



South Bend Common Council

227 W, Jefferson Blvd. Room 441 - County-City Building, South Bend, IN 46601

The Collective Power of Engagement & Intentional Collaboration

August 22, 2019

Near Westside Neighborhood Organization

Use this to outline/summarize the concept of your proposal

1. A description of proposed plan and how it relates to the Common Council/City's basic purpose and mission:

The Near Westside Neighborhood Organization (NWSNO) seeks to complete a comprehensive analysis of the neighborhood, looking for areas (infrastructure, business investment, quality-of-life improvements, site remediation, urban infill projects, open space, etc.) that have potential for collaboration between the neighborhood and the City.

Additionally, we seek to continue and increase outreach, communication, and opportunities for participation for ALL our neighbors in the civic and community life of the neighborhood and the City.

2. Why this plan is needed:

The Near West Side has suffered from decades of disinvestment – especially the western half of the neighborhood. We seek to increase our position as a resilient, diverse, urban neighborhood with strong ties to downtown, Western Ave, and our neighbors to the west.

We seek to support safe, responsible, and beautiful homes and apartments for our families.

Along with disinvestment, our neighborhood suffers from fragmentation and inadequate communication with City resources; as such, we seek a multi-faceted effort to match resident assets with City assets.

3. The human and financial resources needed to implement the plan (in detail):

We need detailed, frequent, and comprehensive communication with the City (see the fallout from the PSH proposal). A point person with knowledge and authority.

We need a frank and honest conversation with those who hold the purse strings about resource distribution in the city.

The neighborhood needs substantial reinvestment in the area between Chapin Street, Cherry Street, Western Avenue and Colfax. This includes infrastructure improvements, housing rehab, construction of new houses and possibly commercial development. We need a plan to accomplish these objectives.

The area west of Cherry Street has several former factories and a plan is needed to assess the environmental issues and clean up these sites.

We need to move beyond stabilization to growth, innovation and opportunity. A concrete plan for specific investment in targeted areas.

We need more support of local businesses and institutions.

We would like to work with The City (redevelopment commission) and key developers (SBHF + others) for infill of vacant properties (market-rate housing) and a possible community center, that would attract retiring Baby Boomers and young professionals, providing stability (boomers) and new-energy (young professionals) for neighborhood growth and inclusion.

Once a plan is in place, the neighborhood will be in a stronger position to work with future developers because the plan will provide parameters for new development.

4. What will this mean to the Common Council/City in opportunities and cost in 1 to three years:

This gets said so often that it feels like a cliché (it is not): The City is only as strong as its continuant parts, and those parts are its neighborhoods. As South Bend's original neighborhood, the strength and resilience of the Near West Side is critical to the City's reemergence as a midwestern powerhouse of innovation, creativity and pluralism.

5. An alternative plan/other options:

If funds are limited, the plans can be implemented over a longer time period. Developing a plan and setting priorities is a crucial first step to define the future needs of the neighborhood.