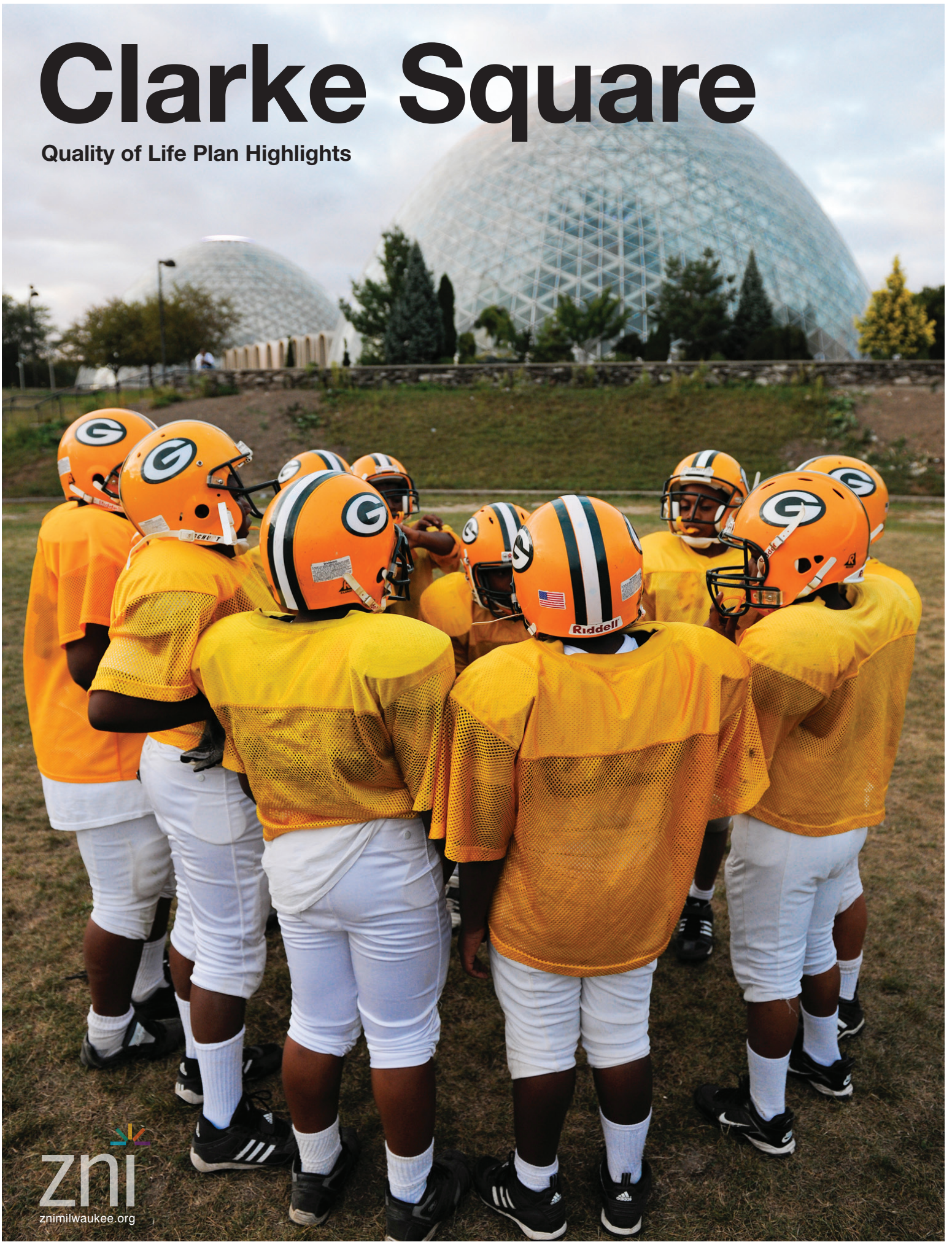


Clarke Square

Quality of Life Plan Highlights





Clarke Square is a neighborhood of many riches. One of the most diverse communities in Milwaukee, it is home to Journey House, a community-based organization that strengthens families, as well as service agencies such as the Milwaukee Christian Center and the Lao American Organization. The community boasts the Milwaukee County Mitchell Park Conservatory—where visitors can enter the world’s only beehive-shaped glass domes—and Cesar Chavez Drive, a commercial strip that draws Milwaukee’s Latino community and others to shop, eat authentic Mexican food, and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere.

The Zilber Neighborhood Initiative in Clarke Square strives to honor residents by building on these powerful physical and human assets. The process to create a Quality of Life Plan for the community kicked off at a lively meeting on April 30, 2009, attended by more than 435 residents. They were asked to complete three sentences: “The best thing about Clarke Square is...”; “Something I would like to change about Clarke Square is...”; and “Something that is needed in Clarke Square is...” Residents’ responses became the basis for the Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative Quality of Life Plan.

Clarke Square residents are eager for more people to know about their family-oriented and hard-working neighborhood. Located near the emerging economic engine of Menomonee Valley and international tourist attractions such as the Potawatomi Casino, Miller Park (home of the Milwaukee Brewers), and the Harley-Davidson Museum, Clarke Square is one of the gateways to Milwaukee’s Near South Side. Through the initiative, residents plan to spread the word that Clarke Square is not just a place to pass through on the way to somewhere else, but a great community in which to live, learn, work, play, worship, shop, and serve.



LONGFELLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



LONGFELLOW CLASSROOM



JOURNEY HOUSE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Clarke Square

Community-School Partnership

Two major anchor institutions in the Clarke Square neighborhood are joining together to **provide an academic and athletic facility that honors Clarke Square residents and offers adequate and appropriate space for families to learn and play.** Longfellow School, the largest elementary school in Wisconsin, and Journey House, a community-based organization, are in the midst of a \$6 million capital campaign to create the Journey House Center for Family Learning and Youth Athletics.

The new facility will enable Journey House and Longfellow to share classrooms, meeting and program space, and a youth gymnasium. It will ensure consistent collaboration among staff, teachers, families, students and other support staff. It also will help meet growing community demand for services and activities, and relieve overcrowding at the school.

Transforming Longfellow into a community school that serves people in all stages of life with education and skills training, health and social services, and other community activities will foster more successful students, stronger families, and a healthier neighborhood.

Lifelong Learning

At Longfellow School, which serves more than 900 pupils, students are holding their own academically against their peers in other Milwaukee public schools. However, there is room for improvement. Longfellow students lagged from 10 to 40 percentage points, depending on the grade and subject, behind state averages on the Wisconsin standardized test results for 2009. At the same time, 48 percent of residents over age 25 in the Clarke Square area lack a high-school diploma.

We will **support high academic performance at neighborhood schools, encourage post-secondary education, and promote lifelong learning** so that residents will be prepared to compete in the global economy. Our goals include supporting the expansion of Hmong American Peace Academy, increasing adult English Language Learner skills, and establishing university satellite locations in Clarke Square to increase access to college courses and promote higher learning.

The ZNI Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative strives to honor residents by building on the strong physical and human assets in the community.



MITCHELL PARK DOMES



MPD COMMUNITY OFFICER JESUS GLORIA



ORGANIZED YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS

Clarke Square

Employment and Job Training

About 20 percent of area residents who wanted work were unemployed in 2009—twice the national average. Providing residents access to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages is an important step toward boosting the economic well-being of our neighborhood. Through the creation of an Urban Careers Institute, we will work to increase the job skills and workforce readiness of our residents, and then **match employment opportunities for teens and adults with employers’ current and emerging workforce needs.** Our focus will be on careers in the areas of finance, science, engineering, coaching and officiating, urban ecology, economic development, customer service, and office technology.

In addition, we will work with Menomonee Valley Partners to identify training and employment opportunities. We will also strive to increase the number of participants in Youth Build, a workforce development program for at-risk young adults. The program will expose young people to the fields of construction and entrepreneurship, while building affordable, Energy Star homes.

Youth, Parks, and Recreation

If young people have access to engaging, character-building activities, they are less vulnerable to the lure of gangs and drugs. In Clarke Square, more than one-third of residents are under the age of 18. We will **offer the community ample access to youth development activities and appropriate spaces for organized sports and family recreation programs.**

For example, we will work with the park system to redesign Mitchell Park to accommodate both sports and urban gardening. Key projects include installation of an NFL-quality football field; the building of a skateboard park; and the development of a multipurpose sports and recreation complex that promotes winter sports and connects Mitchell Park to other recreational destinations, such as the Hank Aaron Trail.

Other projects include revitalizing Clarke Square Park, promoting a bike-friendly community, increasing gymnasium space, providing more adult recreation activities, and expanding youth development programs.



MILWAUKEE CHRISTIAN CENTER



FIREMEN AT THE PICK'N SAVE



BLOCK CLUB LEADER MRS. TYNA

Clarke Square

Social Connections

The vitality of any neighborhood depends on the connections individuals make with one another. Achieving many of our goals depends on working together for the common good. We plan to **establish new relationships and build on existing connections to develop a sense of belonging and community pride in Clarke Square.**

Toward that end, we will establish the Clarke Square Neighborhood Association, composed of new and existing block clubs and interested individuals. We will foster communication among residents and promote services, programs, and activities that bring people together.

Public Safety

While crime rates have declined in Clarke Square during the past three years due to anti-crime efforts such as the federally funded Weed and Seed initiative, residents continue to express concern about violent crime, gang activity, drug trafficking, prostitution, and persistent “hot spots.” We also recognize the need to improve pedestrian safety, particularly along major traffic corridors.

We will take the steps necessary to **ensure that Clarke Square is a safe place to live, learn, work, play, worship, shop, and serve.** Our goals include creating safe passageways for pedestrians, bikers, and motorists;

encouraging participation in public safety trainings and crime reduction activities; and eliminating graffiti. We also will provide intensive services for ex-offenders returning or relocating to Clarke Square.

Neighborhood Beautification

As one of the most diverse communities in Milwaukee, Clarke Square offers a multicultural array of shops, restaurants, churches, and community-based activities. Its proximity to the Menomonee Valley industrial corridor and tourist destinations such as Potawatomi Casino, Harley-Davidson Museum, Miller Park, and Mitchell Park Domes also make it an appealing place to live, work, and do business.

But in some respects, the neighborhood is a well-kept secret. We intend to **raise the visibility of Clarke Square by enhancing its curb appeal and streetscapes in a way that reflects and promotes the cultures of its diverse residents.**

By restoring the exteriors of buildings, beautifying the neighborhood with trees, flowers, and vegetable gardens, and clearly identifying it with a new neighborhood logo and prominent gateway signs and banners, we can help build Clarke Square’s reputation as a neighborhood of choice.

Clarke Square



LONGFELLOW PRINCIPAL WENDELL SMITH



MERCADO EL REY SUPERMARKET



MEXICAN CUISINE AT CHAVEZ DRIVE RESTAURANT

Housing

Clarke Square boasts a rich diversity of housing, including single-family homes, duplexes, and large apartment buildings. Distinctive and historic homes, such as those designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, are scattered throughout the neighborhood. Private independent living facilities and public housing meet the housing needs of seniors.

About half of our housing stock was built before 1897, making it much older on average than Milwaukee's housing as a whole, and consequently more expensive to maintain. The community is densely occupied; the average household size in Clarke Square is 3.37 people, compared to 2.52 in Milwaukee.

Housing sales in the neighborhood tumbled from their peak of 101 in 2005 to a low of 12 in 2008, though prices dropped during that period. At the same time, foreclosures increased. In 2008, foreclosures were filed on 5.3 percent of the one- and two-family residential buildings in the community—twice as many as the year before.

To overcome these challenges and build on the community's strengths, we will work to **stabilize, promote, and preserve diverse housing—from affordable to market-rate—to accommodate a wide range of household incomes** and family needs.

Economic Development

Starting at the south end of Cesar Chavez Drive (16th Street) and walking north, residents and visitors are treated to a mix of thriving restaurants, music stores, dental and health clinics, Mexican grocery stores, fast food franchises, and even a store that sells cowboy gear. Day and night, the sidewalks are filled with pedestrian traffic.

To build on the success of the Cesar Chavez Business Improvement District (BID), we will seek an official "Main Street Milwaukee" designation for the BID, which would increase funding opportunities and volunteer involvement. We will support small businesses and help entrepreneurs get started. We will also encourage business and property owners to invest in their buildings and our community.

By sustaining and growing businesses, and enhancing job creation and retention, we will foster community wealth.





ADOPTING THE PLANS FOR CLARKE SQUARE



CART VENDORS ON CESAR CHAVEZ DRIVE



YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AT APRIL 30 ZNI CLARKE SQUARE VISIONING EVENT

Clarke Square

Passion. Commitment. Achievement.

With passion comes commitment and, together, they lead to achievement. Adopted by residents and other Clarke Square stakeholders during planning, this is the mantra that will drive the execution of our Quality of Life Plan. Neighbors, community leaders, and agency partners that represent Clarke Square's many cultures guided the planning process, crafted specific strategies, and adopted the final plan. Along the way, hundreds of neighborhood residents participated in visioning and feedback sessions. For the first time in decades, Clarke Square stakeholders came together to develop and endorse a unified plan for improving the quality of community life.

The inclusiveness of the ZNI planning process has energized and mobilized residents and other community leaders. It has also stimulated a new spirit of neighborliness and commitment to community. Marta Alamo no longer cleans the street in front of her home across from Mitchell Park by herself. Now, young football players and cheerleaders cross the street to help her. More people come out to support the efforts of law enforcement to promote neighborhood safety.

In all of this, we are inspired by the passion and commitment of people who met weekly for several hours on hot summer nights to create this plan. Join us as we work together to achieve our vision of Clarke Square as a neighborhood of choice in Milwaukee. We believe that this is Clarke Square's moment. Yes, we can! Si se puede!



These efforts are supported by the Zilber Family Foundation. In 2008, the Foundation announced a ten-year, \$50 million commitment to improve the quality of life in Milwaukee neighborhoods, starting with Lindsay Heights and Clarke Square. To read the full neighborhood plan, please visit znilwaukee.org.

Clarke Square



NFL FOOTBALL FIELD IN MITCHELL PARK



WELCOME TO CLARKE SQUARE



MITCHELL PARK DOMES



MILWAUKEE CHRISTIAN CENTER



JOURNEY HOUSE LONGFELLOW CENTER FOR FAMILY LEARNING AND YOUTH ATHLETICS RENDERING



CESAR CHAVEZ DRIVE & NATIONAL AVENUE

Clarke Square Catalytic Projects

The following catalytic projects meet community needs identified by neighborhood residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Together they will improve the infrastructure and cohesiveness of the community.

1 Journey House Longfellow Center for Family Learning and Youth Athletics

Journey House, a results-oriented community organization, and MPS Longfellow, a high-performing school, will build a \$6 million addition to Longfellow to provide education and recreation services to residents. This joint facility meets the community demand for increased services, classroom and educational space, indoor sports venues and recreational areas, and green space. Journey House has secured \$2.75 million in private funding towards this capital campaign. The project is “shovel-ready” and will create immediate local jobs.

2 NFL Football Field in Mitchell Park

The NFL Green Bay Packers donated the former Nitschke Field Turf, a \$300,000 synthetic field, to Journey House. Journey House will raise \$450,000 to install and maintain the field in Milwaukee County's Mitchell Park. National research demonstrates that high-quality football fields are catalysts for building community partnerships, increasing property values, and fostering economic development.

3 Mitchell Park

A comprehensive study will be conducted on how to design Mitchell Park to meet the needs of an active, competitive sports community and support the emerging neighborhood interest in urban gardens. The plan will provide guidance on using open space for planting gardens and creating playing fields for organized football, soccer, and basketball, as well as creating spaces for other sports and year-round family recreation.

4 Sports-Plex

A “Sports-Plex” multipurpose complex will be developed in Mitchell Park, including a large gymnasium that can be used for athletic tournaments or community events, and be available for rental for large gatherings such as family reunions and quinceañeras. The Sports-Plex will connect to other recreational destinations, such as the Hank Aaron Trail, and make available year-round sports and recreational activities to community members. This is in the pre-development phase.

5 Skateboard Park

A skateboard park will be built in Mitchell Park to meet the growing demand of young people. This is in the pre-development phase.

6 Bike and Pedestrian Pathways

To promote a bike-friendly community for youth and families, bicycle lanes and walking paths will be created. A facility where residents can build and repair bikes and skateboards also will be created.

7 Clarke Square Park Revitalization

Clarke Square Park will be revitalized as a safe, open space for children and families to congregate. The park will be designed to include benches, tables, drinking fountains, and other amenities that promote playing and gathering. The pavilion will be updated and expanded to accommodate neighborhood and family events.

8 Milwaukee Christian Center

Milwaukee Christian Center will launch a capital campaign to build a new center on its current site that would include a 48-unit senior housing complex, an expanded food pantry, indoor gymnasium, and space for community services.

9 Hmong American Peace Academy

Hmong American Peace Academy will expand its campus from K-6 to K-12 to effectively prepare 900 students for the demands of a competitive global economy. This project responds to the significant increase in student enrollment and parents' desire to continue their children's education at the academy.

10 Urban Careers Institute

The institute is an employment and training program that will place 75 adults in jobs each year. It meets the need for customized training and employment-readiness preparation in the areas of finance, science, engineering, coaching and officiating, urban ecology, economic development, customer service, and office technology.

11 New Energy Star Homes

The Milwaukee Christian Center Youth Build program will build three new Energy Star homes, which will provide affordable housing opportunities for residents. Neighborhood youth in Youth Build, an intensive carpentry skills training and educational program, will build these homes.

12 Welcome to Clarke Square

Four Clarke Square gateway markers will be installed to market the community as one of the gateways to the Near South Side and tourist destinations such as Potawatomi Bingo Casino, Harley-Davidson Museum, Miller Park, and Mitchell Park Domes. In addition, a local artist competition will be held to design a logo and banners that promote Clarke Square as a neighborhood of choice for families and businesses. The banners will be displayed throughout the neighborhood to demonstrate pride in its diverse cultures and attractions.

13 Cesar Chavez Business Improvement District

A new initiative will improve cooperation among businesses and attract new development in the Cesar Chavez Business Improvement District. The Cesar Chavez BID also will encourage commercial and residential property owners to invest in their properties and the community, improve façades, and attract businesses that are willing to help improve the business community.

14 Cesar Chavez Drive & National Avenue

As part of the City of Milwaukee's Near South Side Comprehensive Plan, this active corner of Clarke Square is seeking to attract committed business partners. This business development will become a cornerstone of the neighborhood, which is located just blocks away from Wisconsin's largest tourist attraction: Potawatomi Bingo Casino.