUES

INTEGRITY

We are committed to our world and to the betterment of our community.

COMMITMENT

We are dedicated to the development of our community. We commit our time and focus to the improvement of our neighborhood.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

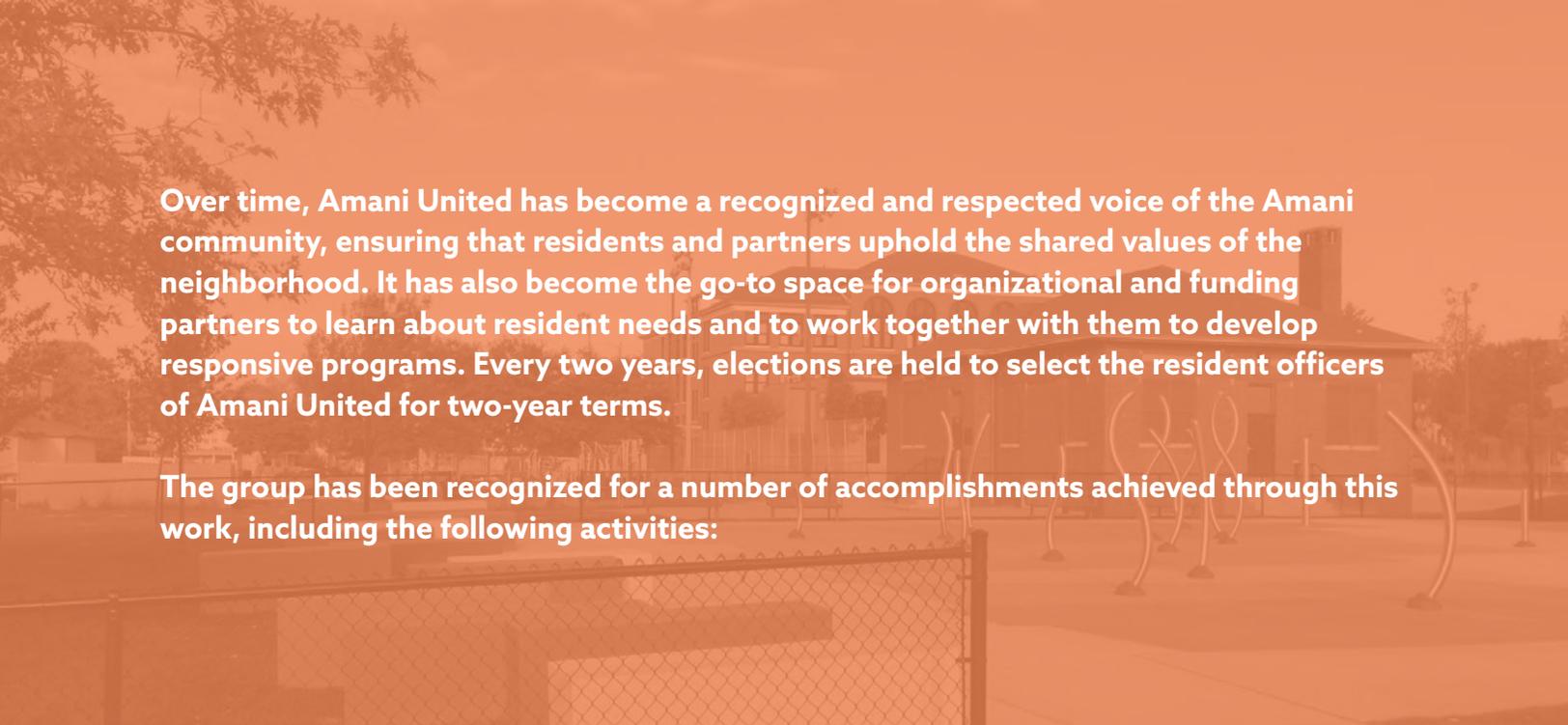
We want to develop collaborative partnerships that support and advocate for resident leadership.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our elected officials, our community organizations and our institutions accountable for the development, safety and sustainability for our community.

TRUTH

We are individuals who are not afraid to stand up for the truth or for any form of injustice our community may face.



Over time, Amani United has become a recognized and respected voice of the Amani community, ensuring that residents and partners uphold the shared values of the neighborhood. It has also become the go-to space for organizational and funding partners to learn about resident needs and to work together with them to develop responsive programs. Every two years, elections are held to select the resident officers of Amani United for two-year terms.

The group has been recognized for a number of accomplishments achieved through this work, including the following activities:

MOODY PARK REVITALIZATION

Residents worked together with Milwaukee County Parks and COA Youth & Family Centers in the design and decision-making of a **\$2 million** neighborhood park renovation. More than **500** people commemorated the opening of the new Moody Park in August 2015. This event was the culmination of a more than **12-year** neighborhood effort to revitalize this cherished park.

Nonprofit Center's 2015 Excellence for Community Organizing

With support from the Dominican Center, Amani community organizing efforts were honored with the 2015 Nonprofit Center Excellence Award. With the foundation created through these efforts, residents and partners are committed to building upon the positive momentum underway and developing the resources needed for plan implementation.

2016 MANDI Award

The Dominican Center and Milwaukee County Parks accepted the Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award on behalf of the revitalization of Moody Park.

2016 Metlife Foundation Award

The Dominican Center accepted a national award for Excellence in Civic Engagement for its efforts to revitalize Moody Park and engage residents in ongoing activities such as beautification projects, vacant lot events, neighborhood cleanups and more.



Well Fed Means Less Lead Campaign

Hunger Task Force partnered with the Dominican Center on the Well Fed Means Less Lead canvassing program. Amani has a geography with a high density of old homes and the highest concentrations of homes with lead service laterals in Milwaukee. The door-to-door canvas engaged residents with in-depth conversations about the presence of lead in and around the home; how to identify sources of lead; how to take self-help steps to minimize household lead exposure; and the important role nutrition plays in a diet protective of lead. The organizations received the **2018 BizTimes Nonprofit Collaboration Award** for these efforts.



Neighborhood Beautification Projects

Community gardens, neighborhood cleanups and painting of boarded-up homes through the *Painting with Purpose* project have helped improve the look of Amani.



Block Ambassadors

Block ambassadors have been identified to serve as centralized communication hubs for neighbors to remain informed about resources and opportunities in their neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PRIORITIES

The following priority areas (safety, housing and economic development, and education and family well-being) have consistently been raised by the voice of Amani residents over the years and are now echoed and expanded upon in this current plan.



27 PERCENT
OF RESIDENTS
ARE BETWEEN
AGES **10-24**,
WHILE
19 PERCENT
ARE OVER THE
AGE OF **55**.

SAFETY

Increase neighbors' willingness to support self, other neighbors and community to achieve community peace

The Amani neighborhood has a history of crime, which has affected the neighborhood's perception of safety, its marketability and residents' ability to connect as a community. The perception of Amani as a dangerous place is held among Amani residents, as well as throughout the city, and impacts decisions about where to live, shop and locate commercial business. It also affects overall community marketability, cohesion and family well-being.

From the beginning, partners identified a connection between resident engagement and the development of a safe and peaceful neighborhood. Residents and staff at the Dominican Center agreed that specific safety issues, including crime and violence, needed to be addressed head-on. In identifying the root causes of these challenges, they recognized the need to better understand and respond to the barriers that prevented people who lived and worked in Amani from coming together for mutual support and collective action. They also emphasized the importance of bringing people together to hold each other, community organizations, elected officials and other city institutions accountable for the safety, development and sustainability of Amani.



This emphasis on community building is rooted in trust and relationships that contributed to the development of neighborhood groups such as Amani United, the First Saturday Group, the Amani Ambassadors Council and Friends of Moody Park. These groups are led by resident co-chairs and supported by neighborhood organizations focused on this area (safety).

These groups have each mobilized residents and partners to work together to make progress on community priorities. While these existing groups are assets to build upon, there is a need to increase and diversify participation, particularly among residents not currently represented: youth and young adults (ages 15-30), renters and those living on the edges of Amani’s boundaries. There is also a need to build bridges between resident groups who do not currently interact, such as youth and young adults and elders.

When discussing safety issues in the neighborhood, adults frequently name youth as a problem, emphasizing the importance of providing them with mentors, job opportunities

and safe spaces to gather as solutions. However, in 2019, COA Youth & Family Centers surveyed Amani youth to find that a majority identified adults as a source of problems, including a lack of positive role models, criminal activity and unwillingness to share information and knowledge with the next generation.

Providing opportunities for all residents to participate in the decisions that affect their lives is key to creating a safer neighborhood. Actively engaging the area’s youth in neighborhood revitalization would provide them with personal development, help to bridge the generation gap and increase collective efficacy and community pride.



GOAL

Foster communication between neighbors to get to know each other, interact and share information.

Residents and partners alike need support and training as they take on new roles and responsibilities, from building trust and resolving conflicts to understanding and addressing racism and violence.

STRATEGIES

Enroll existing Block Leaders as Block Ambassadors, including the Milwaukee Police Department, Safe & Sound and more.

Recruit and enroll residents to be new Block Ambassadors.

Convene the Block Ambassador Collective to facilitate block events in the Amani neighborhood.



GOAL

Foster civic engagement in Amani.

The people who live and work in Amani must also increase their voice and build power through civic participation, from increasing voting and registration rates to attending public meetings. This forward movement requires understanding the fundamentals, such as who can vote and how to vote, as well as the backgrounds of individual candidates and policy issues facing Amani.

STRATEGIES

Provide resident education on people, roles, departments and committees of Milwaukee and Wisconsin government.

Increase Milwaukee and Wisconsin elected official interactions with Amani residents.

Facilitate Amani voter turnout strategy for general election.



GOAL

Address public safety concerns by working with residents, partners and officials.

Residents want action on specific safety challenges, which will require coming together with partners including District 5 of the Milwaukee Police Department, the Community Prosecution Unit, Safe and Sound and Amani's aldermen. Residential focus groups highlighted safety concerns specific to speeding around 23rd Street and Auer Avenue.

STRATEGIES

Increase Amani Slow Down signage throughout the community.

Identify speed deterrents and slow down strategies in Amani neighborhood.

Implement speed deterrents and slow down strategies on key speed streets in Amani.

RECENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

4,166 AMANI HOMES SURVEYED FOR LEAD EDUCATION 

 57% OF RESIDENTS PURCHASED LEAD FILTERS

 50,000 PIECES OF LEAD EDUCATION MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED *

25 RESIDENTS REPORTED DUMPING & NUISANCE ACTIVITIES TO THE CITY 

15 RESIDENTS DISCUSSED NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS AT CITY ZONING NEIGHBORHOOD AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

 250 SLOW DOWN SIGNS DISTRIBUTED

 8 SPEED BUMPS CONFIRMED FOR INSTALLATION STARTING THE SUMMER OF 2020

* Well Fed Means Less Lead Campaign Summary; MKE Nutrition & Lead Task Force; 2018



SUCCESS INDICATORS

Residents report **willingness to actively support the achievement of community peace.**

Residents report **engagement in actively supporting the achievement of community peace.**

Residents report **engagement in addressing public safety efforts.**

OVER TWO-THIRDS (69 PERCENT) OF OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS IN AMANI ARE RENTED, COMPARED TO 57 PERCENT CITYWIDE. YET, RENTAL COSTS ARE HIGHER IN AMANI THAN IN OTHER AREAS OF THE CITY.

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Improve housing conditions through the model block strategy in Amani

When the BNCP started, residents noted that boarded-up houses were a safety issue, sometimes serving as sites for fires, drug deals and sexual assaults. At the individual level, many residents live in poor, unaffordable housing conditions, leading to frequent moves and making it more difficult to save money. Renters, in particular, are at high risk of eviction and often receive little help when landlords fail to monitor their properties or do not respond to repairs and safety issues.

Where there are foreclosures and vacant properties, there will be health risks and opportunities for crime within a neighborhood. Amani residents view housing quality and reducing neighborhood blight as a way to reduce crime, attract economic development and improve the quality of life for all. But, when it comes to housing issues, residents often feel they lack a voice in decision-making and policy development, i.e., when developers who receive city tax credits grant funding. To rehab city-owned houses or build new homes on city-owned lots, the community has no say in the design or locations of the project, and long-term Amani renters are not given preference to buy new homes.





GOAL

Engage residents in block beautification throughout Amani.

STRATEGIES

Educate residents about beautification opportunities and support in Amani, including Rock the Block events.

Facilitate resident-led cleanups throughout Amani.

Facilitate annual Amani Bloom & Groom initiatives.

Engage youth in cleanups and neighborhood beautification through Amani Youth in Action.



GOAL

Restore block integrity to the houses on the pilot block of the model block strategy.

The Amani Housing Pilot is part of the larger Amani Housing Strategy. Efforts are currently being focused on a single pilot block (2900 North 26th Street) and will evolve into a clustered approach initiative.

STRATEGIES

Complete needs profile/specifications on properties on the pilot block.

Identify funding resources to meet the financial profile of the homeowners on the pilot block.

Facilitate house-by-house remodeling projects on the pilot block.



GOAL

Build the capacity of the lead neighborhood organizations, residents and those working in Amani to support the goals of the Amani Housing Strategy.

In 2018, Milwaukee LISC provided the Dominican Center and Amani United with access to customized Loveland software. The Dominican Center housing coordinator worked with residents to survey the condition of all 3,470 parcels in Amani and uploaded photographs and data on all parcels to the software. Following this evaluation, a new housing strategy was adopted in early 2019.

The Amani Housing Strategy was developed in partnership with residents, stakeholders and community partners to address the critical need for quality and affordable housing in the Amani neighborhood. The comprehensive plan will engage current residents and partners serving the community to improve existing and new housing stock and expand the range of quality developments in the neighborhood.

STRATEGIES

Provide various requested trainings to residents, landlords and those working in Amani that support the housing strategy.

Support local contractors in being eligible to participate in restoring housing integrity.

Secure adequate human resources dedicated to the housing initiative.

RECENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



3,470 PARCELS SURVEYED FOR HOUSING CONDITIONS



5 BLOOM & GROOM PLANT SALES



2 ROCK THE BLOCK EVENTS IN 2019



CLEANUPS & SERVICE DAYS



SUCCESS INDICATORS

Improve housing conditions on two model blocks by 2021.

Increase reported resident participation in Amani beautification efforts by 100 percent.

THROUGH THE AMANI
HYDROPONICS PROGRAM,
**EACH SCHOOL RECEIVED A
GROW BOX THAT HELPED
STUDENTS AND FACILITY
TO GROW LEAFY GREEN
VEGETABLES AND HERBS**
FOR DISTRIBUTION TO
AMANI RESIDENTS AND
THROUGH AMANI
FOOD BANKS.





EDUCATION & FAMILY WELL-BEING

Increase family well-being and life-long learning in Amani

Amani residents hope to attract and retain young families in the neighborhood while ensuring older residents can still call Amani home. To address this desire, the plan calls for building healthy partnerships with community organizations, local schools, churches and parks to support access to community resources and a variety of family enrichment activities. Residents believe that education and family well-being are closely linked to quality schools for children and youth. Opportunities for life-long learning develop self-esteem, highlight Amani talents and ensure individual and community success.

COA Youth and Family Centers (COA) is a critical Amani partner organization, the mission of which is to help Milwaukee children, teens and families reach their greatest potential through a continuum of educational, recreational and social work programs. COA helps to connect Amani residents with information about community resources and partners with Amani United to produce and distribute a community newsletter. COA, in turn, benefits from Amani United's community outreach and resident engagement activities. Local churches are other potential resources for help to provide positive summer activities for local children.



GOAL

Engage organizations working in Amani that address stress, trauma, loss, mental health and other risk factors in adults and youth.

When it comes to family well-being, residents have expressed a particular need to support youth and families who have been the victims of violence or have experienced other forms of loss, stress and trauma.

STRATEGIES

Work with residents and partners to identify services offered by organizations.

Engage organizations in the Amani community through the Neighborhood Agreement.

Promote trusted organizations and services to Amani residents.



GOAL

Increase residents' skills in advocacy and securing resources related to family well-being and life-long learning.

Schools and partner organizations like the Dominican Center and COA better connect Amani residents with services, support and opportunities, such as the Dominican Center's Adult Education Program. Residents have far-ranging needs, from legal issues (i.e., related to landlord and tenant disputes, debt collections, payday loans) to health care (insurance, preventative care, diabetes management, mental health and drug and alcohol abuse) to a range of literacy and employment challenges. Many organizations and partners exist to fill these needs, but residents often lack information about how to access the services and support that is available.

STRATEGIES

Connect residents, youth and partners working in Amani with support to address loss, stress and trauma.

Connect families with requested available resources in Amani neighborhood.

Increase residents' access to opportunities for essential trainings in leadership development.



GOAL

Increase residents' participation in decision-making with organizations and systems focused on education and family well-being.

Five of the six schools in and near Amani are elementary schools, with the exception of NOVA, a combined elementary and secondary school. In 2015, Auer Avenue Elementary School became a community school, with an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement, which leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.

The community has supported Auer Avenue in its efforts because many residents attended the school and do not want to see any school in the neighborhood close. Members of Amani United joined the community advisory council at Auer Avenue to participate in planning and programming for the school to promote active parent engagement in their child's learning and to provide a range of family support and opportunities in partnership with the school administration.

STRATEGIES

Increase residents' readiness to serve as Amani liaisons.

Support resident and organization matching process for resident engagement in organizations and systems.

Support Amani schools that desire promoting and facilitating the "community school" model.

RECENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

52 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DOMINICAN CENTER'S ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM



31 COMMUNITY MEETINGS HELD



22 RESIDENTS ATTENDED COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HEARINGS TO PROTEST ELIMINATION OF BUS LINES IMPACTING AMANI



12 STUDENTS QUALIFIED FOR HSED/GED PROGRAMS

3 MOBILE FOOD PANTRIES



5 STUDENTS EARNED HSED/GED



6 AMANI YOUTH LEADERS COMPLETED MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY'S GIRLS WHO CODE PROGRAM (LEVEL ONE) AND 10 AMANI YOUTH LEADERS ARE ENROLLED IN LEVELS ONE AND TWO FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

MORE THAN 200 AMANI RESIDENTS AND DOMINICAN CENTER STUDENTS ATTENDED 18 PERFORMANCES THROUGH UPAF CONNECT



SUCCESS INDICATORS

Amani residents serve on decision-making teams in neighborhood organizations.

Organizations serving Amani connect with residents that need the services provided.

Amani residents have access to all services needed to have positive family well-being and life-long learning.

CONCLUSION



Over time, the Amani neighborhood has been overwhelmed by a concentration of problems culminating from outside the neighborhood. These have included redlining; city policies of disinvestment in neighborhoods of color; an increase in crime caused by the lack of resources and absence of opportunity; mass incarceration driven by restrictive justice policies that punished people of color much more harshly than it did others; the war on drugs; the housing market collapse – a result of sub-prime and predatory lenders targeting lower income families, which caused a rise in foreclosures as homeowners defaulted on their mortgages.



These policies and decisions have contributed to the loss of long-term Amani neighborhood residents who historically played an important role in maintaining stability, and adding to underemployment, job scarcity and further loss of an economic structure in the community that the neighborhood faces today.

Multiple factors over time have created today's Amani, requiring decades of action and inaction. Replacing this with a more forward-thinking vision will also take time. As a collective, Amani United and the Dominican Center have made important beginning steps in each of the areas highlighted in the neighborhood priorities section of this plan. Important resources have been identified and built upon, and

we will need to lean on our partnership to ensure we are able to continue this momentum toward accomplishing our goals.

For us, *accomplish* has two meanings: **Amani will be made a safer, healthier community, and residents and resource partners will work together on a development process to continue and sustain positive change.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to those who contributed to our revitalization plans, including Dr. Katie Pritchard and Carrie Koss Vallejo of Data You Can Use, who researched and developed the data in the Amani profile and plan, as well as Fatima Benhaddou, Jeremy Davis, John Gardner and Jamila Wright for developing the Amani Neighborhood Action Plan, which informed our understanding of Amani history.

We also give thanks to the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) technical assistance team, who were instrumental in keeping Amani BNCP focused and on task: Linda Bowen, executive director of the Institute for Community Peace; and Kirstin Yeado and Lauren Wechsler, senior program analysts at the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

We are especially thankful for our cross-sector partners: the Northwestern Mutual Foundation, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Zilber Family Foundation and Safe and Sound, which remain committed to building neighborhood capacity for social change. We are grateful for their patience and confidence through the Amani BNCP personnel changes.

We thank the Milwaukee Police Department, including Chief Flynn, Assistant Chief Harpole, Assistant Chief Leibold, Assistant Chief Hudson and Inspector of Police Mary Hoering for their leadership in considering and winning the Milwaukee BNCP grant, and District 5 Captain Thomas G. Stigler and officers for their cooperation and support of the Amani BNCP efforts.

The success of the Amani BNCP was possible because of the hard work provided by the Amani BNCP staff: Denise Wooten, Dennis Walton, Alicia Skeeter, Richard Diaz, Jr., Pepper Ray, Jacob Gatlin and Octavia Parker, as well as Milwaukee BNCP coordinators Tonieh Welland and Fatima Benhaddou.

Gratitude is extended to the Dominican Center staff and Trinity Fellows for providing office space, development and moral support, and for embracing the BNCP spirit and concept.

Finally, we are thankful to the Amani residents who gave many unpaid hours in support work, leadership, planning and idea contribution at countless meetings. Without their support, there would be no plan.

FOOTNOTES

¹The four plans referenced are the Strategic Plan for Area Number 9 in 2000, the Caring Community Plan of 2009, the Amani Neighborhood Action Plan of 2012 and the 2014 draft BNCP Revitalization Plan.

² Gurda, John. Milwaukee – City of Neighborhoods. Historic Milwaukee, Inc. 2015.

* The neighborhoods statistics included in this plan are from the Amani BNCP Profile, Data You Can Use 2016. This neighborhood report is based primarily on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 5-year estimates.



