

RESEARCH REPORT

# Embedding Equity into Placemaking

## An Examination of the Milwaukee Method of Creative Placemaking in Practice

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# Acknowledgments

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# Embedding Equity into Placemaking

The racial and economic diversity of cities is an increasingly valued feature when it comes to people feeling connected to where they live, work, and socialize. A thriving community, with social and economic opportunities for all, can foster equitable development and social inclusion. When effective, these places can reflect the priorities of the community and encourage a sense of belonging to improve quality of life.<sup>1</sup> However, these efforts exist within systemic constraints. Resources are limited, and community economic development initiatives focused on the traditional “bottom line” tend to ignore all but the most basic understanding of “impacts” and can lead to displacement, deepen feelings of exclusion, and create barriers to access. To mitigate these effects and build more inclusive processes and equitable outcomes, creative placemaking has emerged as a way to use tools and skills from the arts and culture sector to create a sense of belonging in a space.<sup>2</sup>

Efforts to build equitable creative-placemaking approaches are under way across the country. This report examines one such effort: in Milwaukee, stakeholders are building a creative-placemaking practice to change how people see and experience the places around them and to model a broader approach to place-based investing. This “Milwaukee Method” of creative placemaking (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015) informs and shapes otherwise distinct creative-placemaking projects in the city.

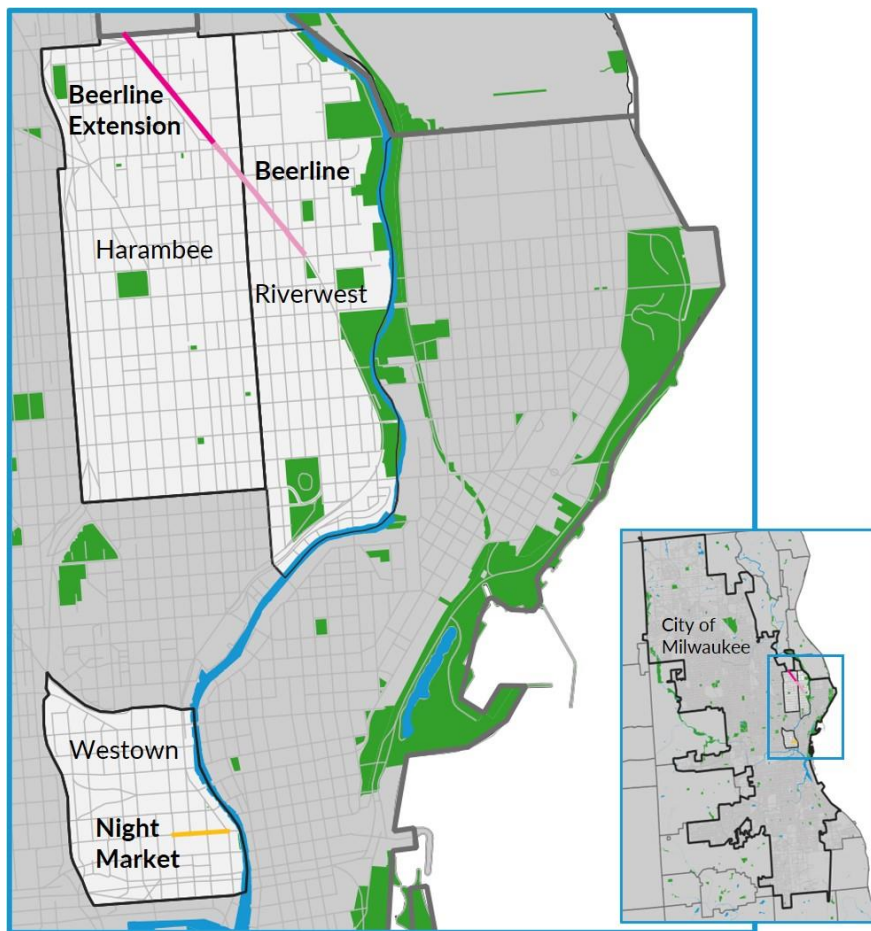
We assess two of these placemaking projects in Milwaukee: the Beerline Trail and the Night Market. We examine both through a lens of inclusive, community-oriented development, with the goal of helping local stakeholders more effectively communicate the benefits and effects of placemaking in their work. We use this lens because studies show that how people feel about where they live, visit, and work affects their feelings of belonging, social cohesion, and identity. It also helps us think about drivers of economic development more broadly—not only as a specific intervention’s return on investment but as a process that can make community change more or less inclusive, more or less equitable.

This research builds on previous Urban Institute work that focused on the Beerline Trail as a driver of community safety in Milwaukee. In a 2018 report, an Urban researcher assessed how the Beerline Trail connected disparate communities (Vásquez-Noriega 2018). The report found that activities such as blight removal, safety audits, lighting, and enhanced activity on the trail led to an increase in the perception of public safety in the neighborhoods surrounding the trail. Elaborating on the initial study, this report uses a broader lens to assess the equitable impact of placemaking and the ways the community can benefit from these investments.

The second project we assess is a downtown market created to bring people to a part of the city with little or no nighttime activity. NEWaukee founded the Night Market in summer 2014, with the goals of creating a safe and interactive place in downtown Milwaukee that draws diverse residents and visitors and changing perceptions of downtown. The Night Market takes place in the summer (typically June to September) along West Wisconsin Avenue and has attracted more than 60,000 attendees every year.<sup>3</sup> We examine how the Night Market as a creative-placemaking initiative affects or drives equity in the investments and development of the downtown area.

Figure 1 shows the locations of the Beerline Trail (both the initial stretch, which opened in 2010, and the more recent extension, which opened in 2015) within the neighborhoods of Harambee and Riverwest and the Night Market along West Wisconsin Avenue within Westtown.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Location of the Beerline Trail and the Night Market in Milwaukee**



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Source: GIS shapefiles from city of Milwaukee open source GIS data repository.

In addition to using the inclusive, community-oriented development lens, we determine how the lessons from the process and implementation of these projects shape efforts to strengthen equity in the city and region. We aim to capture takeaways to advance the creative-placemaking sector and drive future equitable investments.

Our observations and findings were recorded before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created challenges to observation and analysis (e.g., events such as the Night Market were canceled in 2020). However, the pandemic has highlighted considerations related to how cities value and use public space and has offered an avenue for reflection, in addition to an illustration of the important roles public and inclusive spaces can play in our communities.

## Research Questions

To understand how equity is embedded in placemaking in Milwaukee's creative-placemaking projects, our analysis uses a distinct framing question for each effort.

- **Question 1:** How is the community around the Beerline Trail welcoming placemaking, and to what extent are neighbors (residents and workers) benefiting from the trail's equitable development goals?
- **Question 2:** What role does the Night Market play in spurring development in downtown Milwaukee, and to what extent is the development equitable?

These research questions inform our data collection techniques and the framing for our analysis. This report presents findings and next steps for the Beerline Trail and the Night Market while capturing joint recommendations for the city's approach to creative placemaking.

## Methodology

The Urban Institute collected information for this study between October 2019 and September 2020. We used various tools and approaches to collect quantitative and qualitative data while making longitudinal observations to understand the changes in perceptions of the placemaking efforts and the neighborhoods in which they exist before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. These longitudinal observations are particularly informative because they contribute to the growing recognition that public space is a crucial civic asset.



In October 2019, at the beginning of the research project, we held an in-person convening to understand the landscape of place-based investment in Milwaukee, build trust with the creative-placemaking organizations, and determine a collaborative work plan to advance our research agenda through the following months. We invited the Alameda County sheriff's department in California and the Brownsville Community Justice Center in New York City to participate in the convening as representatives of areas exploring creative-placemaking questions. Box 1 contains additional information about those projects.

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#### BOX 1

##### **Creative Placemaking and Equity Studies**

Building on the Urban Institute's previous work on creative placemaking and community safety (Vásquez-Noriega 2018), we continued our engagement with three groups to examine the effects of their creative-placemaking initiatives on equity in their communities. These projects showcase the range of efforts that communities are making to strengthen their residents' sense of belonging. The three initiatives represent different scales of creative placemaking: community-level, city-level, and county-level. This study (city level) examines the effort to build a consistent and inclusive creative-placemaking approach in Milwaukee ("the Milwaukee Method") that can be implemented in different sites across the city. The others are as follows:

- In Brooklyn, New York, the Brownsville Community Justice Center is working with young people to use creative placemaking to build a more inclusive neighborhood. For this engagement, we worked with the group to design a community safety mapping exercise that can be used for siting and planning its work with young people.
- The Alameda County, California, Sheriff's Office has used creative placemaking to build a more inclusive approach to community policing. In this project, we designed survey and assessment tools that community safety stakeholders in Alameda and other jurisdictions can use to guide conversations about how they can work together to build safer and more equitable communities.

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For our study of creative placemaking in Milwaukee, we conducted 15 phone interviews with local stakeholders who participated in the development or implementation of the Beerline Trail or the Night Market. The interviewees were recommended by key staff members from the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), MKE->LAX, Riverworks, and NEWaukee. Those organizations are members of the Creative Placemaking Committee, which was developed to promote inclusive community development strategies in the city. We have been working closely with them to inform the research process and



ground findings in the local realities. NEWaukee founded the Night Market, Riverworks is a core organizer activating the Beerline Trail, and GMC and MKE<->LAX are involved in the planning and development of both projects.

The people we interviewed in Milwaukee included community leaders, representatives of local art organizations, real estate developers, and staff members from nonprofit partners and city government agencies. We also observed a few stakeholder planning meetings in which COVID-19-related changes for Milwaukee neighborhoods were described. Although these meetings were limited in number, our observations aligned with the findings about ongoing arts-based community development work in Milwaukee that we gathered in interviews.

We also reviewed quarterly reports, memos, grant applications, presentations, and other materials from the Night Market and Beerline Trail files. This included past surveys and other information collected by creative-placemaking staff members that provided insights into the projects' beginnings, as well as quantitative data on the demographics of the neighborhoods that surround the projects, the number of people who use the trail and market, and what users of these amenities think about them.

To capture any changes in the community's perceptions of the Beerline Trail and the Night Market, we conducted a media scan, reviewing the content of local news outlets. We used keywords that focused on the neighborhoods and placemaking efforts of interest to determine how articles and headlines described the projects, the extent to which perceptions of the amenities may have changed over time, and who the main beneficiaries of any physical improvements are.

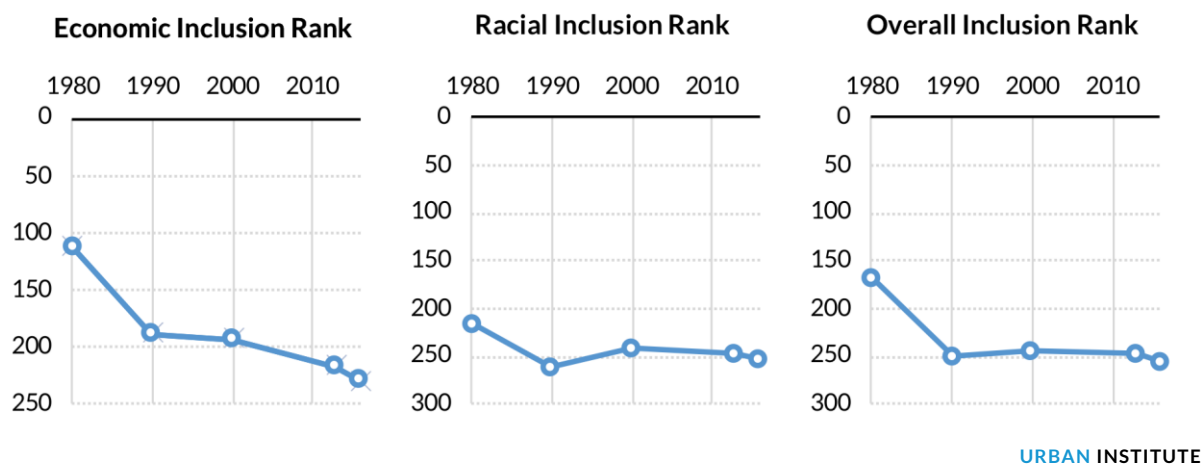
Finally, we conducted a property market analysis that examined historical residential and commercial permit and sales trends in the city using data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.<sup>4</sup>

## Equity and Placemaking in Milwaukee

Milwaukee has distinct social and economic factors that complicate efforts to build equity: its segregation levels are among the highest of all major US cities and regions (Acs et al. 2017), and the prosperity gap between white and Black residents, measured as the difference in well-being and economic opportunity, is the worst among the nation's 50 largest cities (Levine 2020a). These disparities were created by decades of redlining and the displacement and exclusion of Black residents that began in the 1940s when the county imposed restrictive covenants barring Black people from living in 16 of the county's 18 suburbs (Quinn 1979). Today, Milwaukee has one of the lowest rates of Black suburbanization and the highest Black poverty rate among the nation's largest metropolitan areas

(Levine 2020b). According to an Urban Institute analysis of 2016 data, Milwaukee ranked in the bottom half of 274 of the largest US cities in overall inclusion (economic and racial) and 253rd in racial inclusion (figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**FIGURE 2**  
**Measuring Inclusion in Milwaukee**



**Source:** Christina Stacy, Brady Meixell, Ananya Hariharan, Erika Poethig, and Solomon Greene, “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” Urban Institute, last updated September 15, 2020, <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion/?topic=map>.

**Notes:** Milwaukee’s ranks are out of 274 of the largest US cities. Overall inclusion reflects the ability of lower-income residents and people of color to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity. This is measured by combining economic inclusion and racial inclusion. Economic inclusion reflects the ability of residents with lower incomes to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity, as measured by income segregation, housing affordability, the share of working poor residents, and the high school dropout rate. Racial inclusion reflects the ability of residents of color to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity, as measured by the gaps between residents of color and white residents in homeownership, poverty, and educational attainment, as well as the share of the city’s population who are people of color.

Yet despite these disparities, the metropolitan Milwaukee area experienced a net increase in people moving there between April and August 2020 during the pandemic, according to an analysis by LinkedIn Economic Graph Research.<sup>6</sup> The analysis found that Milwaukee was among the five cities in the US with the greatest increases in their inflow-to-outflow ratio (i.e., more people moved there than moved away). The city has been prioritizing approaches and projects to address the historical segregation and poor outcomes for people of color to embrace and benefit from its diversity. The city government, downtown business improvement district, GMC, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and several other key stakeholders have been championing local development projects to enhance the urban landscape in ways that promote equitable place-based resources for all Milwaukeeans.

National and local funders have also aligned their commitments to producing opportunities that engage residents in a collaborative process to help achieve the community changes that residents want.

In 2016, ArtPlace America provided one of the grants that catalyzed arts programming on the Beerline Trail, and it partnered with the Urban Institute for a scan of the public safety and arts and culture field (Ross 2016). Local foundations have also been involved in and supported this work, with Bader Philanthropies and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation both taking an interest in understanding how spaces can be activated to confront and address the city's history of segregation and promote equitable development.

Area stakeholders have framed their work within a “Milwaukee Method” to encourage creative placemaking in the city (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015). In 2014, the GMC formed the Creative Placemaking Committee to formalize its commitment to the method and engagement with local communities.<sup>7</sup> According to a document produced by the committee, the Milwaukee Method

- unifies arts and culture with economic and community development;
- accelerates neighborhood development by creating civic gathering places;
- increases density, safety, business creation, the tax base, and property values;
- strengthens public and private alignments; and
- supports artists, makers, and other cultural workers to co-lead neighborhood engagement (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015).

The document notes that the “Milwaukee Method” supports “interweaving cultural and economic diversity as a method of sustainable city development for long-term success of investments” and that “this commitment to a trail system, repurposed industrial space, and neighborhoods fosters ongoing and new alignments” (Greater Milwaukee Committee 2015, 7).

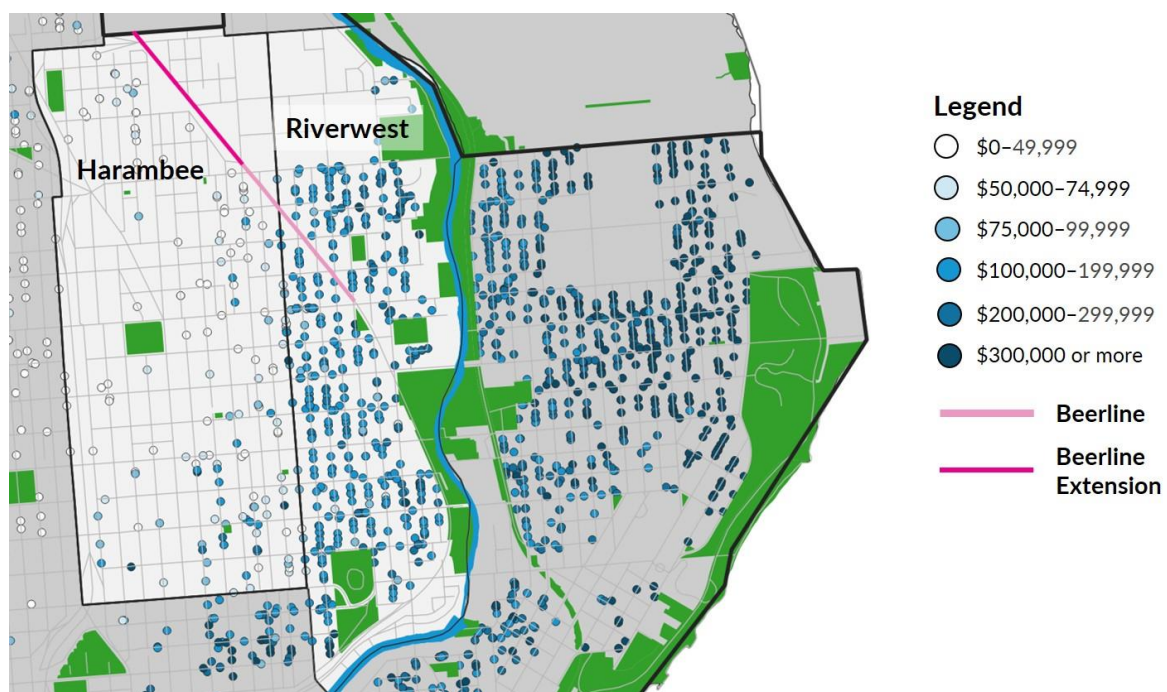
The GMC and its partners work on various projects that invest in public space, encourage local redevelopment, and boost economic growth in neighborhoods. The GMC is demonstrating the Milwaukee Method through three long-term projects, including the Beerline Trail and the Night Market. It also continues to invest in the activation of places and seeks to understand the sustainability of these projects and the equitable development impacts.

## Beerline Trail

Milwaukee's neighborhoods are sharply divided by race and income. On the city's north side, Harambee and Riverwest, two neighborhoods split by Holton Street, illustrate these dynamics. Riverwest to the east is a racially diverse community (60 percent white, 25 percent Black, 8 percent Latinx) and has

relatively low unemployment, stable housing (a median house price of \$150,000), and vibrant commercial corridors (Greater Milwaukee Foundation 2016). Harambee to the west is a majority-Black neighborhood (84 percent) and has more unemployment, lower housing prices (median of \$63,000), a greater share of households who rent, and greater shares of vacant housing and commercial real estate. Figure 3 shows single-family home sales and sale prices between 2015 and 2019, with sales in Riverwest far outpacing those in Harambee. This highlights two dynamics that further exacerbate disparities between the two neighborhoods. First, when they sell, homeowners in Riverwest are making more money on those sales and seeing a greater return on their investments. Second, because homeownership rates tend to be higher in Riverwest than Harambee, sales of single-family homes in Harambee are more likely to involve households who rent: so not only are the investment benefits not going directly to the family living in the house, but the sale may actually signal impending displacement depending on the new owner's plans. In other words, these disparities exacerbate differences in both wealth creation and residential stability.

**FIGURE 3**  
Single-Family Home Sales in the Milwaukee Neighborhoods of Harambee and Riverwest, 2015–19



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**Source:** Authors' analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.

Within this context, an abandoned freight rail line that had previously served local breweries provided an opportunity to build a public asset across the communities in the form of a linear park. The space's initial redevelopment was a build-out of a trail between Burleigh Street to the south and Keefe

Avenue to the North. This segment, named the Beerline Trail in acknowledgment of its past use, opened in 2010 and linked up with a riverfront trail that continued south to the city center. A northern extension, initially called the ARTery, was first envisioned in 2012 and opened in 2015 (for a more detailed timeline, see Vásquez-Noriega 2018).<sup>8</sup> This segment provided both opportunities and challenges for stakeholders and designers: it extended the line farther into Harambee proper, but as this northern segment was behind larger industrial buildings and warehouses, it had limited access points for the community, in contrast to the original trail, which had numerous access points as it crossed city streets. The trail currently ends at a former railroad bridge that crosses Capitol Drive, and the city of Milwaukee has acquired some of the corridor north of Capitol for future trail expansion and possible connection to an in-development trail network.

As the trail and the vision for the trail have expanded, local stakeholders have envisioned it as a space that not only physically connects neighborhoods but also builds social connections between Harambee and Riverwest. To make this happen, various local activists and organizations have designed an inclusive planning and implementation process to site, design, and activate the Beerline Trail. This has meant a concerted effort to conduct outreach and build inclusive planning and outreach structures to the surrounding communities.

For a long-term endeavor like the Beerline Trail effort, figuring out how best to incorporate community voice and stakeholders is complicated: funding from ArtPlace America and the Kresge Foundation helped support a robust engagement process, especially between 2014 and 2017, during which time the trail extension opened with robust pilot programming activities. More recently, the project's core organizations have focused on building a permanent design and a programmatic vision and acquiring funds to turn the short-term gains into a permanent social feature of the city's landscape. Public engagement has also continued: the Hood Design Studio, based in California, was selected to build a permanent vision for the space and led on-site community engagement activities in 2017 and early 2019. In practice, this has resulted in a three-part structure that involves varying levels of engagement depending on the need for more or less regular consultation (for more discussion, see Vásquez-Noriega 2018):

- **Core organizations** meet regularly to guide trail development and activation. They are Riverworks Development Corporation, which coordinates maintenance and programming; the GMC; MKE ↔ LAX; the city of Milwaukee; and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.
- **Advisory organizations** support the decisionmaking process. They are Bader Philanthropies, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Rail-to-Trails Conservancy, and the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation.

- The “**guiding lenses**” group is made up of local organizations, stakeholders, and people involved in youth engagement, civic art, and neighborhood safety, as well as other local groups. It is part of the advisory group and creates a direct channel to get input from community members on the Beerline Trail planning processes.

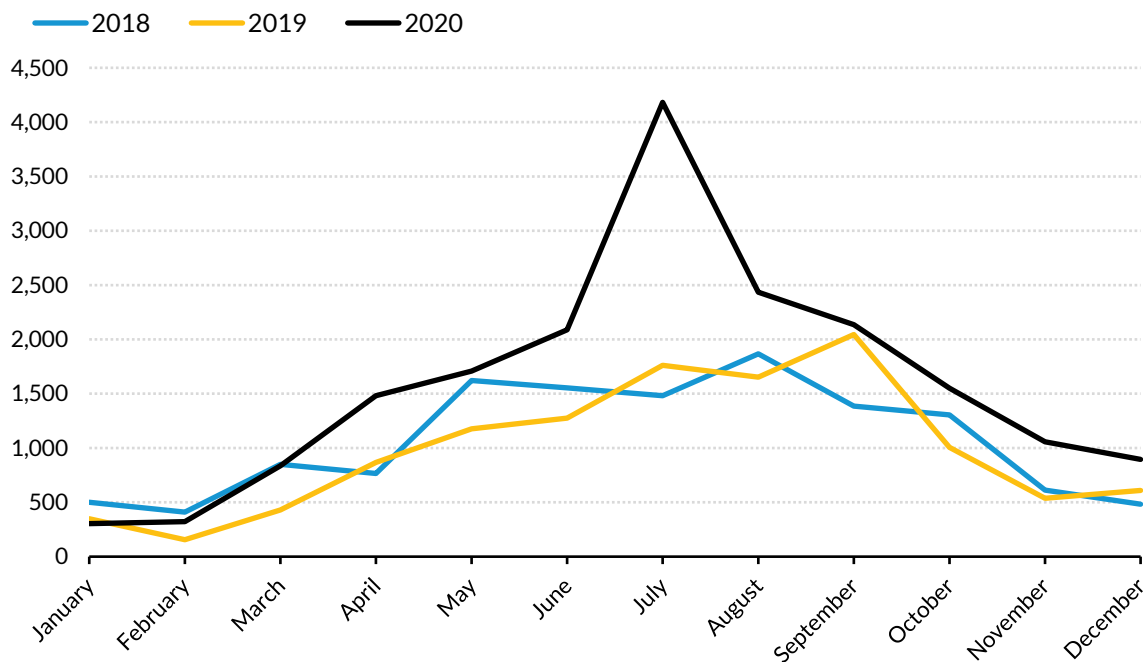
The Beerline Trail partner organizations, including the three groups just described, are working together on the Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project. It is a creative-placemaking collaboration that centers equity in the development of the Beerline Trail by engaging residents in the process and ensuring that the green space best serves the needs of the community. The 2019 Equitable Implementation Plan (GRAEF 2019) and the Lifeways Plan (Hood Design Studio 2019) provide strategic visioning, goals, and priorities for the next phases of the trail’s development. The Lifeways Plan envisions a community design process for the Beerline Trail between Capitol Drive and North Richards Street and provides recommendations for implementing community priorities for the space. The 2019 Equitable Implementation Plan is the broader plan for Beerline Trail extension and accessibility, programming and maintenance, and entrepreneurship and sustainability that aligns with the goals of the Lifeways Plan to improve the lives of residents in Riverwest and Harambee. Both plans not only identify the potential of the Beerline Trail to reduce blight and bring activity to a once-disused area but also seek opportunities to encourage cultural exchange and increased diversity among the trail’s users. The plans envision using the space to foster a sense of belonging among residents of the surrounding communities, to increase stewardship of the land, and to promote sustainability. These stakeholders have created an ongoing partnership throughout the development of these plans, the early design of the trail, and fundraising and sustainability efforts.

When the trail was first developed, the focus was on piloting programming that would appeal to community members and spotlight the organizations located along the trail and in the community. Stakeholder meetings were used to coordinate performances, murals, youth activities, and other events to increase use of the space, and those less familiar with the trail were encouraged to use it. Since then, the focus has shifted to sustaining programming and fundraising for expansions to the trail that would increase its connection to other parts of the city, as well as for operations and maintenance. This process was also disrupted by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic: formal, in-person public programming was put on hold, and the release of the Lifeways Plan was delayed. It was eventually released in January 2021. This meant that the design activities of Hood Design Studio during its visit in April 2019 were one of the last opportunities for engagement for some stakeholders and community members.

However, the pandemic has also reinforced the value of local public spaces, and despite a lack of formal programming, trail use increased substantially. The number of Beerline Trail users rose from

11,868 in 2019 to 19,000 in 2020, a 60 percent increase. For all months between April and December, the monthly 2020 count exceeded the number of users that frequented the trail in the same month in 2018 and 2019 (figure 4).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Beerline Trail Monthly User Counts**



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**Source:** Analysis based on data from Eco-Visio dashboard, accessed March 5, 2021, <https://www.eco-visio.net/v5/#dashboard-site::site=100040919>.

**Note:** Counts are from a location on the trail just south of East Albert Place.

Although trail use has increased significantly, counts of users are not sufficient to determine who the users are and where they are coming from. Going forward, the physical trail can only promote use to a certain extent. Intentional engagement, education, and encouragement will remain essential to ensuring that community members are part of the Beerline Trail development and activation process and see themselves as the primary stakeholders.

Institutionally, one challenge has been keeping the broader community involved and up-to-date on the trail's progress while the core stakeholder group focuses on needed fundraising and planning. Physically and programmatically, key challenges have been promoting access, use, and a sense of belonging for a space that is, especially in its northern sections, on the periphery of multiple neighborhoods and hidden behind warehouses. Equitably, the key question is how the space can be



used to draw together two distinct communities and as a springboard for inclusive community development.

## Findings

Over the past 10 years, significant investment has been made along the Beerline Trail. Organizations that include the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation, Bader Philanthropies, and Running Rebels have relocated their headquarters to the broader area (or immediately to the south) and have been active users and programmers of the trail. Groups such as Safe & Sound and Running Rebels have engaged artists and creators to use the space and engage the community, particularly young people. The space has hosted concerts and events that have attracted new users to the trail. One organization that works to activate the trail became involved in the creative-placemaking effort because it saw the trail as a way to catalyze equity and greening. Many stakeholders see it as important civic infrastructure.

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*We did a lot of education around the history and hope for the trail. For us, it’s a huge asset as a green space beside our building and for the young people we serve.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Although programming and community engagement have been done and resources have gone into the trail, we learned in stakeholder interviews that some residents are unaware of the trail’s existence within walking distance of their homes—in some cases, behind their backyards. Although efforts to bring attention to and activate the space accelerated after the trail opened in 2010, more work can be done to encourage use, especially by Black residents, who, according to some interviewees, are less likely than white residents to be aware of or visit the trail. As one interviewee noted, “When I think about Harambee...I don’t know if there is the awareness around the Beerline Trail...If they [people of color] don’t see themselves represented in a space, then they don’t use the space. I don’t think that means that people of color and African Americans can’t use it, [there’s] not a muscle built up around it.”

Efforts have been made since the trail’s opening to improve safety along it and to encourage residents to use the space. Before it was the Beerline Trail, the dimly lit space was the site of illegal dumping. To combat negative perceptions of the space, the city, Riverworks Development Corporation,

and other neighborhood organizations conducted safety audits; increased surveillance by installing cameras, lighting, and other safety measures; and used art to make the space vibrant and welcoming. As one stakeholder put it, “The graffiti and loneliness of the trail make people think it’s not as safe...Work to paint murals and activate the trail is to combat some of that perception.”

The Beerline Trail work has been going on for the past decade, with continued buy-in from community leaders, city agencies, funders, and the business community because it aligns with the strategic urban planning priorities of the region. We learned from many stakeholders that they moved into the surrounding community in the past five years to demonstrate an interest in and to invest in the Beerline Trail.

Several local government agencies and other stakeholders are involved in and interested in the planning of the trail, and this can lead to challenges in navigating how to invest in development and operations and maintenance. These challenges go beyond just local city government and groups: among other plans, the Beerline Trail is part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy’s Route of the Badger initiative to build a 700-mile regional trail system.<sup>9</sup> As one stakeholder put it, “Navigating the politics of different municipalities can be challenging,” citing the city of Milwaukee, the city of Glendale, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The presence of these stakeholders has increased attention to the trail and led to additional resources, but working with political interests that are not always aligned has led to frustration and approval delays that have slowed down the work. One interviewee noted that “there was a huge delay for approval to start the actual work” and said that “was frustrating for us, that the politics came in the way of programming the use and activities along the trail.”

The trail was designed to promote green space equity. Before the trail existed, only 8 percent of Milwaukee residents lived within 2 miles of a trail. After the development of the Beerline Trail and the regional system that includes other work on the Route of the Badger initiative, 66 percent of Milwaukee residents have access (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy 2017).

But equity is more than physical access. Some stakeholders we interviewed said that adding entrance points to the trail would encourage use. They want the trail to be seen as a destination as well as a throughway to other parts of the city and have noted that scheduled programming such as concerts have drawn in people who otherwise would not have visited. The creative-placemaking organizations have been working to ensure the trail is welcoming and accessible and offers programming for a diversity of people, including young people, residents of color, people with lower incomes, older adults, and other groups that might not typically use public spaces (Trust for Public Land 2020). For instance, to foster an environment with which users would identify, some programming organizations focused on

displaying graffiti as an art form, rather than treating it as a public safety concern. This drew more artists to the trail and allowed for art programming for young people to create murals along the trail.

Neighborhood empowerment and community engagement were key to the early success of the trail and will be important moving forward. The planning and initial activation phases involved concerted efforts to include residents, collaboratively work to improve the trail and the surrounding areas, and engage artists and entrepreneurs in creating the space. Stakeholders noted that engagement was central to the Beerline Trail planning process—which involved working with residents, local businesses, artpreneurs, and entrepreneurs—and had garnered “lots of interest” and “great involvement.” This collaborative approach, formalized in 2014 with the formation of the guiding lenses group, would continue as the Hood Design Studio began a collaborative community engagement process the following year.

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*We advocate for the voices of our residents to be elevated. People need to be consulted and their decisions included in the planning process.*

*—Stakeholder*

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After the Hood Design Studio–led community engagement activities in April 2019, the local core stakeholders focused on the fundraising and planning that would be necessary to make the design vision a reality. This made ongoing, broader engagement more difficult and required a different set of stakeholders, leaving out some earlier participants. In interviews, we learned that some organizations felt excluded from the decisionmaking and wanted more involvement in trail programming. Some interviewees also said collaboration had been limited at some points, with less flexibility to allow different groups to participate. One interviewee recommended “better collaboration and inclusion among the partners” and specific ways to continue building trust among young people and people of color living in the neighborhood. The trail provided an ongoing opportunity for residents to build a coalition around the neighborhood asset, and stakeholders wanted that continuity in engagement.

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*We want to have a sense of ownership for the public space and its continued use. We'd love to see the space activated more, maybe even similar to the Night Market, drawing people to the trail. [We would like to] encourage community ambassadors and engage residents to have ownership—for example, [through] trash cleanup and graffiti removal.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Interviewees noted that the Beerline Trail is more than just a physical space, that it has the potential to bring different types of people together. Some organizations have focused especially on the important role that young people can play and have used the trail to reach out to and engage youths, many of whom have never been to the trail, in building a shared community vision. This facilitates conversations around how the young people can plug in, create a safe space for themselves to share challenges they experience, and discuss how they can connect with their community through art. But building trust takes time, and these youth-focused organizations had to facilitate deliberate programming to advance civic engagement among young people. As one interviewee noted, “There’s always some hesitation because [young people] think it’s people from the outside coming to take over and leaving them out of the process. If young people are part of the process from planning, they are more interested and react positively.”

Similarly, encouraging buy-in and ownership among residents of color requires time and flexibility. The trail visioning and development process was the first time some were being asked to engage in shaping their community and determining how space would be used. Even after fostering buy-in, getting residents to participate was challenging, and more people from Riverwest than Harambee attended Beerline Trail planning meetings. Guided by the recommendations of residents and young people who live close to the trail, the creative-placemaking organizations used various events to engage community members. A key point made in the interviews was that shifting meeting locations to different access points along the trail could be more inclusive. If meeting attendance differs by location, that could help demonstrate how users were experiencing the Beerline Trail.

The COVID-19 pandemic upended several carefully designed plans, especially around community outreach, for the Beerline Trail. Community engagement has started again in 2021, and core stakeholders and project leaders will need to grapple with a planning process that, for people who have not been centrally involved, has seemed to be on pause for more than a year. However, the pandemic has also created opportunities to increase the use and perceived value of public spaces like the Beerline Trail. Even without trail programming, trail use increased in 2020. With many Milwaukee residents

facing financial hardships, the trail offered mental and physical health benefits and created a place for socially distanced social engagement.

In the years ahead, even though neighborhood shifts and developments cannot be attributed solely or directly to the trail, its impacts will ripple through the community. As its use increases, so too will its value as a civic asset. As the Milwaukee creative-placemaking organizations continue to focus on this asset, it will be important to ensure that community members, particularly young people and people of color, are at the table when decisions about development and programming are made. Finding creative ways to connect with residents and ensuring they are key beneficiaries of the Beerline Trail are crucial.

## Next Steps

The Beerline Trail's ability to drive equity and inclusion creates an important opportunity for the city, but using the trail to center the priorities of residents and drive community engagement is also a challenge. It will take ongoing effort to ensure the space is more than just a physical trail and becomes a truly inclusive and active site of engagement between diverse groups. We recommend four approaches that stakeholders can take to continue monitoring progress and examining concrete change.

First, assessments to better understand and track stakeholder engagement should happen on an ongoing basis. As we found in our interviews, some people or groups will be more or less involved at different times, but understanding the reasons that people engage (or do not engage) would help the core planning team monitor their progress in building and maintaining an inclusive process. This could involve tools to collect regular feedback from stakeholders to ensure they are informed, engaged, and empowered to reflect their priorities. For example, a short survey could be administered to determine stakeholders' participation status and level of interest (with questions such as, "are you involved in planning meetings?" and "do you have recommendations for improvement?"). Another option would be to conduct a more detailed annual "stakeholder visioning survey" that assesses people's involvement with the project and their knowledge of its status and next steps and asks respondents what trail programming and features they would like to see.

Second, data on trail use and neighborhood change can help frame the implementation of the effort and its potential effects on nearby communities. For the trail itself, the usage counter (a machine that counts visitors at one point on the trail and was the source for the counts in figure 4) could be supplemented with counters at other access points, to improve our understanding of how the entire trail is being used. Meanwhile, qualitative data, collected through interviews or minisurveys distributed at events, could deepen our understanding of the trail's base of users and their patterns. More broadly, tracking community change could involve monitoring community development trends by reviewing

property sales and permits or media coverage and social media posts related to the Beerline Trail, as well as Harambee and Riverwest more generally.

Third, understanding community buy-in will require a sense of how the trail is perceived and used, and helping the community feel ownership of the space may involve shifting cultures around belonging and identity in the built environment. For instance, communities of color are less likely to use park space even if they live nearby. If the Beerline Trail is envisioned as a catalyst of equity, all residents, especially residents of color, will need to feel ownership over the space and programming decisions. Data collection could involve assessing engagement with or use of the Beerline Trail and knowledge of its role in the community. This could involve mental and asset mapping exercises to understand how residents perceive the Beerline Trail, events in which residents review and comment on ongoing assessments and data collected on the Beerline Trail, or surveys targeted to either trail users or community members more broadly. Including more community members, in particular those with broad and diverse sets of community ties, in the core stakeholder group might also increase collective efficacy around the use and programming of the space and ensure that it reflects residents' priorities.

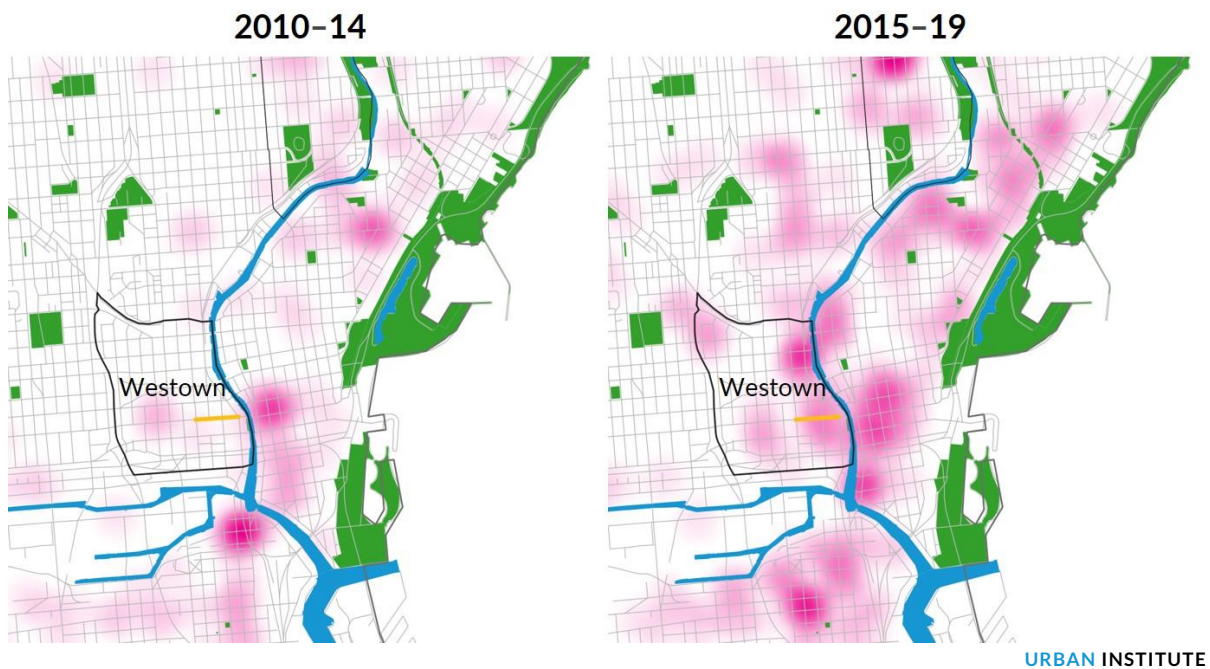
Fourth, without resources for ongoing outreach, staffing, and capacity building, stakeholders and community members may not feel included in the trail's development. Earlier, when the project had resources for pilot programming and trail design, people felt empowered to participate. As funding dwindles, however, finding a balance between paying for physical aspects of the trail (e.g., access point creation, trail extensions, and operations and maintenance) and paying for programming and engagement is a challenge. The latter is harder to evaluate and often lacks tangible results, but it is equally important for creative placemaking that drives equity.

## Night Market

Like downtowns in many other US cities, Milwaukee's downtown has undergone significant change in recent years after chasing previous redevelopment trends, from conventions centers to malls (box 2), in an attempt to compete with increasingly suburban consumption patterns. Although the part of downtown east of the Milwaukee River has long seen regular commercial sales and redevelopment, substantial activity west of the river is relatively new and is part of a recent downtown-wide increase in commercial sales (figure 5). The residential population of downtown has also grown into districts that were previously only commercial—Westtown, for example, had seven residential sales in four buildings between 2002 and 2009, 58 residential sales in five buildings between 2010 and 2014, and 128 sales in 11 buildings between 2015 and 2019.<sup>10</sup>

FIGURE 5

Commercial Sales in Downtown Milwaukee and Surrounding Neighborhoods



Source: Authors' analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee's open data portal.

Notes: The Night Market's location is highlighted in yellow. The darker the magenta, the higher the density of commercial sales.

The NEWaukee Night Market is a free outdoor event that is held at night several times a year and showcases local vendors, performers, and artists. It first took place in 2014 along a stretch of West Wisconsin Avenue that faces what had been the Shops of Grand Avenue (originally named the Grand Avenue Mall). The neighborhood was on the cusp of change but was saddled with negative perceptions about its vitality and safety. The goals of the Night Market were not just to bring people downtown and activate a previously moribund space, but also to bring together a mix of people from across the city and region and create a diverse and welcoming space for activity and engagement. As Angela Damiani, NEWaukee's CEO, put it, the goal was "to create a totally unique experience downtown that's safe and attractive for families to come and experience a part of downtown that, perhaps, they haven't experienced at night."<sup>11</sup>

NEWaukee and other organizations rooted in enhancing spaces for residents to thrive have been crucial to establishing the Night Market as a placemaking effort in Milwaukee. During the Night Market's development and activation, these founding organizations considered who would use the space and how they might want to use it to determine the market's activities and features. When the organizers conceived of the Night Market, they decided its success would not be measured by attendance figures alone, but also by its role in changing perceptions of the neighborhood and the area's trajectory. Between



increased interest from commercial property developers and a burgeoning residential community, this stretch of West Wisconsin had the chance to reemerge as a vital corridor, but questions of how, to what end, and for whom would guide the efforts of those behind the development and implementation of the Night Market. A lengthy process was undertaken to combat perceived public safety concerns, to attract diverse groups, and to program inclusively. The Night Market has continued to play an essential role in activating the once-empty blocks of downtown Milwaukee.

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## BOX 2

### Revitalizing Downtown Milwaukee: The Struggle to Rethink Space

Milwaukee's downtown core had always competed with neighborhood-oriented commercial areas and retail corridors throughout the city. After World War II, as suburbanization took off and many wealthier and mostly white families left the city, the downtown core increasingly struggled to compete with suburban office opportunities and the rise of the automobile-focused suburban shopping malls.

To compete, in 1982, the Shops of Grand Avenue were built along three city blocks in downtown Milwaukee. The mall featured more than 80 stores and the largest food court in Wisconsin. The stores were positioned to attract people to the downtown area and to spur growth in businesses and retail. After about a decade, the mall lost its anchor tenants, and the number of visitors and spending went down. Some stores, like the T.J. Maxx, had access points outside the mall, reducing the need for shoppers to go inside. These design elements created "dead storefronts" in the mall's interior that further dissuaded visitors from entering.

To revitalize downtown, the city has promoted efforts such as the Night Market, the daytime farmers' market, and the River Rhythms concert series. This signaled an evolution of commercial space, which also reimagined how the city could attract economic activity to an abandoned area. In alignment with this transformation, the mall was sold and is being rebranded as "The Avenue," with office space, housing, and a new food hall. The 3rd Street Market Hall is being designed with an open concept, mirroring that of the Night Market and other outdoor activities. It draws from lessons learned about downtown's evolution during urban renewal and aims to foster a dynamic environment that will be activated to draw people.

**Sources:** Alexis Stephens, "Goodbye, Urban Indoor Mall. Hello, Downtown Outlet Center!" *Next City*, June 10, 2015, <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/city-indoor-malls-new-downtown-outlet-centers>; Bobby Tanzilo, "8 images of Downtown's Old Grand Avenue Mall," *OnMilwaukee*, May 18, 2020, <https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/grand-avenue-mall-vintage-photos>; Paul Gores and Guy Boulton, "Shops of Grand Avenue Sold to Milwaukee Investors for \$24.6 million," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 18, 2015, <https://archive.jsonline.com/business/shops-of-grand-avenue-sold-to-milwaukee-investors-for-246-million-b99637069z1-362998851.html/>; Sean Ryan, "Grand Avenue Owners Buying Nearby Properties, Attracting More Office Tenants," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/2019/11/11/grand-avenue-owners-buying-nearby-properties.html>; Jeffrey Zimmerman, "Downtown," *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/downtown/>.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, NEWaukee canceled Night Market activities in 2020, and planning for 2021 is taking place amid uncertainty. Going forward, the Night Market has the opportunity to bring people together downtown in a shared, diverse, social space.

## Findings

We collected our data both before and during the pandemic. The resulting insights, based on our interviews with stakeholders and our review of media content and social media posts, reflect the Night Market's role in downtown development and highlight the key themes for sustaining equity when the Night Market can reopen.

The Night Market, while not the only event that catalyzed the area's development, has contributed to bringing people from outside downtown into a neighborhood they typically might not have frequented after work hours. The market increased activity and foot traffic in the downtown area and was aligned with the economic development happening with the River Rhythms concert series, the Shops of Grand Avenue, and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Advertising drew people into the neighborhood at times when the area typically did not have many visitors, and this, along with the other activities, encouraged people to stay.<sup>12</sup> Together, the Night Market and River Rhythms have drawn people to downtown Milwaukee on Wednesdays. The Night Market, in particular, maintained attention and energy each year it was held. The Night Market demonstrates how blocks can be transformed and bring together diverse groups with a range of activities.

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*The way in which the Night Market uses the public space and the street is special and may not have been as well-used many years ago, but now it makes people use a space they don't often spend time in.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Although the Night Market's structure is largely similar to that of other urban festival events and fairs, it introduced a new way to be active in Milwaukee's downtown by giving access to people who might not have seen themselves there before. Although visitor surveys were not extensively collected, the responses indicated that people traveled from all over the city and even other states. For example, young adults visited downtown for a pop-up of the Milwaukee Public Library at the Night Market, and simultaneously, River Rhythms, held a few blocks away, often attracted a crowd of adults 40 or older.

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*The Night Market was one of the most diverse experiences in the city. It may not be a catalyst for investment on West Wisconsin, but they get credit for spurring diversity.*

*—Stakeholder*

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Evidence from our interviews, our media analysis, and the visitor survey<sup>13</sup> suggests that the Night Market has helped improve negative perceptions of neighborhood safety that were largely related to the physical length of the blocks and the lack of retail—both of which made the area uninviting. The Night Market’s activities helped reimagine a space once considered unappealing, unsafe, and inactive and empowered people to think differently about visiting downtown at night. Multiple stakeholders noted that the Night Market had prompted people to reassess their views of the neighborhood. Media stories that mentioned West Wisconsin or Westtown went from focusing on vacancies, especially in the case of the Shops of Grand Avenue, in the early 2010s to highlighting the area’s activities and portraying the neighborhood as an increasingly vibrant destination in the latter part of the decade. The limited data from visitor surveys show this potential—they indicate an increase, albeit small, in the “perception of safety” in the neighborhood. People’s attitudes about downtown began to change, and they attributed this to the activation by placemaking efforts.

The planning for the Night Market was inclusive and engaging, including multiple sessions that involved a diverse set of stakeholders. As a part of this process, the Night Market planning team consulted local businesses, community leaders, and developers in the area to ensure this development would be inclusive. These equitable planning processes must continue to iterate throughout the market’s development, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the value of public space is heightened. New needs and priorities may emerge, and the market’s success has positioned it to continue being a catalyst for diverse interactions.

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*In summary, you have to try a lot of things and see what works. The Night Market has proven what could work. We tried to do some placemaking on the empty block; it fizzled out.*

*Probably didn’t work because there was not enough of a concentrated effort, but it didn’t work and we need to keep trying.*

*—Stakeholder*

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The Night Market helped shape the trajectory of investment downtown and has a lot of potential to encourage equity-driven placemaking. It has also influenced perceptions of the neighborhood. In addition, the Night Market's organizers have a good relationship with neighborhood developers. However, to ensure that the downtown area does not become inaccessible either because of cost or feel, the Night Market must continue to find ways to connect with the community's core priorities. As new development occurs along West Wisconsin Avenue, the market can center itself as a prime attraction that brings diversity downtown and reinforce that the area is welcoming.

## Next Steps

The work of NEWaukee and collaborators to envision and develop the Night Market concept has clearly followed the precepts of the Milwaukee Method of creative placemaking: it has linked arts and cultural programming with local development and has supported artists and cultural workers, it has built a civic gathering place (even if an occasional one), it has linked public and private interests, and it has been designed to increase perceptions of safety and economic vitality in the area.

Our suggestions for future work, then, focus on how the Night Market can continue building an inclusive community in the context of a rapidly developing neighborhood and can more fully understand its effects on those changes.

As noted above, NEWaukee has designed a visitor survey that contains questions about respondents' reasons for attending the Night Market, their neighborhood or city of residence,<sup>14</sup> their perceptions of the neighborhood's safety, and the likelihood they will return to the market. This is a useful and succinct template for future survey collection. To increase its usefulness, the survey needs to be distributed more systematically during the Night Markets. It could also be shared via online distribution channels: engagement through Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram could be used to monitor perceptions, seek feedback, and build trust. This would help establish a broader baseline for understanding perceptions of the event and the neighborhood and linking them to visitor trends.

More broadly, because a goal of the Night Market is to affect how the neighborhood is perceived, used, and developed even when the Night Market is not taking place, we recommend additional data collection focused on residents, visitors, and other stakeholders (such as property owners). This could include minisurveys of residents of newer buildings, people who work in the neighborhood, or business owners to find out what they think of the neighborhood, what drew them to the area, and what effects they think cultural programming like the Night Market has had. For example, residents might see the Night Market as the impetus for their considering the neighborhood as a place to live, while business

owners might see it as a source of customers. Interviews or ongoing assessments with key public and private organizational stakeholders, like those conducted for this study, will be useful for understanding how they perceive the Night Market's role in the neighborhood.

Finally, continuing to monitor neighborhood development and change will be crucial, both to identify new groups of potential users and stakeholders and to understand how the Night Market can continue playing a role in shaping the neighborhood. As with our recommendations for the Beerline Trail, this may involve ongoing analysis of property records to monitor developments and, on the ground level, collection of data on usage (e.g., how many people are in a given space and when, how people enter or leave the neighborhood, and how public spaces are used when programming is not active).

More broadly, we expect the neighborhood to experience an increase in development in the years ahead, so the Night Market may need to shift from building interest and positive perceptions to maintaining a sense of inclusivity, equity, and belonging. This would require a lot of effort, including ongoing assessments, but it is the best way to ensure that the Night Market can build on its successes.

## Key Takeaways

The Beerline Trail and Night Market are different projects, but both are informed by a desire to build inclusive processes and equitable spaces. Based on our examination of these efforts, we present some key takeaways that stakeholders, both those in Milwaukee and those undertaking creative-placemaking efforts elsewhere, should think about in pursuing their work.

- 1. Funding ongoing collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is key to gaining a comprehensive understanding of how people experience placemaking projects.**

Demonstrating the quantitative impact of placemaking efforts can be challenging and overlook key insights into how people experience a space. The organizations planning and implementing efforts such as the Beerline Trail and the Night Market can benefit tremendously from qualitative feedback on the degree to which residents and visitors feel engaged, consulted, or empowered. These findings can help determine buy-in, equity, and, most importantly, sustainability. However, data that can help determine who is materially benefiting from these efforts is hard to come by. In Milwaukee, the city and local stakeholders are thoughtfully activating spaces using principles of equitable placemaking, but fully tracking outcomes and understanding effects will require a deeper dive into quantitative and qualitative data

measuring attendance, use, and outcomes disaggregated by age, race, and income. Foundations and philanthropists interested in funding the development and continuation of placemaking activities and projects should commission the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to understand how many people are visiting a place and how they feel when they are there. Now that the Beerline Trail and the Night Market have been operational for some time, the coupling of these data can illustrate use, access, social cohesion, and belonging to determine whether the placemaking efforts help produce equitable outcomes.

2. **Neighborhoods at an inflection point of change and opportunity, like the ones we studied in Milwaukee, can allow their economic success to undermine or drive out people of color if equity is not an intentional part of the design and implementation of efforts.** The spaces around the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods and West Wisconsin Avenue downtown were activated for the diverse group of people who live, work, and frequent the areas. The Beerline Trail and the Night Market were planned to explicitly undo the historical physical boundaries that may have barred people of color, Indigenous people, and people with low incomes from accessing some neighborhood amenities. These projects were designed to center equity through community engagement strategies that brought residents to the table to offer input, to collaborate on the development, and to be empowered in decisionmaking. Continuing to incorporate these voices, which are often unheard, will be crucial to who has access and who feels like they belong. This might require regular engagements to understand the quality of people's experiences and how they may differ based on race and economic opportunity. Placemaking organizations should be charged to build this into their implementation plans as they roll out activities.
3. **The physical environment can create barriers that affect how people interact in a space, so incorporating design elements with an equity focus can increase access.** In Milwaukee, streets have historically been used as a racial divider, cutting off services from the predominately Black and lower-income north and west sides. There has been a historical lack of investment in these spaces, and placemaking projects that use the built environment are important because they give back the right of way in a space that may have once been inaccessible. The goal of the Beerline Trail was to increase connectivity among economically and racially diverse communities and offer a sense of safety. The trail offers some of this; however, the two segments of the Beerline Trail are disconnected, and because avenues cut across the trail, people may not realize that the segments are all one trail network. The northern trail is more fully enclosed within an industrial district that has historically been perceived as desolate. The southern half goes on and off streets, and users are unaware that it is continuous. Large streets

are difficult to cross and create physical barriers to using the trail. Efforts have already been made to improve these connections: the city repurposed a rail bridge to extend the trail across Capitol Drive, allowing people on the trail to avoid crossing a large arterial road. Additionally, a new entrance at Vienna Avenue expands access along the trail's northern stretch. Here, new murals (developed in collaboration between the Beerline stakeholders, Hood Design Studio, and local artists) are being painted to welcome community members. Connecting communities helps people better navigate the city, and placemaking partners will need to continue improving access points and visibility so more people will use the trail. Similarly, in the downtown area, the blocks are long, but the Night Market creates a sense of cohesiveness that draws people and connects them with other activities such as River Rhythms and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. To improve its engagement with people of diverse ages and races, the symphony is moving from its older, Brutalism-influenced building to a more classically designed building and adding a glass pavilion that is more open to the street and more welcoming to the community.

4. **The COVID-19 pandemic offers the opportunity to reinforce the value of placemaking activities to create spaces for community while people are distancing.** The city of Milwaukee will need to be nimble and flexible in fostering a sense of community while people are physically distancing. Since the pandemic began, restaurants, stores, businesses, and many other commercial activities, including the Night Market, have been discontinued. The Beerline Trail remains open as a public space that the community can enjoy. This demonstrates the value of trails, green spaces, parks, and other placemaking activations—passive and active—and should further reinforce that these are crucial civic assets. Although the Beerline Trail and the Night Market benefited from intentional activation in the past, even without the mural painting, pop-ups, library giveaways, or outdoor concerts, these spaces are treasured by the community. Funders should recognize the importance of placemaking in this moment of outdoor appreciation and ensure that placemaking is incorporated into efforts to reimagine space.
5. **Continuous stewardship by placemaking organizations and community members, particularly people of color, is needed to ensure that residents are not priced out or displaced as a neighborhood begins to change.** Efforts to coordinate and maintain trust in placemaking can be challenging, but when community members are engaged early and consistently, they become stewards of the projects. The Beerline Trail benefited from the relocation of organizations like Running Rebels, Bader Philanthropies, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, which increased attention and investment in the surrounding neighborhoods. When those resources are aligned with residents' priorities, the trail is more likely to be valued, used, and sustained. The Night Market, meanwhile, has brought attention to the downtown



area as a destination for families seeking entertainment in a space that did not exist years ago. To ensure that the market continues to serve the demand without changing the neighborhood in ways that displace people, the placemaking organizations will need to create routine temperature checks with users and visitors, with intentional representativeness. These placemaking projects have the challenging and ambitious goals of improving equity and closing historical racial and economic gaps. To do this effectively, everyone, especially people of color and residents with low incomes who are often left out of decisionmaking, must feel empowered and participate.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “What Is Placemaking?” Project for Public Spaces, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>.
- <sup>2</sup> See “About ArtPlace,” ArtPlace America, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction>.
- <sup>3</sup> This attendance figure is for 2014 through 2019. When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the US in early 2020, the Night Market was canceled.
- <sup>4</sup> The city’s data portal is available at <https://data.milwaukee.gov/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Christina Stacy, Brady Meixell, Ananya Hariharan, Erika Poethig, and Solomon Greene, “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” Urban Institute, last updated September 15, 2020, <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion/?topic=map>.
- <sup>6</sup> George Anders, “So Long Big City! Handling a Pandemic Often Means Calling the Movers,” LinkedIn, September 23, 2020, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/so-long-big-city-handling-pandemic-often-means-calling-george-anders/>.
- <sup>7</sup> The committee is chaired by Angela Damiani, the CEO of NEWaukee; Brad Pruitt, a filmmaker with Inspired Media; and Elizabeth Brenner, retired president/publisher of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.
- <sup>8</sup> Jeramey Jannene, “Campaign Underway to Improve, Extend Beerline Trail,” Urban Milwaukee, January 22, 2021, <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2021/01/22/eyes-on-milwaukee-campaign-underway-to-improve-extend-beerline-trail/>.
- <sup>9</sup> See “Creating Healthier Communities in Wisconsin: Route of the Badger,” Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/trailnation/route-of-the-badger/>.
- <sup>10</sup> Count based on authors’ analysis of property sales data from the city of Milwaukee’s open data portal.
- <sup>11</sup> Scott Wise, “Night Market Opens Wednesday in Downtown Milwaukee,” WUWM, July 16, 2014, <https://www.wuwm.com/post/night-market-opens-wednesday-downtown-milwaukee#stream/0>.
- <sup>12</sup> For example, in a 2016 news release, NEWaukee advertised the downtown programming as Westown Wednesdays, including the farmers’ market from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., River Rhythms from 6:30 to 9 p.m., and the Night Market from 9 to 10 p.m.
- <sup>13</sup> The visitor survey asked six questions: Where do you currently live? Why did you come to the Night Market? What was your perception of safety on West Wisconsin prior to event? How has the market changed your perception of safety on the Avenue? How likely are you to come back to the Avenue after the market? If you could create anything on the lot, what would you want to see?
- <sup>14</sup> We recommend that future NEWaukee surveys capture information on attendees’ zip codes, to keep the data straightforward and easy to compile.

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