



The Innovations and Wellness Commons: A Case Study in Transformative Commercial & Community Investment

1609-1617 W. North Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53205 | **DECEMBER 2015**





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Timeline

1902	1902:	Public natatorium and library were constructed at 1609 W. North Ave.
1906	1906:	Tavern and bowling alley with second-floor residential space was constructed at 1615-1617 W. North Ave.
2000	2000:	Walnut Way Conservation Corp. incorporated as a community development corporation.
2008	2008:	Zilber Family Foundation funded the planning and development of the Lindsay Heights Quality of Life Plan, a collaborative and inclusive community planning process to identify and produce ways to improve social, economic, and physical conditions of the Lindsay Heights neighborhood.
2011	2011	Vacant lot at 1609 W. North Ave. was acquired.
2012	2012	Environmental Phase I and II assessment of vacant lot completed.
2013	2013	Social hall at 1615-1617 W. North Ave. was acquired.
	2013	Community planning and tenant recruitment for The Innovations and Wellness Commons (The Commons) begins.
	2013	Development team assembled.
2014	2014	Capital campaign launched.
	2014 January	Initial building design and cost estimating begins
	2014 September	\$650,000 CED HFFI grant awarded for Phase I.
	2014 September	\$500,000 Zilber Family Foundation grant awarded for Phase I.
	2014 October	Construction begins.
2015	2015 January	\$413,750 WEDC grant awarded for Phase I.
	2015 July	The Milwaukee Center for Independence begins operating their commercial kitchen.
	2015 October	Outpost Natural Foods, The Juice Kitchen and Fondy Food Center move in.
	2015 November	Investment and Planning for Phase II Begins, with Construction TBD

Introduction

In 2000, a subtle but powerful shift took place in Milwaukee's Lindsay Heights neighborhood...away from disinvestment, disconnection, and discouragement to investment, empowerment, and hope. The source for this joyful disruption were the neighbors themselves who, under the leadership of residents Sharon and Larry Adams, formed the nonprofit Walnut Way Conservation Corp. (Walnut Way) to reclaim and redevelop the economic health and vitality of their community – Lindsay Heights.

Since then, Walnut Way and its community partners have rolled out a series of successful and innovative programs and initiatives addressing the neighborhood's most pressing economic, housing, environmental, and health issues. Yet for all of the progress that has been made in Lindsay Heights, one critical issue remained: what to do about the languishing commercial corridor that stretches along W. North Avenue between I-43 and N. 20th St. and serves as the commercial backbone and public "face" of Lindsay Heights?

Recognizing that a robust commercial corridor is the backbone of a healthy urban neighborhood – creating jobs, spurring investment, and raising the quality of life for residents¹ – Walnut Way decided it could no longer wait for "someone else" to make a commercial investment on W. North Ave. That "someone else" must be the Lindsay Heights community itself.

And hence was born The Innovations and Wellness Commons (The Commons), a community-driven, cooperatively funded multi-use commercial development project on the corner of N. 16th St. and W. North Ave. The Commons will revitalize the commercial corridor of W. North Avenue, create sustainable jobs, and place access to health and wellness services, particularly healthy food, within walking distance of Lindsay Heights residents.

The Commons is a two-phased development. Phase I focuses on creating a healthy food oasis for the community. A vacant building at 1615-1617 W. North Avenue was renovated to include a pop-up Outpost Natural Foods Co-op, The Juice Kitchen (a juice bar), and the administrative offices for Fondy Food Center. A new 4,500 square foot addition was also built to house a commercial kitchen operated by the Milwaukee Center for Independence. Phase II at 1609 W. North Avenue is currently in its development stage and will focus on health and wellness services.



This case study highlights the successful launch of Phase I of the Commons and how a disinvested community drew upon the inherent resilience, talent, and passion of its residents and partners to reclaim its economic power and transform itself into a joyful, abundant place to live, work, and play.

¹ <http://www.instituteccd.org/news/3802> LISC Institute for Comprehensive Community Development "Five steps to revitalization" by Elizabeth Duffrin April 23, 2012

Lindsay Heights



Neighborhood and Site History

Lindsay Heights is a 110-block neighborhood located just north of Milwaukee's downtown. It is bounded by Locust Street (north), Walnut Street (south), I-43 (east) and N. 20th Street (west). Two main thoroughfares run through Lindsay Heights: W. Fond du Lac Avenue, which connects directly with downtown Milwaukee, and W. North Avenue, which connects to Milwaukee's east and west sides.

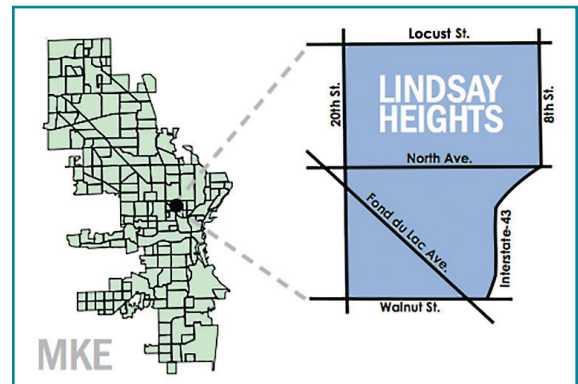
NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Lindsay Heights was originally settled by German immigrants in the late 1800s, eventually welcoming Russian and Polish Jews and African-Americans.² The neighborhood is also notable for being one of the stopping points used by the Underground Railroad to transport former slaves from southern states to Canada.

In its heyday, the Lindsay Heights section of W. North Avenue was a thriving commercial district with restaurants, bowling alleys and taverns, theaters, grocery and hardware stores, churches, and small businesses and professional services. Local businesses and manufacturers – both large and small – provided stable jobs to local residents that enabled them to support families, own homes, support local



Looking North from Fond du Lac Avenue.



shops and businesses, and enjoy a wide variety of entertainment options. By the 1920s, Lindsay Heights and the adjacent Bronzeville neighborhood had become the economic and social hub of Milwaukee's African-American community. The neighborhood was renamed Lindsay Heights in 1997 after community activist Bernice Lindsay, who was sometimes called the "mother of the black community."

² Lindsay Heights Quality of Life, Zilber Family Foundation

Lindsay Heights

In the 1950s and 1960s, a long period of disinvestment began in Lindsay Heights and surrounding North Side neighborhoods. A combination of racial redlining, the destruction of thousands of homes and businesses for the expansion of the I-43 freeway and the proposed but eventually abandoned Park West Freeway, and the disappearance of family-supporting jobs from long-time Milwaukee manufacturers such as Allis-Chalmers and A.O. Smith ripped apart the social, economic, and residential fabric of the community.

The once thriving commercial corridors and surrounding neighborhoods slowly deteriorated. Property values plummeted and buildings fell into disrepair. Businesses moved out, unemployment rose, vital retail services disappeared, and schools suffered. Gangs, drugs, and prostitution moved in.

SITE HISTORY

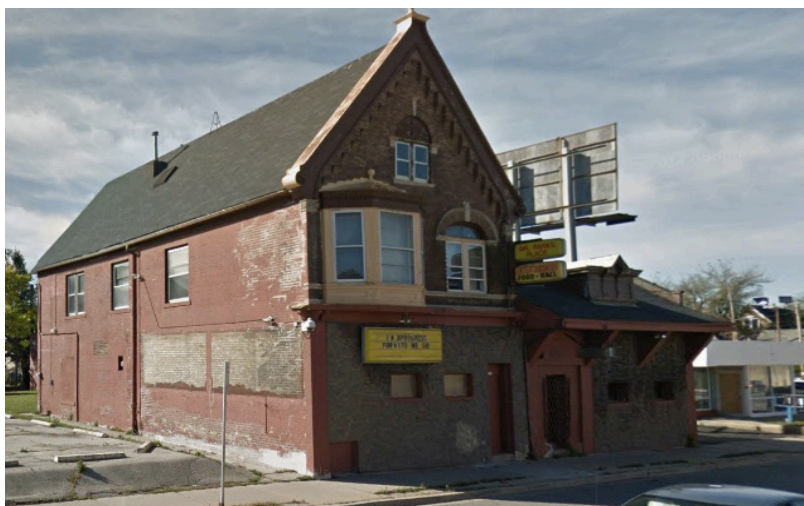
The history of the corner of N. 16th St. and W. North Ave. is long and varied. In 1902, the City of Milwaukee built the West North Avenue public natatorium and library. The building immediately to the west of the natatorium (1615 W. North Ave.) was built in 1906 and housed a variety of businesses, including a tavern and bowling alley owned by Louis Jenz.³ An addition was later added (1617 W. North Ave.). The building served as a community gathering space, regularly hosting meetings of the Knights of Columbus and other social groups.

By the time Walnut Way's Sharon Adams returned to her childhood home in Lindsay Heights in the late 1990s, the West North Avenue natatorium and library had long been demolished, leaving behind a vacant lot. The bowling alley and tavern at 1615-17 W. North Ave. was replaced by a social club called Park's Place. In the intervening years, the building's brick exterior and original windows were covered with a façade. In 2010, Park's Place closed and the building was left vacant, becoming yet another symbol of the largely abandoned and declining North Ave. commercial corridor.



West North Avenue Public Natatorium⁴

Challenges and Opportunities



Park's Place, 1615-17 W. North Ave.

Decades of economic disinvestment have left their mark on Lindsay Heights: high unemployment, low rates of high school graduation, declining rates of home ownership and deteriorating housing stock, and a decaying commercial strip – both structurally and business-wise.

³Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, Sept. 27, 1935

⁴Wisconsin Historical Society

Lindsay Heights

CHALLENGES: HEALTH AND ECONOMICS

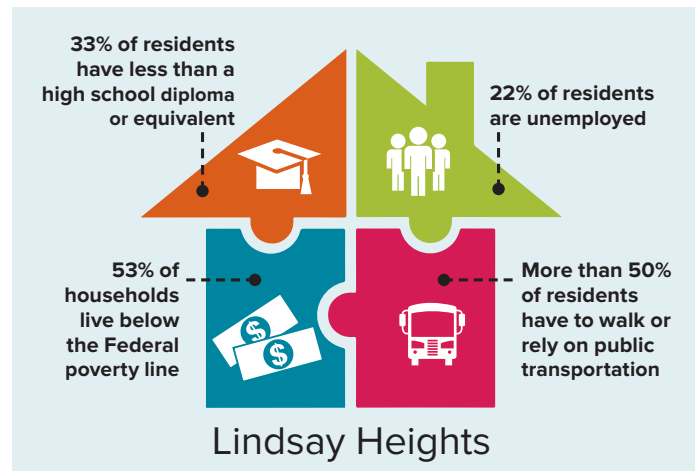
The two zip codes of 53205 and 53206 comprise Lindsay Heights and rank the lowest of all of the City of Milwaukee's 29 zip codes in socioeconomic (SES) indicators. There are a combined 38,909 individuals living within Lindsay Heights, with 53206 having the greatest number of residents (29,334 vs. 9,575 in 53205).

SES Indicators Amongst Lowest Ranked Zip Codes In Milwaukee^{5,6}

- **27.6%** are uninsured
- **27.6%** are in poor or fair health
- **74.3 life expectancy**
(vs. 80.1 in the highest SES zip codes)
- **43.5% obesity rates**
- **67.3% teen birth rate**
- **45.4% of housing** built before 1940

Access to Food⁷

- **69.7% inadequate** fruit and vegetable consumption
- **64.1% lack access** to healthy food
(vs. 6.9% of residents in the highest SES zip codes)



CHALLENGES: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Along the two commercial corridors within Lindsay Heights – N. Fond du Lac Ave. and W. North Ave. – nearly 33% of all buildings are vacant at street level and approximately 55% of commercial properties appear blighted and in disrepair⁸. Land and building values are also depressed, with considerable vacant office and industrial space available:

- Assessed land values: \$9-15/square foot (SF)
- Assessed building values: \$14/SF (industrial; \$21-27/SF (commercial)
- Asking price for-sale buildings: \$11-20/SF (around 10-30% below assessed value)
- 140,000 SF of vacant office space (49% of all office space in area)
- 120,000 SF of vacant industrial space (35% of all industrial space)

Despite ample availability of commercial space, very few of it is good quality, leaving businesses and organizations forced to choose between leasing office and retail space in aging, poorly maintained buildings or relocating to a different area of the city with more attractive properties. This has a profound impact on



North Ave. looking west from 16th St.



the economic health and vitality of the commercial corridor, spurring a continued exodus of retail businesses and professional services out of the community, taking jobs and local dollars with them as well as further depressing retail sales and development interest.

⁵ Milwaukee Health Report 2013: Health Disparities in Milwaukee by Socioeconomic Status, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Urban Population Health

⁶ 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

⁷ Milwaukee Health Report 2013: Health Disparities in Milwaukee by Socioeconomic Status, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Urban Population Health University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Urban Population Health

⁸ No Vacancy in Spirit: Addressing Residential Lots, Commercial Corridors, and Neighborhood Identity in the Lindsay Heights Area of Milwaukee, WI, Applied Planning Workshop, Spring 2013, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Urban Planning and Architecture.

Lindsay Heights

TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Most traditional real estate development occurs in areas with few barriers in place. The challenges noted above make Lindsay Heights a less attractive development prospect. There are additional, equally significant issues that impede development. These include the extensive (and expensive) renovation required of many of the vacant commercial properties, low assessed values and anticipated leasing rates, making commercial development financially unattractive to traditional developers. Milwaukee's long history of racial segregation, which is ranked highest in the nation⁹, is still very real and continues to hamper economic investment in Lindsay Heights despite the area's potential and geographic advantages. Finally, the real and perceived low socioeconomic characteristics and need for more services, such as educational support and job-readiness training, make development less appealing than in areas with higher socioeconomic indicators.

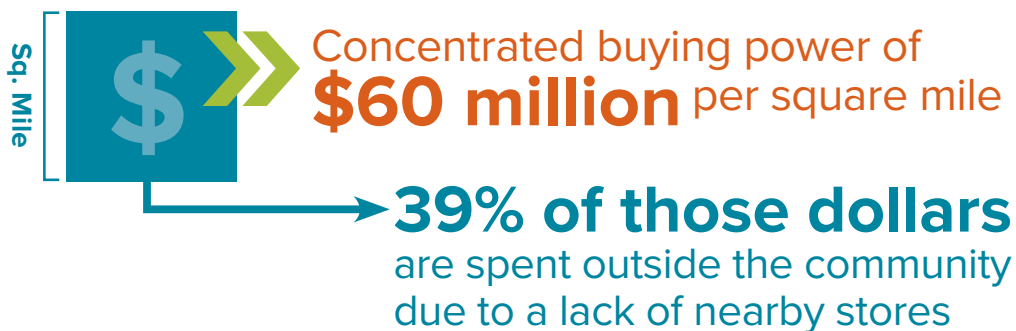
Opportunities

Despite these challenges – both real and perceived – there are many positive factors pointing to the desirability of investing and developing in Lindsay Heights.

A 2010 study by Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) MetroEdge (LME), a national commercial corridor program, was commissioned to develop a revitalization strategy for commercial corridors in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood. Their work consisted of a market analysis, property inventory, and development of a revitalization strategy¹⁰. Among their key findings were that residents have a visible sense of community interest and commitment and households earning \$50,000 or more per year have increased 38% over ten years (key indicator of progress – economic diversity). While LME acknowledged the negative impact of blight and vacancies along the commercial corridor, they also identified many sites in which visible progress could be created over the short and medium term and upon which new or existing businesses and services could provide some of the goods that currently aren't being offered in the neighborhood.



Looking west on W. North Ave.



⁹ Most Segregated Cities in America by Harrison Jacobs, Andy Kiersz, and Gus Lubin, November 22, 2013, businessinsider.com

¹⁰ LISC MetroEdge (LME), 2010.

Lindsay Heights



WALNUT WAY CONSERVATION CORP.

In 2000, Lindsay Heights residents Sharon Adams, her husband Larry, and several neighbors founded the nonprofit Walnut Way Conservation Corp. (Walnut

Way) to revitalize the health and vitality of their neighborhood. They began with the drug house across the street from their home on N. 17th St., turning it into a vibrant community center and Walnut Way's headquarters. From there, Walnut Way began an intentional approach of focusing on one house, one vacant lot, and one block at a time.

Today, Walnut Way has evolved into one of Milwaukee's most successful community-led nonprofits with a strong record of innovative programs and partnerships to improve the neighborhood's economic, housing, environmental, and health issues. Their success and creativity in tackling these issues is widely respected throughout Milwaukee: Formerly vacant lots have been transformed into beautiful urban gardens, fruit orchards, and aviaries. Neighborhood teens and young adults have trained in and become experts in urban agriculture, honey production, and marketing and sales. Residents have taken advantage of a wide range of home buying and improvement resources, resulting in an increase in home ownership. Men, women, children, elders, and families actively participate in a variety of activities, covering numerous topics – healing circles, cooking clubs, fitness classes, wellness groups, and leadership training workshops. And Walnut Way has developed long-term research and funding partnerships with local medical systems, universities, foundations, and other nonprofits to continue researching and advocating for sustainable, permanent solutions to the neighborhood's most pressing issues.



WALNUT WAY MISSION

Walnut Way's mission is to sustain economically diverse and abundant communities through civic engagement, environmental stewardship, and creating venues for prosperity.

WALNUT WAY'S VISION

In the Greater Walnut Way community, rebirth will be evidence by successful businesses run by residents, parks filled with neighbors, bountiful gardens, festivals and art at a neighborhood scale. Residents will have access to quality education, health care, technical support, and investment. Elders will be remembered and consulted. Children will be cherished and guided. Innovations to support our earth will be expected. **People will live and serve abundantly.**



Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

Phase I and Phase II



In 2008, the Zilber Family Foundation funded a diverse and inclusive community planning process in which Lindsay Heights residents and community partners were invited to identify and develop strategies to improve the neighborhood's social, economic, and physical condition. The resulting *Lindsay Heights Quality of Life Plan* focused on eight areas:

1. Support youth and families,
2. **Strengthen commercial corridors,**
3. Advance public safety,
4. Achieve academic proficiency for all children,
5. Foster lifelong learning,
6. Ensure quality housing,
7. **Increase access to health and wellness services, and**
8. **Improve healthy food availability.**

The *Quality of Life Plan* served as the incentive for numerous programs and initiatives by a variety of organizations, including Walnut Way, to address the above community-identified goals. The concept of The Commons emerged out of discussions relating to the second item: strengthening commercial corridors.



STRENGTHENING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The 10-block stretch of West North Avenue between I-43 and N. 20th was identified as a logical focus for commercial corridor development since it bisects Lindsay Heights, is heavily trafficked, and features a large number of empty or underutilized buildings and vacant lots. Residents recommended integrating three other outcomes within The Commons framework: lifelong learning opportunities, increasing access to health and wellness services, and improving healthy food availability.



SPLITTING THE COMMONS INTO TWO PHASES

To make the project more viable, Walnut Way decided to split The Commons into two separate but complimentary project phases: Phase I would focus on food and Phase II on health and wellness services. By so doing, Walnut Way could reduce the initial amount of funding required to begin and complete the project. Successful completion of Phase I would not only demonstrate Walnut Way's ability to skillfully develop and execute a catalytic project, but also have an immediate impact on the economic and physical health of the community.



Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

Building Consensus and Connecting with Partners

Building consensus amongst residents and community partners was a key step to gathering support, building momentum, and clarifying the primary goals for The Commons.

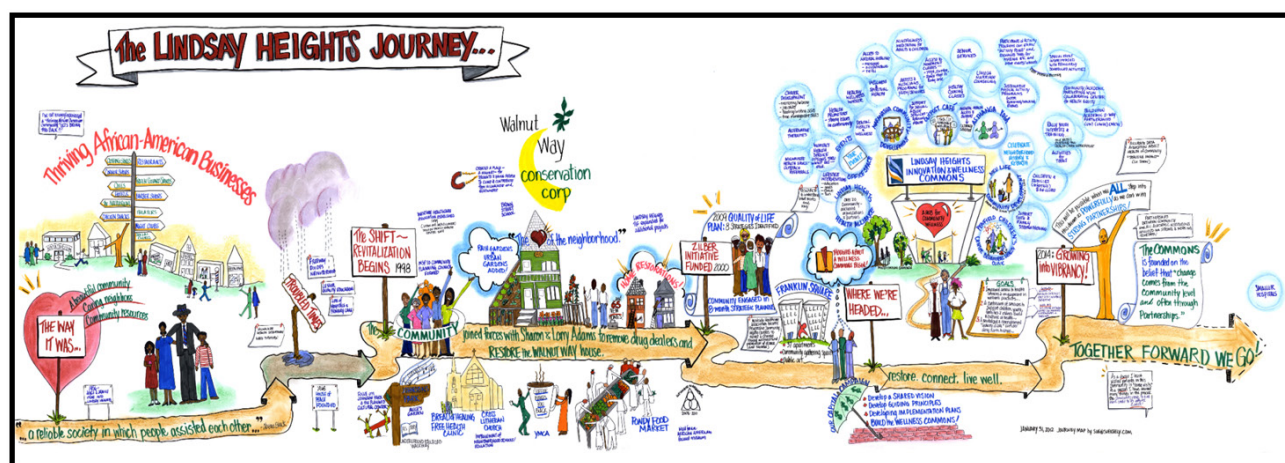
Over a 15-month period in 2013 and 2014, a core team of project partners and Walnut Way staff, including JoAnne Sabir, Walnut Way's Associate Director of Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Initiative, collaborated together to facilitate a Program Integration Committee (PIC) that would re-imagine a healthier Lindsay Heights and identify how The Commons can help accomplish that goal. More than 70 individuals and partners participated, including neighbors, local nonprofits, health care providers and medical systems, academic partners, and Lindsay Heights Health Alliance Steering Committee members. Committee meetings were hosted by a variety of Walnut Way's community partners, including Discovery World (500 N. Harbor Dr.), MCFI (2020 W. Wells St.), Aurora Sinai Medical Center (945 N. 12th St.), Aurora Family Services (3200 W. Highland Ave.), and Franklin Square Apartments (1420 W. Center St.). The meetings were intentionally moved to highlight Walnut Way's community partners and neighborhood assets. Funding for this project was provided by the UW- School of Medicine and Public Health from the Wisconsin Partnership Program.



The PIC developed an implementation plan for The Commons that identified desired types of services; guiding principles for its development and construction; individual, community, and institutional assets within the community; job training and employment expectations; and expected outcomes.

The three primary goals of The Commons were winnowed to three:

1. Improve access to health services and engagement in wellness practices;
2. Provide a continuum of resources to support children, youth, families, and elders; and
3. Revitalize and strengthen "quality of life" commercial developments



Based upon these goals, the PIC eventually decided that the best fit for Lindsay Heights would be a development project that focused on health and wellness (including accessibility to delicious, fresh food), training and education, and community navigation and connectivity.

Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

TAPPING INTO NETWORK OF EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

Long before the concept of The Commons existed, Walnut Way had been building relationships with Milwaukee area architects, developers, entrepreneurs, food-related businesses, job training programs, and much more, all of whom shared Walnut Way's vision of a sustainable community. With this network, Walnut Way was able to tap into a deep reservoir of expertise in the areas of site acquisition, financing, architectural design and construction, and financing. Access to these experts helped shape and guide the project from the outset. Not surprisingly given their shared values, the project's development team eventually emerged from this extensive network.

Gaining Support of Community Partners

Since 2000, Walnut Way has forged partnerships with a wide network of partners to dismantle the community's social and economic isolation. Gaining their support for The Commons was critical to its overall success.

- Alice's Garden
- Aurora Family Services
- Aurora Health Care – Integrative Medicine
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee
- Bread of Healing Clinic
- Center for Urban Population Health
- Children's Hospital & Health System
- Community Planning Council
- Curative Care Network
- Discovery World Museum
- Fondy Food Center
- Hopkins-Lloyd School/Hephatha Church
- Legacy Redevelopment Corporation
- Lloyd School Planning Council
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Milwaukee Health Care Partnership
- Milwaukee Health Services
- North Avenue and Fond du Lac Market Place Bid 32
- Penfield Children's Center
- Progressive Health Center
- Regional Planning Commission
- Social Development Commission
- The Juice Kitchen
- TRIUMPH
- UW - Madison
- UW - Milwaukee
- Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute
- Wisconsin Center for Health Equity
- Wisconsin Population Health Service
- P3 Development
- YMCA

CITY OF MILWAUKEE SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

The community-driven vision for The Commons aligns with the City of Milwaukee's broad plans to focus on neighborhood catalytic investments. Additionally, the project's food focus fits within the ReFresh Milwaukee initiative, which is part of the City's comprehensive sustainability plan that identifies food-related development as a top priority in order to create a stronger local food system. The goals of The Commons also fit in with the commercial district and corridor priorities outlined by the Department of City Development for Fond du Lac and North Avenues. This alignment was an important element behind the City's financial and underwriting support for the project.



Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

■ Creating an Innovative Financing Model and Attracting Donors

To finance the project, Walnut Way split the project into two Phases. Phase I – the subject of this case study – was funded primarily through grants and philanthropic support. Phase II is expected to be funded predominantly by philanthropic dollars. (The following financing applies solely to Phase I of The Commons.)

Given the previously highlighted development and investment challenges in disinvested communities like Lindsay Heights, Walnut Way developed an innovative, cooperatively based funding model that uses a combination of philanthropy, federal and state grants, and community funding (from tenants, development team).

ATTRACTING DONORS

Identifying donors rested heavily on identifying individuals and foundations whose mission aligns with Walnut Way and who have a strong interest in initiatives promoting social, racial, and economic equity. The Commons capital campaign began in 2014 and incorporated targeted outreach materials, presentations, and events that clearly articulate the desired outcomes in terms and language that resonates with the respective donor. Table 1 lists the names and types of funders and their contributions.

The five largest philanthropic contributors to The Commons to date are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Zilber Family Foundation: \$500,000 | 4. Greater Milwaukee Foundation: \$100,000 |
| 2. M&I Foundation: \$150,000 | 5. Hudson Family Foundation: \$100,000 |
| 3. Bader Philanthropies: \$100,000 | |

CED Healthy Food Financing Initiative¹¹

The federal CED HFFI grant of \$650,000¹² is administered through the Office of Community Services (OCS) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To qualify for an HFFI grant, a project must be in a food desert (defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a census tract with a substantial share of residents who live in low-income areas that have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy food retail outlet). Because a key requirement for CED HFFI applicants is that they be a community development corporation (CDC), Walnut Way partnered with Martin Luther King Economic Development Corporation (MLKEDC), a registered Milwaukee CDC based on Milwaukee's north side. MLKEDC agreed to partner with Walnut Way with a 30% equity ownership and to apply for funding.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

The WEDC's \$413,750 grant is part of their Community Development Grant Program, which supports community development and redevelopment efforts – primarily in downtown areas – throughout the state. Projects are selected based on their ability to demonstrate the economic impact of the proposed project, including public and private partnership development, financial need, and use of sustainable downtown development practices.

“The Innovations & Wellness Commons will not only be a valuable resource for area residents by providing them with healthy food options, but it also has the potential to be a real catalyst for future economic development in the neighborhood.”

– Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch

¹¹ Office of Community Services, Healthy Food Financing Initiatives, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/health-food-financing>

¹² \$425,000 of the \$650,000 CED HFFI award was applied to Phase I of The Commons. The balance will be applied to Phase II.

Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

Table 1: Funders and Contributors for The Commons - Phase I

SOURCE	AMOUNT
PUBLIC GRANTS	
City of Milwaukee Façade Improvement Grant	25,000
City of Milwaukee Retail Investment Fund	25,000
Community Economic Development (CED) Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) ¹³	425,000
WHEDA/Mandel ¹⁴	100,000
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development (WEDC) Community Development Investment Grant Program	413,750
Total Public Grants	\$988,750
PHILANTHROPY	
Bader Philanthropies	100,000
Bradley Foundation	75,000
Greater Milwaukee Frank Kirkpatrick Fund and the Walter and Olive Stiemke Fund	100,000
Hudson Family Foundation	100,000
Individual Donors	10,500
M&I Foundation	150,000
Judith Scaffer – Fidelity Charitable	10,000
WE Foundation	5,000
WI Preservation Fund	5,000
Zilber Family Foundation	500,000
Total Philanthropic Support	\$1,055,500
PROJECT TEAM PARTICIPATION	
Baker Tilly (50% all services)	2,500
CG Schmidt (100% pre-construction services)	32,000
Fix Development (20% all services)	15,000
Mayer Helminiak Architects (35% all services)	12,000
Ken Morgan (grant writing consultant)	20,000
Reinhart Boerner Van Dueren, DC	5,000
Total Project Team Participation	\$86,500
TENANT PARTICIPATION	
Milwaukee Center for Independence (MCFI)	300,000
The Juice Kitchen	50,000
Total Tenant Participation	\$350,000
DEBT	
Forward Community Investment (FCI)/Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	500,000
Total Debt Investors	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$2,980,750

¹³ \$225,000 of the total CED HFFI \$650,000 grant is allocated to Phase II.

¹⁴ In 2014, The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WHEDA) allocated \$10.5 million in New Markets Tax Credits to the Mandel Group's North End Phase III project. A required part of the New Markets Tax Credits approval established a Community Benefits Agreement calling for the Mandel Group to make a minimum charitable contribution of \$100,000 to the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation that was used to finance The Commons.

Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

Assembling the Development Team

After building consensus, the second critical component in the success of The Commons was identifying and selecting a development team – real estate developer, owner’s representative, architect, construction company, and professional services (legal and accounting) – who not only shared Walnut Way’s vision of an abundant community but also were comfortable with a collaborative development process in which residents and community stakeholders had an equal voice in the design and construction of The Commons. Walnut Way sought out team members who were comfortable working within disinvested communities and outside traditional business and development models and also had demonstrated expertise in coming up with creative, ecologically sustainable design and construction solutions, and could work with limited resources.

Each of the selected team members has extensive experience in creative, ecologically sustainable urban development projects. Equally important, each member had a long-standing relationship with Walnut Way in a variety of capacities – from participating in community design charrettes, providing development and funding expertise, and working as part of a team of other projects such as pocket parks and community gardens. Each member of the development team also contributed a percent of their work as a pro-bono contribution, thereby reducing the amount of required funding as well as demonstrating their commitment to the overarching goals of The Commons. Once again, the deep network of relationships Walnut Way has built and nurtured in the past 15 years proved beneficial in assembling a development team that could not only deliver but who deeply understood and supported goals of The Commons.

Example: The Pro Forma

Walnut Way relied on Fix Development’s extensive real estate development expertise to create a pro forma that was required to pursue funding from a major philanthropic organization. The pro forma had to demonstrate the project’s financial assumptions (timeline, costs, financing sources, and physical characteristic of the project), estimated cash flow (before and during construction and upon completion such as projected revenues and expenses), and return on investment.

“The pro forma was not a tool that Walnut Way understood how to develop, but it was extremely meaningful to investors and demonstrated that Walnut Way had assembled a competent team with complementary skills.”

– Juli Kaufmann, Fix Development



Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

Owners

MAJORITY OWNER: Walnut Way Conservation Corp.

Walnut Way Conservation Corp. (Walnut Way) formed a single member entity called Wellness Commons, LLC specifically to hold Walnut Way's real estate. Walnut Way owns 70% of The Commons and manages The Commons. Walnut Way selected the development team and facilitated the Program Integration Committee to guide and support the three primary outcomes of The Commons (see page 12).



CO-OWNER: Martin Luther King Economic Development Corp. (MLKEDC)

MLKEDC has a 10% equity investment in The Commons. MLKEDC is a private, non-profit community development corporation with an established track record for successful completion of commercial real estate development that support business development, job creation projects, training, and employment. The real estate projects MLKEDC has developed and co-developed total more than \$34 million and served as a catalyst for millions of dollars in reinvestment in low-income areas and created numerous employment opportunities for low-income residents. Some of these projects include King Drive Commons I-IV (four projects totalling \$25.3 million and developed between 2005-2011) and the Clock Shadow Building (2012).



Development Team

PROJECT CO-DEVELOPER AND OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE: Fix Development

Fix Development is the co-developer for The Commons and also provides development, project management, and owner's representative consulting services. Fix Development was founded by Juli Kaufmann and has executed more than \$20 million in community development, receiving numerous local, regional, and national awards for its work. Fix Development developed the Clock Shadow Building, a \$7.5 million dollar development that is fully occupied and successfully created jobs and provided healthy food production and retail services in the Walkers Point neighborhood of Milwaukee. The Commons is modeled in many ways after the successful Clock Shadow Building.



ARCHITECT: Mayer Helminiak Architects

The project architect was Mayer Helminiak Architects, a small architecture firm who translates client needs into spaces that teach, inspire, heal, motivate, entertain and pamper. Mayer Helminiak Architects worked closely with Walnut Way to create a beautiful, sustainable, innovative, and affordable design that honors the history of the building and the surrounding Lindsay Heights neighborhood.



Envisioning The Innovations and Wellness Commons

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER: CG Schmidt, Inc.

Located in Milwaukee for more than 90 years, construction manager CG Schmidt focuses on creating exceptional facilities that improve the lives of others. CG Schmidt renovated the existing 1615 W. North Ave. building and will be constructing the new adjacent retail/office building at 1609 W. North Ave. They also assisted with fundraising, financing, and community outreach for The Commons.



OWNERS REPRESENTATIVE: Rivet LLC

Monique Charlier of Rivet LLC supported Fix Development as an owner's representative for Walnut Way. Charlier brought experience managing sustainable construction projects and a background of working with non-profit and community-based clients in Milwaukee.



LEGAL: Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, SC

Richard Donner, Esq, of Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, SC provides legal counsel to The Commons project. Reinhart is an international service corporation founded more than a century ago. They offer a range of legal services to small and large businesses, individuals, nonprofit organizations, and other entities.

ACCOUNTING: Baker Tilly

Don Bernards and Adam Templer of Baker Tilly provide financial consulting. Founded in 1931, Baker Tilly is one of the top 20 largest accounting and advisory firms in the U.S. Baker Tilly is a full-service accounting and advisory firm with specialized professionals for all businesses, including the non-profit sector.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Development of The Commons was also made possible by the expertise and participation of the following community partners:

- **Community members:** Lindsay Heights residents and neighborhood organizations, including The Community Planning Council, Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Health Alliance, and Lindsay Heights Commercial Corridors Workgroup
- **Walnut Way:** staff and board members
- **Financial supporters and community partners:** Zilber Family Foundation, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), Zilber Construction LTD
- **Strategic fund development:** Robert Arzbaeher, CEO of Actuant Corp., The Strategic Resource Group LLC, WOO Connections, Vision First, and the late Welford Sanders
- **Health system and academic partners:** Aurora Health Care, Medical College of Wisconsin, Children's Hospital and Health System, University of Wisconsin's School of Medicine and Public Health, and University of Wisconsin's Institute for Clinical and Translational Research: Community Health Connections Community-Academic Partnerships

Site Development

Site Selection and Acquisition

While the PIC was collaborating on a shared vision for The Commons, Walnut Way administrative co-directors Sharon and Larry Adams worked with architect Mark Helminiak to identify and evaluate potential sites along W. North Ave. – existing buildings, vacant lots, or combinations thereof – that would be suitable for The Commons. Working with an architect helped Walnut Way determine early on whether a particular building could be affordably renovated or if it would be better to build new on a vacant lot.

One challenge Walnut Way encountered when approaching property owners were the number of owners who had no interest in selling or wanted to hold onto their properties until the market is strong enough to justify a high sale. This is a common practice in disinvested neighborhoods and can make development even more cumbersome and expensive.

In 2011, Walnut Way purchased a vacant lot at 1609 W. North Avenue; in 2013, they bought the adjacent vacant building. Together, the two properties make up the project site. (A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and a limited Phase II Environmental Site Assessment were conducted on the vacant lot. The lot was found to contain predominantly construction fill from the demolition of the old natatorium and library.) The 1615-1617 W. North Ave. property was tested and cleared of any environmental concerns.



“Sharon has a great eye for the potential of many underutilized or vacant properties within Lindsay Heights. Our firm worked with her and her team to build on those ideas, help visualize what the outcome might be like, and how best to renovate and design it for a truly transformative project.”

– Mark Helminiak
Mayer Helminiak Architects

ACQUISITION COSTS

1609 W. North Ave. (vacant lot)	1615-1617 W. North Ave. (building)	TOTAL
\$139,500	\$336,500	\$476,000

Design and Construction

The Commons incorporates the best ecological practices in architectural design and sustainable materials to support and preserve the environment. The development team was committed to using the highest level of craftsmanship throughout the building’s construction, preserving wherever possible the building’s unique historic features, and hiring local residents and tradespeople for construction work.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The development team strove to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) building strategies and practices. Due to the fees involved in attaining LEED certification, The Commons did not pursue certification but instead applied savings to incorporating as many LEED-qualifying elements as possible within The Commons. These included:

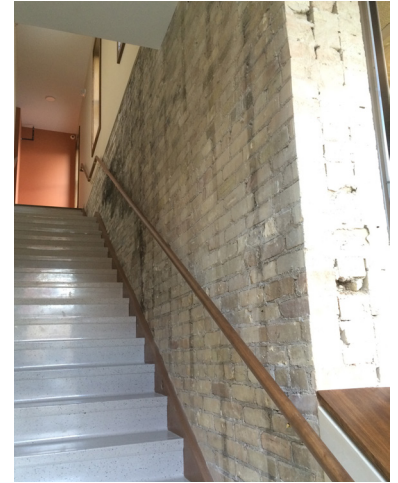
- Energy efficient and operable windows
- Building windows and orientation to capture maximum daylight
- Environmentally friendly paint
- LEED compliant lights
- High efficiency heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) system

Site Development



RETAINING HISTORIC CHARACTER

The building's exterior was largely preserved, with original details highlighted. Until construction began, the development team could not be sure what lay behind walls and what original elements could be salvaged. Happily, it was discovered that behind the exterior boards covering the building's façade, the original window openings and brick encasements were intact. The original windows were replaced with new, energy efficient windows that matched the original casement openings.



The front exterior red brick walls were cleaned and new matching red bricks were used for the exterior of the back building addition that houses MCFI's commercial kitchen, providing a seamless look between the old and new building.

Much of the interior needed to be demolished, including the original staircase. In the process of tearing down interior walls, the construction crew discovered a cream city brick wall that had once served as the west exterior wall of the 1615 W. North Ave. building prior to the addition of the 1617 W. North Ave. building (date unknown). The cream city brick wall still contained a faded portion of a mural advertising the old Louis Jenz Bowling Alley and Tavern. The wall and mural were preserved and integrated within the new design. This wall is now called "Jenz's Wall."



An original tin ceiling was also discovered during demolition, but due to its condition and high likelihood of containing asbestos, it was removed. A replica tin ceiling was placed in the front entrance leading to Outpost Natural Foods and Fondy Food Center's offices on the second floor.



The bowling lanes from the Louis Jenz Bowling Alley were still intact within the building's basement. The demolition crew carefully removed the wood lanes for re-use. While

ultimately no use was found for the lanes in The Commons, the lanes were donated and repurposed as benches and tables in a recently constructed neighborhood park (Ezekial Gillespie Pocket Park, N. 14th and W. Wright St.).

Old doors were also salvaged and repurposed as bathroom stall partitions.



Original window casement openings were preserved.

Site Development



The bowling lanes from the old Jenz Bowling Alley were repurposed into wood benches and installed in Ezekial Gillespie Pocket Park, 14th & Wright.



HIRING LOCAL RESIDENTS

As a condition for participating in The Commons, the development team agreed to support one of the main goals of The Commons – create jobs – by hiring local residents and skilled tradespeople as much as possible. Table 2 shows the individual ways that the team supported the goal of job creation. CG Schmidt worked closely with Walnut Way’s Larry Adams to identify skilled tradespeople who lived within Lindsay Heights. Of the handful that were identified, none were available to work on The Commons, indicating a need for more job skills training in this area. Eventually CG Schmidt expanded its search to near-by Milwaukee residents and businesses.

“As a Milwaukee-based construction management firm, we are committed to engaging local workforce and emerging businesses. The Innovations and Wellness Commons Project provided unique opportunities for many of our project team members and has lead to continuing collaborations on other projects.”

– Joe Schmidt, CG Schmidt



Fix Development intern Jeff Henderson (now employed with Walnut Way Blue Skies Landscaping)

TABLE 2: Job Opportunities for Local Residents in Design and Construction

Team Member	No. of Jobs	TYPE
Fix Development	1	Hired a local resident as a paid intern to learn about and assist in development activities. Upon completion of his internship, the resident took a full-time position with Blue Skies Landscaping (a Walnut Way enterprise).
CG Schmidt	3	Hired three local companies that assist in demolition, restoration, and electrical work. Two of the businesses has been identified as an “emerging business.” CG Schmidt continues to promote this business in other projects and to other construction firms.

Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

Tenant recruitment was led by Walnut Way's JoAnne Sabir and Sharon Adams, as well as other PIC committee members. From the outset, future Commons tenants were considered partners vs. simply tenants and were expected to provide services and products that improve access to health and wellness services, expand community resources and support, and help revitalize the North Ave. commercial corridor.

As with the development team, the four tenants – Milwaukee Center for Independence (MCFI), Outpost Natural Foods, The Juice Kitchen, and Fondy Food Center – emerged synergistically from Walnut Way's extensive community network. These businesses and organizations had all previously worked with Walnut Way in a variety of capacities and were the first to indicate an interest in leasing space in The Commons.

The two largest tenants – MCFI and Outpost Natural Foods – each contributed a significant amount in food-related equipment and finishing materials such as lights, counters, and shelving. In addition, MCFI paid for a state-of-the-art ventilation system. Their contributions significantly increased the value of the overall project and reduced construction costs. See Table 1 for tenant contributions.



Staff at Outpost Natural Foods.



Vendors at Fondy Farmers Market.



Kids clamoring for juice at The Juice Kitchen.



Products made by Walnut Way and sold locally.

Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

Tenants

MILWAUKEE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE (MCFI)



Who They Are

MCFI is a Milwaukee-based nonprofit that offers life-changing programs and services for children and adults with disabilities, special needs, and barriers to success. The MCFI Hospitality Academy, which is leasing space for a commercial kitchen in The Commons, provides on-the-job training for individuals interested in working in the hospitality industry. This includes development of the skills required to secure lasting careers in the hospitality industry including custodial, food service, and customer service.

Products/Services Provided in The Commons

MCFI leased the newly built back portion of Phase I of The Commons and built out a commercial kitchen to prepare fresh, healthy meals for its contract clients – child care centers and schools that serve mainly low-income families. The kitchen will provide jobs and paid training opportunities to local residents and offer job opportunities in other MCFI facilities. When not in use by MCFI, the commercial kitchen space will be available for use by Walnut Way to advance its healthy food-related programs by expanding value-added food production within the neighborhood as well as other tenants.

Relationship with Walnut Way and Lindsay Heights Community

MCFI's main facility is located at 2020 W. Wells St., which is within a mile of Lindsay Heights. A significant number of MCFI clients live within or near Lindsay Heights. MCFI hosted Walnut Way's PIC meetings at their Wells St. offices, which prompted MCFI to consider and ultimately agree to become a tenant partner in Phase I of The Commons.

See Table 3 for collaborations with other Commons tenants and community residents.

“The Commons has provided an excellent state-of-the-art venue for MCFI to really live our mission every day. We are, and will continue to be, grateful for the vision of Sharon Adams and Walnut Way in bringing this project to fruition.”

- Heidi Chada, Vice President of Nutrition and Wellness Services and Director of the Hospitality Academy, Milwaukee Center for Independence



Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

THE JUICE KITCHEN

Who They Are

The Juice Kitchen originated as an Internet-based business in 2010.

This is its first brick and mortar store. The Juice Kitchen produces and sells a variety of fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies.

THE *Juice* KITCHEN

Products/Services Provided in The Commons

The Juice Kitchen uses fresh, organic ingredients to create nutrient-rich, healthy fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies. They also provide health coaching services. Customers can sit at a table and enjoy juices in the store or purchase them to go. The Juice Kitchen also offers nutrition, fitness, and leadership training programs to residents. A rotating selection of artwork from local residents is featured on its walls.

Relationship with Walnut Way and Lindsay Heights Community

Long-time Lindsay Heights residents, entrepreneurs, and Walnut Way staff members JoAnne and Maanaan Sabir own the Juice Kitchen. Through their affiliation with Walnut Way and as residents, they have developed many deep relationships with residents and businesses.

See Table 3 for collaborations with other Commons tenants and community residents.

“People need to understand that this wasn’t just a case of us just putting together a juice kitchen. Many people came before us – Sharon and Larry Adams, Sharon’s father Julius Foster, my father Mohammed Sabir, and many others – who put a lot of work into this community. Now we have to repay them and this is a great way to do it. We were in the right spot at the right time with a great idea and product that the community has been wanting for a long time.”

– Maanaan Sabir
The Juice Kitchen



Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

OUTPOST NATURAL FOODS

Outpost Natural Food is a Milwaukee-based member-owned cooperative founded in 1970 that operates four large organic grocery stores in the Milwaukee area.



Products/Services Provided in The Commons

Outpost's 650-sq. ft. pop-up store is similar to its other stores, just smaller in scale, and intended to increase access to local, organic, and natural foods and complement the food options already available in the area (such as Fondy Farmers Market, The Juice Kitchen, and Galst Food Market). The store will sell fresh fruits and vegetables, including seasonally available fruit from Walnut Way's orchards and produce from Fondy Farmers Market and Fondy Farm. They will also offer other locally produced foods and healthy foods, bulk items such as rice and lentils, prepared carryout items such as pasta salad and soups, fresh baked goods, and coffee and tea.

To help make cooperative ownership accessible to more people in the Lindsay Heights community, Outpost implemented "In Reach," a special ownership program that offers a reduced payment plan for co-op services (five \$5 payments for one share of \$25) for eligible participants. Local residents are encouraged to apply for jobs within the store as well as offered job opportunities at other Outpost locations.

Outpost will be gauging interest amongst residents for potential expansion opportunity into Phase II of The Commons.

Relationship with Walnut Way and Lindsay Heights Community

Outpost has a long history with Walnut Way, dating back to 2006. In 2011, they awarded Walnut Way a \$30,000 grant for health and wellness educational programming. Outpost also participated in the UW-Milwaukee Lindsay Heights design charrette. Outpost's vision closely aligns with Walnut Way's: maintaining access to products and services that promote personal and environmental health, access to organically and locally produced goods, education and information about choices that impact personal and environmental health, a community with commerce that is locally owned or locally oriented exists, and owners have a sense of connectedness, belonging and fellowship.

"In 2012, Outpost adopted a planned goal of placing at least one grocery store in a neighborhood with low accessibility to fresh food. The Commons was a wonderful example of synchronicity: we wanted to expand and the community wanted us here."

- Margaret Mittelstadt
Outpost Natural Foods



Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

FONDY FOOD CENTER

Fondy Food Center is a locally owned nonprofit organization that connects Greater Milwaukee to local, fresh food – from farm to market to table – so that children learn better, adults live healthier, and communities celebrate cultural food traditions. Fondy Food Center manages Fondy Farmers Market at 2200 W. Fond du Lac Avenue within Lindsay Heights. They also operate Fondy Farm, an 80-acre farm in Port Washington that offers affordable, long-term leases to low-income farmers plus the amenities needed to succeed such as irrigation, greenhouses, tractors, and technical and business assistance. Fondy Food Center also manages the Milwaukee County Winter Farmers Market and a pop-up market at Milwaukee's Schlitz Park office complex. Its programs work in harmony to fill the need for fresh, locally grown food on Milwaukee's North Side.



Products/Services Provided in The Commons

Fondy Food Center's administrative offices will be located on the second floor of The Commons building.

Relationship with Walnut Way and Lindsay Heights Community

Fondy Food Center has a long and rich relationship with Walnut Way, dating back to when they rented office space from Walnut Way in their original N. 17th St. headquarters more than 10 years ago. Fondy is an active participant in many Walnut Way-led health and wellness initiatives. Walnut Way's urban agriculture team sell fruit, vegetables, and honey at Fondy Farmers Market.



“Moving into The Commons is a game changer on many fronts: increased synergy and collaboration with Commons tenants just by sheer daily proximity to each other (“Hey, what if we ...?”), more opportunity for us to increase capacity and promote produce grown by Fondy farmers and sold at Outpost, and the ability to host events at our office, such as a monthly donor breakfast using products from The Juice Kitchen and Outpost, of course.”

– Young Kim
Executive Director, Fondy Food Center



Tenant Recruitment and Collaborations

TENANT PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

The Commons focus, recruitment, and placement of four food-related businesses within one building opens up tremendous opportunities for collaboration and enhances already existing partnerships. Table 3 highlights these partnerships and identifies new collaborations resulting from locating in The Commons.

TABLE 3: Tenant Partnerships and Community Collaborations

Food Production	Retail and Wholesale	Jobs	Other	Community Outreach & Collaborations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCFI commercial kitchen available to The Juice Kitchen to store, clean, and process produce for juicing operations. • MCFI commercial kitchen available to Walnut Way to process honey and other products for sale at local markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpost sells wholesale produce to The Juice Kitchen. • Outpost buys food wholesale from Fondy for commercial deli and retail sales. • Outpost sells Walnut Way honey, fruit, and vegetables at pop-up store. • Walnut Way fruit, vegetable, and honey sold at Fondy Farmers Market. • Fondy sells Juice Kitchen juices and smoothies at market. • MCFI offers cleaning and processing equipment to Fondy farmers to prepare for wholesale and retail sales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpost hires local residents for pop-up and other Outpost locations. • The Juice Kitchen hires local residents. • MCFI hires local residents for jobs and paid training programs both at The Commons location and other MCFI facilities. • Outpost hires MCFI-trained individuals for open positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fondy purchases catered meals from Outpost for special events. • Fondy orders juices from The Juice Kitchen for special events. * Outpost and MCFI are collaborating on developing additional food service training modules for Outpost's prepared foods department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Juice Kitchen offers nutrition, fitness, book readings, and leadership training workshops plus juicing clubs. • The Juice Kitchen promotes local artists and features a rotating selection of local artwork on their walls. • Outpost holds cooking classes, tasting events, and other food-related events to residents. • MCFI commercial kitchen available to Walnut Way for food-related programs. • MCFI provides complimentary nutrition and wellness education to its community partners.

Community Transformation and Impact

Community Transformation and Impact

The Commons was intentionally conceived and developed to transform the commercial corridor of W. North Ave. and spur more investment, create jobs, and increase access to healthy, fresh food.

ECONOMICS & EMPLOYMENT

• Growing the Local Economy

By supporting local businesses within The Commons, residents and visitors sustain the economic health and vitality of the neighborhood. This ultimately contributes to a more resilient and abundant community, attracts additional investments, and expands job opportunities.

The Commons' food-related focus and tenant partners leverage and strengthen existing food-related efforts already underway in Lindsay Heights as well as expand the production and distribution of locally grown fruits and vegetables. The growing interest in organic foods and products¹⁵ will support the long-term business viability of tenants within The Commons as well as other food-related businesses and initiatives within Lindsay Heights, such as Walnut Way's urban agriculture programs and Alice's Garden.



• Creating Jobs

Amongst the four tenants, Phase I of The Commons will provide 27 jobs, including at least 19 jobs for low-income residents while encouraging additional business development, business expansion, and employment opportunities in Lindsay Heights. (See Table 4 on page 29.) Phase II will provide additional opportunities for local private wellness practitioners (e.g. yoga, massage) that will reframe wellness to include holistic services in addition to traditional physician and medical services.

The jobs available in Phase I fall within the rapidly growing food industry, which includes a whole host of viable, sustainable career opportunities including, but not limited to, cooks, restaurant management, nutrition and food safety, production (land management, growing, etc.), manufacturing and distribution, retail sales, wholesale marketing, research and development, and business and marketing administration. Within this industry there are a wide variety of career development opportunities for low-income area residents leading to career advancement and economic self-sufficiency.



¹⁵ <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/growing-demand.pdf>

Community Transformation and Impact

TABLE 4: Jobs Projected to be Provided by The Commons Tenants

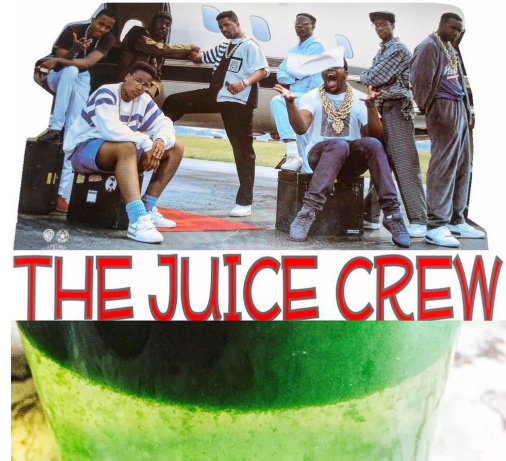
Job Type	# of Jobs for Low-Income	# of Other Jobs	Wage Range	Fringe Benefits
The Juice Kitchen				
Food preparer/juice maker	1		\$12-\$15	Health, vacation
Retail worker	1		\$14-\$16	Health, vacation
Store manager		1	\$16-\$18	Health, vacation
Walnut Way				
Food Grower	1		\$12-\$15	Health, vacation
MCFI-Commercial Kitchen				
Food Prep Assistant	3		\$12-\$15	Health, vacation
Food Prep Associate	2		\$12-\$15	Health, vacation
Production Manager		1	\$20-\$25	Health, vacation
General Manager		1	\$20-\$25	Health, vacation
Outpost Natural Foods				
Cashier	4		\$10-\$15	Health, vacation
General Associates	5		\$10-\$15	Health, vacation
Assistant Manager		2	\$15-\$20	Health, vacation
Store Manager		1	\$20-\$25	Health, vacation
Fondy Food Center				
Market Assistant	2		\$10-\$15	
Program Directors		3	\$25-\$35	Health, vacation
Total	19	9		

Community Transformation and Impact

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

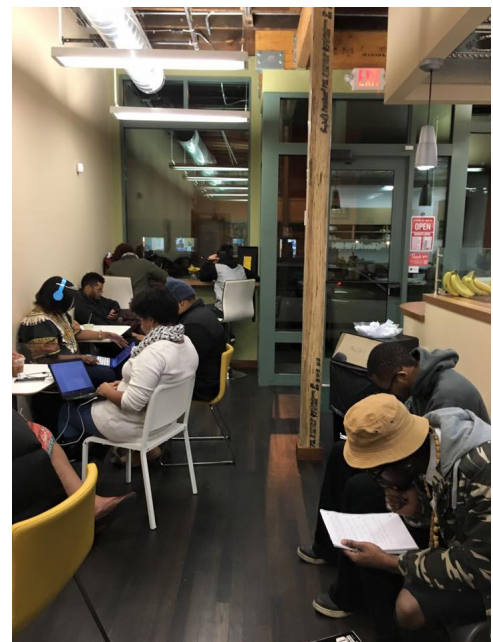
• Supporting Health and Wellness

The Juice Kitchen and Outpost Natural Foods open up two new opportunities within Lindsay Heights for residents to purchase and enjoy fresh, healthy whole food and beverages. Both stores plan to offer a variety of events designed to engage with and encourage health and wellness amongst residents. For example, The Juice Kitchen will be recruiting Lindsay Heights teens to join its Juice Crew, a social club encouraging the arts, wellness, and community leadership and organizing.



• Building Community

The Commons tenants have a shared commitment to creating a space that supports and builds community beginning at its most basic level – providing a beautiful, welcoming space in which to buy and enjoy food – to highlighting local artists and offering community gathering spaces. The availability of beautiful space will also be used by Fondy Food Center to host special events and welcome customers and donors that had previously not been possible in their previous location. The Juice Kitchen will be made available for community events and Outpost Natural Foods will host various free food-related events and tastings throughout the year.



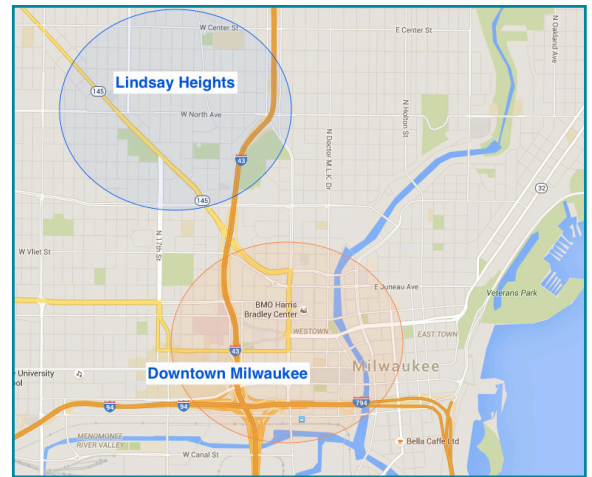
Community Transformation and Impact

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

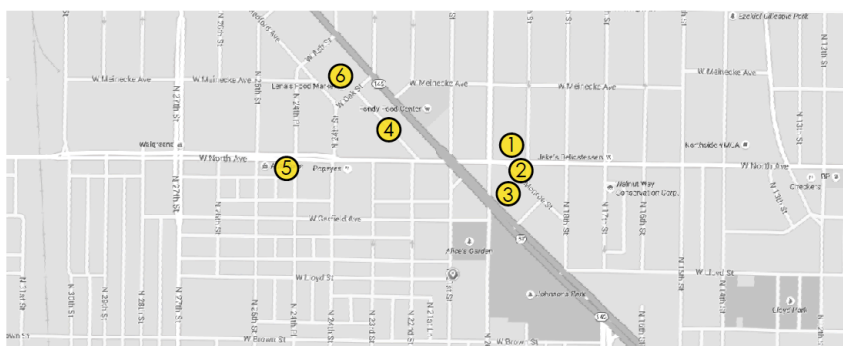
The two commercial corridors within Lindsay Heights – W. Fond du Lac Avenue and W. North Avenue – are ripe for growth. Residents enthusiastically support local businesses and are eager for workforce training and job opportunities. There are a large variety of properties and lots suitable for development. And Lindsay Heights prime geographic location (within minutes of downtown Milwaukee and served by several bus lines) all contribute to the attractiveness of developing within Lindsay Heights.

The beautifully and ecologically designed Phase I of The Commons showcases what is possible for its commercial corridor. Within the past several years, nearly \$40 million in area investments have been made within Lindsay Heights, including the recently built St. Ann's Center for Intergenerational Care – Bucyrus Campus, a \$20 million facility at 2450 W. North Avenue. Momentum is now building, with Phase I of The Commons complete and development beginning for Phase II and a Fix Development project – The Historic Walter Schmidt Tavern at 1848 W. Fond du Lac Ave.

A design charette was sponsored by the Lindsay Heights Commercial Corridors workgroup and UW-Milwaukee's Community Design Solutions in July 2015 to identify potential sites within Lindsay Heights that had the potential to become a catalytic development project. Lindsay Heights residents, local developers and architects, businesses and nonprofit organizations, and urban planners were invited to participate and brainstorm creative, exciting project concepts. Six sites were identified as having potential to spur additional investment within the community, stabilize property values, and increase retail options.



LINDSAY HEIGHTS SITES



- ① 1900 - 1926 W. North Ave. ④ 2100 - 2300 W. North Ave.
- ② 1905 W. North Ave. ⑤ 2451 - 2457 W. North Ave.
- ③ 2226 N. 20th St. Block ⑥ 2322 W. Oak St.

As Phase II of The Commons begins to take shape, the commercial landscape of W. North Avenue will transform even further, reflecting the resiliency and abundance of the Lindsay Heights community.

Source: UW-Milwaukee Community Building Solutions, July 28, 2015

Conclusion

Lindsay Heights: Resilience, Talent, and Passion

Residents, businesses, community organizations, and public and private stakeholders are working together to find solutions and leverage investments that will continue to transform the economic, environmental, social, and physical health of Lindsay Heights. Special events and street festivals, social and recreational clubs, and regular community meetings connect residents to both each other and to the greater Milwaukee community, offering new opportunities for collaboration and growth. Long-time community organizers are training and partnering with emerging leaders to develop and implement innovative approaches that will increase civic participation, expand employment and workforce training opportunities, and raise the quality of schools within Lindsay Heights. And businesses – both new and existing – are linking up to promote successful commercial and retail development within Lindsay Heights and adjoining communities.

The Innovations and Wellness Commons is just the first of many commercial developments that is tapping into the community's inherent resilience, talent, and passion. The Commons serves as an example of how together – residents, businesses, and community stakeholders – can overcome development challenges unique to disinvested communities and design and build a beautiful, community-driven, impactful commercial development, one that will propel forward the transformation of Lindsay Heights into a joyful, abundant, and sustainable community.



For more information, please contact Juli Kaufmann at Fix Development or Sharon Adams at Walnut Way Conservation Corp.

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