

**BRIGHTWOOD  
HILLSIDE  
OAKHILL  
RALSTON HOVEY**



**RESTORATION | RESILIENCE | REVITALIZATION**

**MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD**

**QUALITY OF LIFE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
2025 - 2030**



City-County Building  
200 E Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

March 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This letter verifies that the Martindale Brightwood Quality of Life Plan has met all necessary requirements to complete the Department of Metropolitan Development's Certified Plan Program for the City of Indianapolis. This designation remains in effect until March 20, 2030.

This program is designed to encourage excellence in community planning and to maximize the impact of community-sponsored planning initiatives. Certification requirements ensure that the resulting certified plan has met high standards for community engagement, including the creation and execution of a comprehensive engagement plan. Additionally, all certified plans must meet content standards that demonstrate alignment with City policy, and present actionable steps the community can enact.

The partners of this initiative have met all expectations in the creation of a plan which works towards the City of Indianapolis's values of a healthier, more vibrant, more inclusive, and more competitive city.

Respectfully,

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Megan Vukusich  
Director of the Department of Metropolitan Development  
City of Indianapolis & Marion County

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Logan Lane  
Administrator for Long-Range Planning  
City of Indianapolis & Marion County



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## COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The Martindale Brightwood neighborhood, located in the near Eastside of Indianapolis, is an area of great historical significance and pride, for the African American community of Indianapolis and particularly for the people who live in this neighborhood. For more than 150 years, the neighbors of Martindale Brightwood have worked together to build a resilient, supportive community. Neighbors have faced many challenges, yet the events that converged in 2020 raised those challenges to new levels.

The following Quality of Life Plan was created in response to several critical factors the neighborhood experienced beginning in 2020. During a year of unprecedented uncertainty, the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic and a nation in racial turmoil, motivated neighborhood residents and stakeholders to collectively renew their commitment to determine the neighborhood's future. The resident led congress, One Voice Martindale Brightwood, representing the neighborhood associations of Oakhill, Hillside, Ralston Hovey and Brightwood Concerned Citizens, determined to launch a renewed Quality of Life plan, one that would move forward through these crises. One Voice aligned with MOVE-MB, the coalition of neighborhood-based institutions that provide neighbors access to resources and support.

With momentum in place in a time of crisis, the collective redoubled its commitment to continued alignment and articulated its vision in this statement, published in the Indianapolis Recorder in November 2020:



### **A Collective Statement Regarding Martindale Brightwood** *Originally Published In The Indianapolis Recorder November 13, 2020*

For too long, the Martindale Brightwood community has been stigmatized and dissected as an area marked by disproportionately adverse statistics. While the challenges we face from an unrelenting pandemic and systemic racism are real, our community stands tall, resilient, and impatient to welcome in an era that harkens back to our community's best days.

Over the past several months, Martindale Brightwood residents and neighborhood organizations have navigated the unprecedented trials of COVID-19, while acknowledging the generations of systemic racism and police violence that has wreaked greater havoc on our neighborhood. We've lost too many of our sons and daughters to senseless violence, too many of our seniors and residents to needless effects of lack of access, made possible by institutions that have written too many of our people off as second class.

But if adversity reveals true character, we stand tall knowing the true character of our neighborhood is one of resiliency, creating beauty from the chaos that has befallen this great neighborhood, much of which is beyond its stakeholders' control.

# STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE

The unrest our nation is encountering has only strengthened our collective resolve to transform our community in a manner where our assets are not only maintained but grow from within. No longer will we fall victim to silos, selfishness, or self-serving initiatives or actions that take away from the empowerment of the whole.

Martindale Brightwood stands positioned for a new tomorrow on the shoulders of long-time residents committed to ensuring their community becomes a thriving epicenter of empowerment, focusing first and foremost on our most underserved residents. We are fortified by churches, schools, and neighborhood organizations committed to expediting that return to greatness through faith, high quality, and commitment to our community. We are unashamedly and predominantly Black, and proudly support, promote and work toward efforts to build diversity from within from that foundation. We are further vociferous in our advocacy against those who would threaten the future that we envision for our children and future generations.

We are rich in talent, both from our most revered seniors who have paved the way for a new tomorrow and in our youth, who will soon lead the path we set today. We are diverse in thought and experience, but monolithic in our contention that our neighborhood is destined for the greatness generations before us envisioned.

As our revival continues, we are richer in transformative development and amenities that will prepare our community residents to assume their rightful places as critical contributors to our city, state and nation.

The residents and neighborhood-based organizations that represent this strong coalition welcome all who commit to this transformation in support of our vision. But to be clear, Martindale Brightwood embraces and owns its future, and we will not relinquish that responsibility.

We will demonstrate coalition and resolve through continued development of our neighborhood assets, as will be made obvious by the strengthening of our schools, the active participation of residents in community beautification and the advocacy of neighborhood and city strategies that engender the vision of community we deserve.

We are rooted in our faith that this community's most challenging days lie behind us, but through faith and work, the transformation that is underway will be accelerated with fidelity to our quality-of-life plan.

Most importantly, we celebrate our transformation through collective impact, knowing that one stakeholder, organization, church or amenity is no more or less important than the other, and all have an accountable role to play in leading our renaissance. As a result, Martindale Brightwood is not only fierce in its strive for positive change but also territorial in that we know the assets are here to drive that change.

Today, the many stakeholders representing this renewed coalition are demanding this neighborhood's rightful place as the makers of our destiny. We welcome all those with a vested interest to support and participate but are asking no one's permission. Frankly, our transformation will not happen to us, but will happen by us.

# MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD : A BRIEF HISTORY

First established in the 1870s with the construction of railroads in the area, the neighborhoods of Brightwood and Martindale provided homes for workers in the railways and the factories that were located adjacent to the lines. Immigrants settled on the Hill in Brightwood while the Martindale neighborhood, known locally as the Bottoms, attracted African Americans, including porters on the railroads. For generations, residents worked and raised families in the neighborhoods. As Martindale and Brightwood moved into the early 20th century, these communities became increasingly vibrant particularly along Station Street and Martindale Avenue, with stores, churches, and schools arising to serve residents. Even as Indianapolis became increasingly segregated, Martindale emerged as a center for the African American community, boasting a roller skating rink, movie theater, Frederick Douglass Park, and other amenities appealing to Black residents of the city.

After World War II, the neighborhood saw a transition marked especially by interstate highway construction that displaced thousands of residents, while other families moved to new Indianapolis suburbs. Racial segregation in housing and education challenged the community and systemic racism limited opportunities for Black residents of Martindale Brightwood.

Yet, the people of the community made institutions like Hazel Hart Hendricks School 37 and Francis W Parker School 56 their own expressions of hope for the future of Black children in a strong, supportive Black community. Martin University, a predominantly Black institution, was founded by Father Boniface Hardin in 1977. Churches provided centers for faith and also platforms for social justice. For instance, at St. John's MB Church, Dr. Andrew J. Brown hosted the organization of Indiana's branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, making Martindale Brightwood a center for the state's civil rights movement.

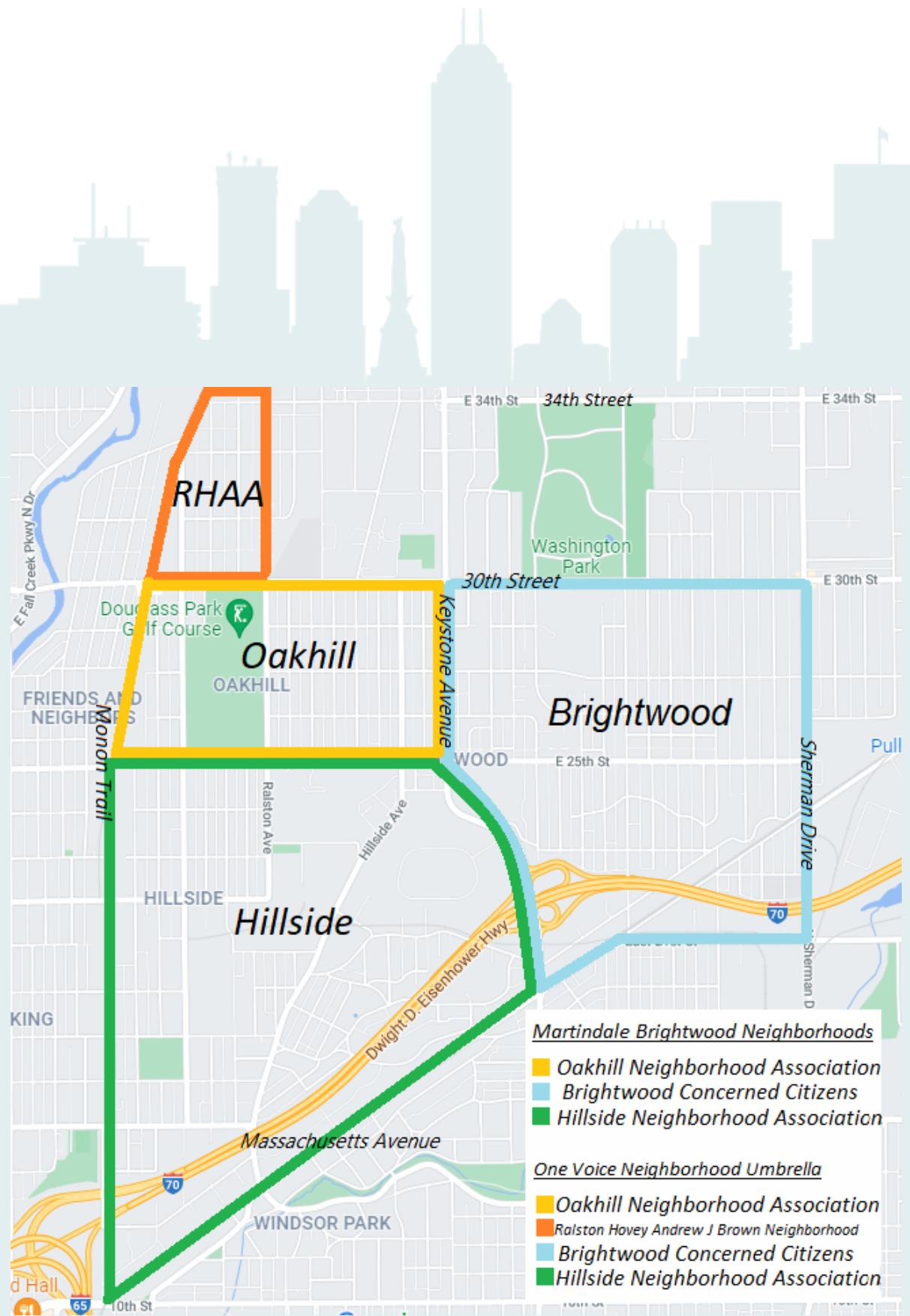
The four associations that represent the neighborhoods of Martindale Brightwood date back at least to the 1960s, when neighbors in Hillside, Oak Hill, Ralston Hovey Arsenal, and Brightwood Concerned Citizens began organizing to take on challenges. Later the community formed the umbrella neighborhood organization now known as One Voice Martindale Brightwood (OVMB) to coordinate across the neighborhoods and present a unified front in taking action.

More recently, advocacy organizations like the Martindale Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative and the Martindale Brightwood Code Compliance Committee have united to overcome specific challenges of environmental and housing quality. Residents in these associations are supported by stakeholders in several non-profit organizations working together in the MOVE MB Coalition. (For contact information on the associations and organizations leading change in Martindale Brightwood, please see the appendix to this Plan document.)

In the history of neighborhood advocacy and activism, many Greatriarchs have risen to leadership in Martindale Brightwood. A rich tradition of neighborhood leadership represented by people like Juanita Smith, Shirley Webster, Peggy Storey, Linda Minter, Frankie Cissel, Pat Ladd, and many, many others is carried on by a new generation of leaders who contributed to the creation of this Quality of Life Plan. But all of the leaders from the Martindale Brightwood understood that their mission was to represent the community as a whole, that their individual voices were powered by the collective voices of all of the neighbors in the community.

United and working collectively, residents and stakeholders of Martindale Brightwood have made significant accomplishments, through the implementation of four Quality of Life Plans since 2004.

# MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD : A BRIEF HISTORY



# QUALITY OF LIFE PLANS FROM 2000 - 2024

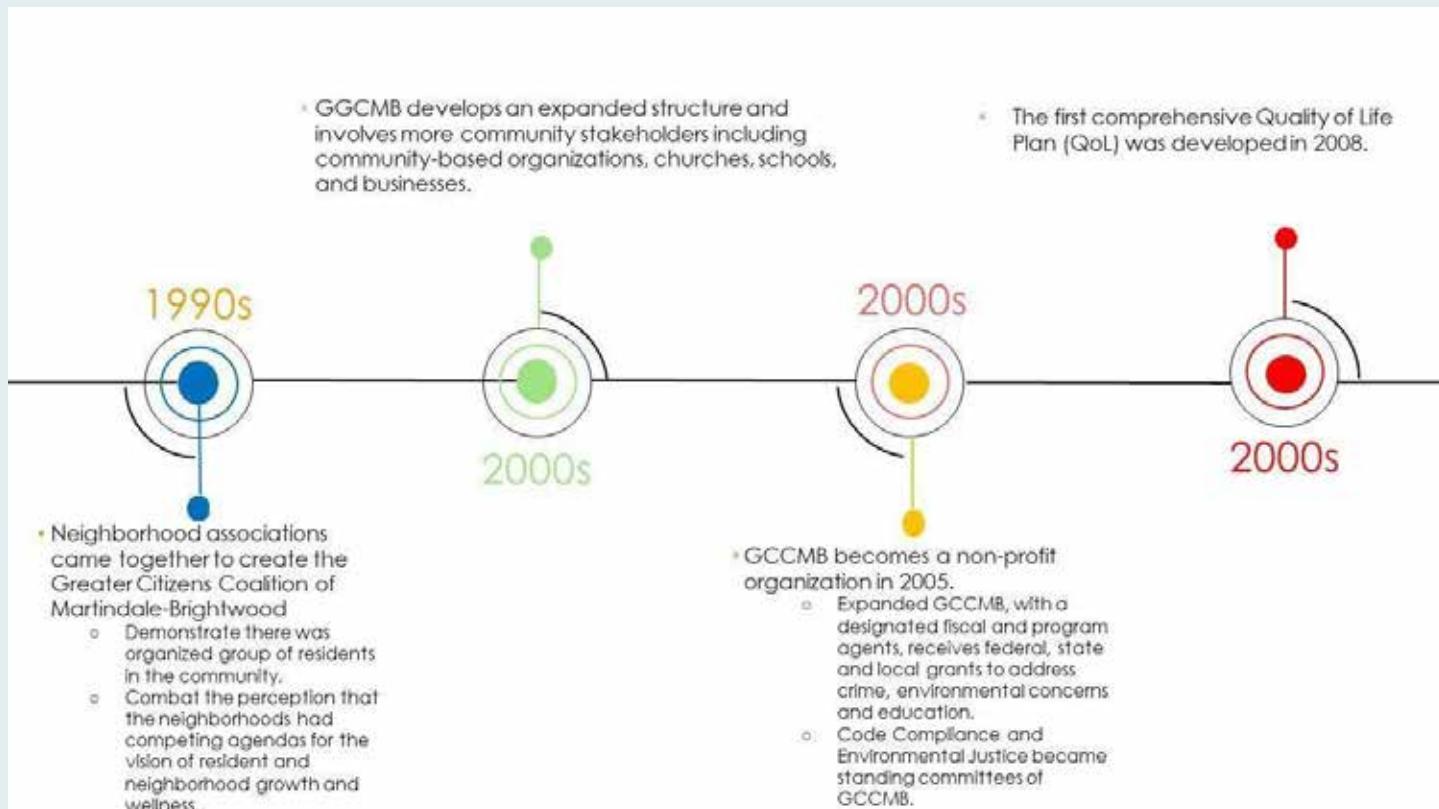
By Gina Lewis Alexander,

Executive Director Oasis Christian Community Development Corporation 1999 - 2024

In the early 2000's neighborhoods of Indianapolis took a deep dive into the intricacies and uniqueness of their respective communities. Two neighborhoods of Indianapolis; Martindale Brightwood being one in particular, drew the attention of a major foundation. The Annie E Casey Foundation decided to invest in the forward movement resident engagement of our community from 2000 through 2010.

With this burst of support residents of Martindale Brightwood felt a resurgence of community pride and preservation. Towards the end of this decade, the City of Indianapolis decided to invest funds into neighborhoods through LISC Indianapolis. An initiative was born to facilitate the distribution of these funds called the Great Indianapolis Neighborhoods Initiative, commonly referred to as GINI.

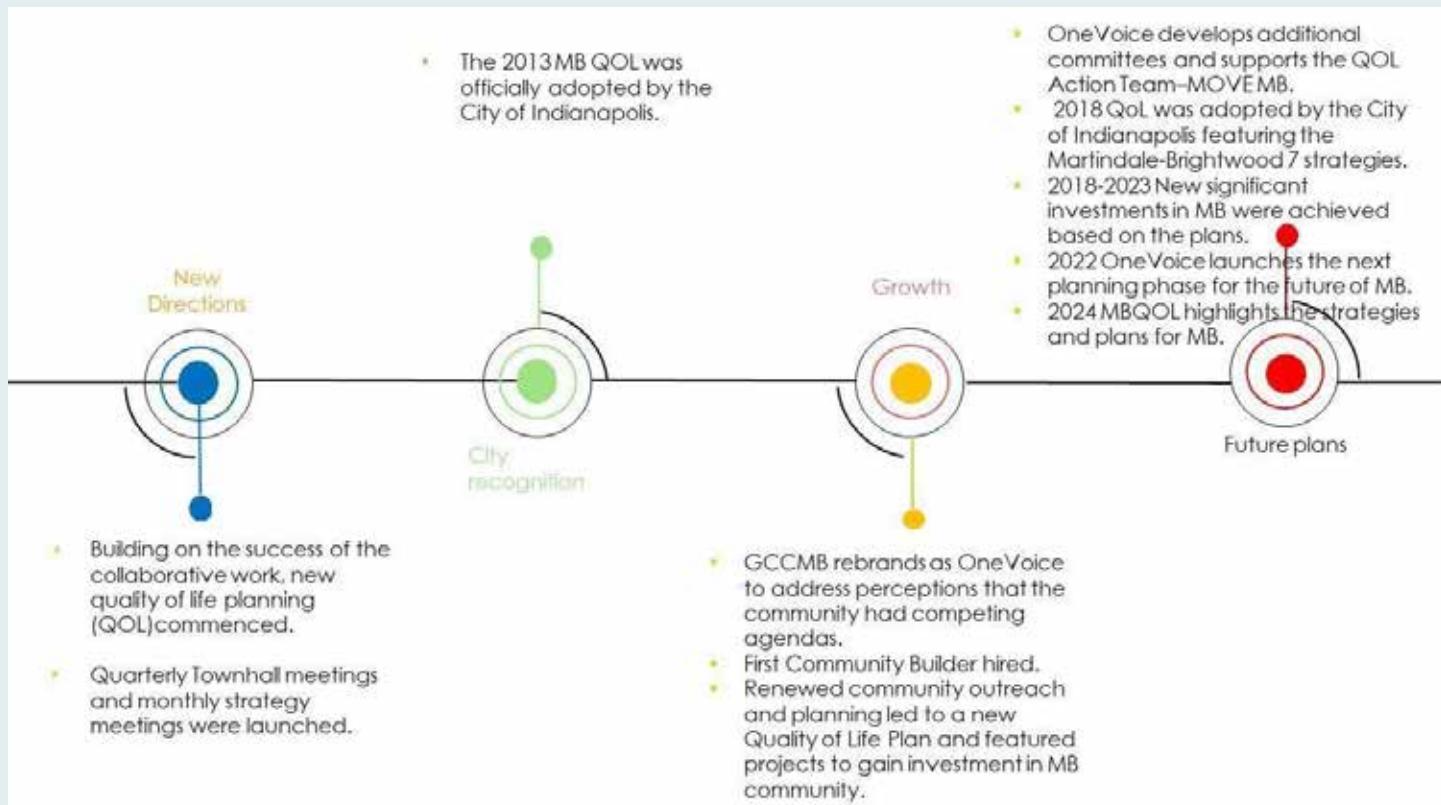
After such strong support from the Annie E Casey Foundation, resident leaders and community-based organizations came together to apply for GINI funds. Unfortunately, the community was denied access to these funds because of long term carry over stereotypes and city wide unfamiliarity of Martindale Brightwood strengths and sustainability. This lack of acknowledgement struck the core of community leaders and ignited a fire to create an infrastructure addressing Martindale Brightwood's top focus areas including strategies and action steps. In prior years this had been called a Neighborhood Plan. However, a new term had evolved and the infrastructure platform for neighborhood goal attainment was called a Quality of Life Plan.



# QUALITY OF LIFE PLANS FROM 2000 - 2024

Through subsequent efforts from the Annie E. Casey foundation and their staff, a Martindale Brightwood Quality of Life Plan was developed with much input and dedication from the community. This plan was presented to the city at a second RFP for GINI funding. This time the City responded that they had divided the City into four quadrants and Martindale Brightwood will be a part of the Northeast Quality of Life Planning Process. With the best interest of the beloved Martindale Brightwood community and recognizing the potentially added value of a Quality of Life Plan, residents and community stakeholders gathered at the Indiana State Fairgrounds working alongside Forest Manor, Devington, Millersville/Binford to develop the Northeast Quality of Life Plan.

This engagement yielded little progress for Martindale Brightwood. So again, community based organizations came together to strategize on the appropriate approach to gain the much deserved attention and funding for this community. The organizations were Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation, Oasis of Hope Development Corporation Brightwood Community Center and Edna Martin Christian Center. Stop the Violence was later added. These organizations committed to identifying neighborhood grants and pursuing them on behalf of Martindale Brightwood. Additionally, any available resources such as finances, staff time allocation facility usage or political connections were to be strategically applied to the advancement of Martindale Brightwood. These committed organizations became known as MOVE; a collaborative network utilizing resources to move the community of Martindale Brightwood forward. It was through this endeavor that residents and community leaders and organizations decided to come together and strengthen the Greater Indianapolis Citizens Coalition of Martindale Brightwood. GCCMB so that residents' input could



## QUALITY OF LIFE PLANS FROM 2000 - 2024

be documented and delivered to those who understood community development engagement commitment and sustainability. The GCCMB even decided to legally do business as ONE VOICE of Martindale Brightwood. So that all would understand the historic perspective of this community who has fought against many obstacles and systemic oppressions. Many neighborhood association meetings, town hall meetings, strategic planning sessions, subcommittee group meetings, zoom meetings, one on one meetings, front porch conversations, surveys, telephone calls and prayer meetings have been held to identify focus areas, partner organizations, action steps, timelines and measurable objectives.

There have been approximately five (5) updates to this document. Spanning time from 2005 to 2023 giving each living document an average life span of 3 years.

I have written this history to the best of my knowledge and there were moments when I shed a tear in remembering the soldiers of this community in which we stand on their shoulders, moments when I became angry at the injustices constantly placed upon this community as an albatross of hindrance.

**BUT, TODAY WE MAKE HISTORY AGAIN AND IT IS ALIVE AND WELL IN EACH OF US AS WE PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS!**



*The Harrison Center's Greatriarch project shares stories of residents and stakeholders who have served as advisors to the work and connections of the Martindale Brightwood community. For more information, please visit <https://www.harrisoncenter.org/greatriarchs>.*

# QUALITY OF LIFE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROCESS

## Why a Quality of Life Plan

This Quality of Life Plan's purpose is to serve as a comprehensive, community-driven roadmap designed to guide sustainable development and improvements in Martindale Brightwood over the next 5 years and aims to:

1. Identify and Prioritize Community Needs: Through extensive community engagement, this Quality of Life Plan outlines the most pressing issues and opportunities in Martindale-Brightwood across ten pillars
2. Strengthen Collaboration: By involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies, the plan seeks to further support collaboration and shared responsibility.
3. Provide Strategic Direction: The plan offers a set of actionable strategies and tactics for each focus area, providing a clear path forward for the community.
4. Promote Equity and Inclusion: The plan gives special attention to ensuring the equitable distribution of the benefits resulting from community development to residents, regardless of socio-economic status, race, or age.
5. Facilitate Investment: A well-researched and community-backed plan will attract public and private investment into the neighborhood for the implementation of identified strategies.
6. Measure and Monitor Progress: The plan includes key performance indicators and a monitoring framework to regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies, thereby ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.
7. Celebrate Community Identity: Through the promotion of arts, culture, and local history, the plan aims to strengthen and celebrate the unique identity of the Martindale-Brightwood community.

## The Planning Process

Over the past months, the Quality of Life Steering Committee has embarked on a journey of deep community engagement creating a collective vision of what Martindale-Brightwood can become in the next five years. The resilience and commitment of our community have been the cornerstones of this process. Despite the unprecedented communication challenges residual from the pandemic, the Committee successfully leveraged virtual platforms like Zoom and maintained active email correspondence to ensure every voice is heard. The insights and recommendations represent the efforts of hundreds of dedicated residents, business owners, organizers, and stakeholders, all united in their commitment to a thriving Martindale-Brightwood. Through planning sessions, town halls, and one-on-one meetings with residents, business owners, representatives of nonprofit and faith-based organizations, and elected officials, the process wove together diverse threads of Martindale Brightwood's assets and aspirations to inform a plan for the future.

# QUALITY OF LIFE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROCESS

## Current State Analysis

The community's deliberation and discussion were informed through efforts to collect and disseminate data and information describing the current realities for Martindale Brightwood. Black Onyx Management began this analysis in late 2022 at the beginning of the formal planning process, and additional data was collected in 2024. This background data is instrumental in identifying the existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities within the community, forming the basis for strategic planning and intervention. Components of the analysis included:

Media narratives can significantly influence community perspectives and priorities. A Media Scan with a thorough review of local and regional news outlets, social media platforms, and other media sources illuminated the public perception and media portrayal of Martindale Brightwood.

Data collection & analysis, gathering demographic data from public sources, often available through SAVI, to understand the characteristics, socio-economic conditions, and other relevant trends for the population as a whole. Data was also provided by local partner organizations to identify assets and critical issues.

Stakeholder interviews with residents and stakeholder institutions providing qualitative perspectives on assets and vulnerabilities that are the current reality for the neighborhood.

## Community Engagement

Perhaps the most critical element of a neighborhood quality of life plan is the engagement of the community, the many diverse people and the institutions that serve and represent them. Throughout the planning process, the leaders of One Voice Martindale Brightwood and the neighborhood associations actively prioritized the engagement of many different neighbors, and this priority was achieved. The Planning Process publicly launched with a Creators Conference in October 2022; a community Town Hall vision session in June of 2023; and culminated in a Quality of Life Town Hall in July 2024, with total attendance of nearly 300 people. In addition to these three major events a Planning Committee met monthly with sub-groups supplementing the Committee's work, with this nexus of efforts consistently engaging a group of 20-30 people over the course of more than a year. Engagement opportunities for neighbors included participation in existing community meetings, topical focus groups, and small group discussions.

# QUALITY OF LIFE PLANNING TIMELINE

## **Spring 2022.**

One Voice Martindale Brightwood initiates new Quality of Life Plan planning process, begins planning for Creators Conference and enlists volunteers.

## **Summer 2022.**

On behalf of One Voice, Edna Martin Christian Center issues RFP for a planning facilitator. Selection of Black Onyx Consulting in September 2022.

## **October 2022.**

OVMB hosted the Creators Conference on October 29, 2022 with more than 100 people in attendance, marking the launch of the Quality of Life planning process.

## **November 2022.**

Recruitment and first meeting of QoL Plan Committee, meeting monthly through November 2023. Black Onyx begins media scan, data collection, and stakeholder interviews.

## **March 2023.**

Black Onyx presents an initial report to the QoL Committee.

## **April 2023.**

Committee identifies nine Pillars of QoL Plan and organizes sub-groups for Pillars. Subgroups meet parallel to the full committee.

## **June 22, 2023.**

Town Hall Discussion engaged over 80 neighbors residents in the Quality-of-Life Planning process, where they shared their vision and priorities for the future of Martindale Brightwood.

## **November 2023.**

Development of vision and goals for each Pillar. Full Committee decides to add a tenth Pillar, recognizing the importance of Youth Engagement.

## **January through May, 2024.**

Implementation planning to detail Strategies and Action Steps for each Pillar.

## **March 2024.**

OVMB begins QoL Town Hall Planning.

## **July 27, 2024.**

Quality of Life Town Hall at the new Frederick Douglass Family Center introduces the Quality of Life Plan to over 100 residents and stakeholders. Recruitment of volunteers for implementation begins.

## **Fall 2024.**

Anticipated presentation of Martindale Brightwood Quality of Life Plan to City of Indianapolis for certification.

## VISION & PURPOSE

Residents envision Martindale Brightwood as a thriving, inclusive community that prioritizes their well-being. Residents aspire to strengthen the social fabric of their communities through initiatives that encourage engagement and cooperative action by neighbors and youth. Access to equitable, affordable housing represents an overwhelming and immediate concern in the community.

Environmental justice initiatives must correct past contamination while ensuring healthy land, water, and air in the future. Programs focusing on education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and youth development are also crucial, as they believe these programs will empower youth and adults to promote long-term economic stability. They desire more spaces for cultural activities, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, share experiences, and build strong, supportive networks. They seek enhanced greenspaces and recreational areas that promote physical activity and offer families culturally reflective environments for socializing and relaxation. Improved infrastructure, including greater street illumination, pedestrian-focused safety features, and accessible public transportation better connects the neighborhood to the surrounding city. Additionally, residents emphasize the need for local healthcare facilities, mental health support services, and wellness programs, as well as healthy food, to be readily available and affordable, fostering a holistic approach to health.

Ultimately, the vision for the Martindale-Brightwood community centers on creating safe, vibrant, and nurturing environments that cater to the diverse needs of all residents, ensuring a high quality of life and a strong sense of belonging. This iteration of the Martindale-Brightwood Quality of Life Plan (QOL) details a plan of action for all MB stakeholders (residents, businesses, faith and community organizations, elected officials and community supporters) to make this vision a reality. The enclosed plan represents the manifestation of that charge. It is the product of a multi-year journey engaged by committed neighborhood residents and stakeholders aligned around the goal of ensuring agency over the neighborhood's future. The plan identifies ten key pillars determined by the collective as essential components for a vibrant, thriving Martindale Brightwood where all can reside, work, learn, worship, and play, with those Plan Pillars encompassing:

Arts and Culture | Economic Development | Education | Environmental Justice | Health & Wellness | Housing & Infrastructure | Neighborhood Engagement | Public Safety | Workforce Development | Youth Engagement

See more details for each pillar beginning with page 14.

The plan recognizes the complexity of implementing actions along the ten pillars. However, the implementation effort includes goals, strategies, and actions to be engaged throughout this plan's 5-year time frame. Lead partners understand their responsibility for implementing strategies and other organizations are in line to support actions. While identified "pillar leads" and partners will drive and hold to account efforts engaged under the plan, the plan is intentionally forward-looking, recognizing the neighborhood's continual and accelerated evolution. As trends emerge, this collective will monitor progress and incorporate adjustments over the plan's duration, as deemed beneficial.

"We are Martindale-Brightwood, and this is our vision to enhance the quality of life in our community over the next five years. As we present the Martindale-Brightwood Quality of Life Plan, we invite everyone who reviews this Plan to consider how they may contribute to implementing the proposed strategies and join us in turning this vision into a lasting reality for generations to come." – Kenya McMillen, President, One Voice Martindale Brightwood.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS QUALITY OF LIFE PLANS



Previous Quality Of Life Plan Accomplishments From Left To Right: New Martindale-Brightwood Branch Library, Grand Opening Of CDC, Kipp Legacy High School & First Graduating Class, 37 Place Community Center, Opening Of Frederick Douglass Community Center, Enda Martin Christian Center Leadership and Legacy Center

## ARTS & CULTURE

Martindale Brightwood's arts and culture tradition has been nurtured by churches, having the reputation for music excellence and often hosting plays and other cultural events. This new plan builds on this historic legacy of church partnership, but infuses arts and culture into other anchor institutions to reach more residents. Some of these organizations are already doing the work and are partnering with KIB, Indianapolis Arts Council, and Harrison Center for electrical box art, murals, and other public art. But, much more needs to be done to engage residents and stakeholders in arts and culture.

Arts and culture goals seek to identify and elevate Martindale Brightwood artists, provide arts education to foster a new generation of artists and arts engagement, connect residents to and preserve neighborhood culture, and create more venues and events to benefit the neighborhood. The goal is that in five years, more residents will be engaged in cultivating a vibrant community where residents know the neighborhood's history, celebrate its culture, and create art and music that honor its history and shape its future. Martindale Brightwood will be a beacon of creativity and community expression.

This will happen through a collective approach—each neighbor, neighborhood, church, or anchor institution leveraging resources and connections to arts and culture. And, while these arts and culture goals will strengthen the cultural life of the neighborhood, they will also support the broader work and success of the quality of life plan. Arts and culture cannot thrive in a silo, but in relationship and partnership with other quality of life plan goals.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** Engage with community artists and residents to create and showcase art that reflects the culture and aspirations of Martindale-Brightwood.

STRATEGY 1.1 Identify and engage artists living or working in Martindale Brightwood.

STRATEGY 1.2 Kickstart community art workshops led by local artists to provide residents with opportunities to create and exhibit their artwork.

STRATEGY 1.3 Collaborate with artists to make Martindale Brightwood beautiful through public art.

**GOAL 2.** Intergenerational Education and Cultural Preservation: Educate the community across generations about the history and cultural significance of Martindale Brightwood

STRATEGY 2.1 Launch and continue oral history projects that capture the stories and experiences of long time residents ensuring intergenerational knowledge transfer.

STRATEGY 2.2 Conduct workshops and seminars on the community history and heritage of Martindale Brightwood, led by local historians and elders.

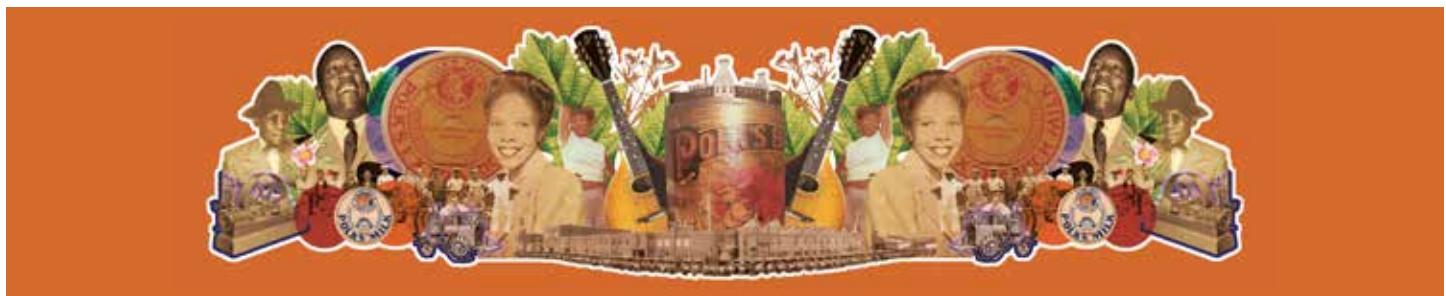
STRATEGY 2.3 Revive storytelling for family and community as an art form

STRATEGY 2.4 Develop guided historical tours of Martindale Brightwood showcasing landmarks and cultural sites

**GOAL 3.** Establish spaces and events in Martindale Brightwood to feature the community's arts and culture

STRATEGY 3.1 Establish community art galleries and cultural spaces to exhibit local artwork and cultural artifacts to capture the neighborhood's history.

STRATEGY 3.2 Make Martindale Brightwood the Porching Capital in Indianapolis to build neighbor relationships



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

After generations of institutional and systemic disinvestment, Martindale Brightwood has emerged from the COVID-19 Pandemic as a neighborhood ripe for accelerated community and economic development. Over the past 5 years, in fact, city, corporate, private and philanthropic investments into the neighborhood has improved overall livability, with improved infrastructure, enhanced amenities and ease of access as to downtown. Likewise the area has maintained substantial business hubs that equally benefit from the locale, both in proximity to downtown and the interstate and, where residents are concerned with the opportunity to provide living wage jobs to residents as key stakeholders.

At the same time, residents, stakeholders, local businesses and home grown entrepreneurs have actively engaged in planning and development as the neighborhood enters a post pandemic reality. The result of these efforts are strategic investments and strengthening of opportunities to drive local dollars, and prospects for future growth.

Stakeholder agencies are well positioned to align economic development opportunities with resident articulated demand, following years of investment into robust workforce development and entrepreneurship innovations for Martindale Brightwood. The neighborhood envisions a vibrant, self sustained community where local investment is recycled. Opportunities exist for prospective businesses and commerce, with this plan creating structure for its coordination.

The Martindale Brightwood CDC, Oasis Development Corporation and Edna Martin Christian Center also boast long histories of attracting and directing economic development resources for neighborhood benefit. They are bolstered by external partners and alignment in larger coalitions such as the Eastside Economic Mobility and Recovery District. With enhanced capacity and resident participation, these agencies are exploring greater opportunities to direct reuse opportunities for existing facilities, concurrent with future land use planning.

Despite exciting opportunities, the neighborhood is keenly aware of pressures that threaten current residents' ability to reap the benefits of these targeted enhancements. Therefore, any place-based comprehensive plan for improvement must include efforts to ensure housing stability as the neighborhood evolves. Connected housing strategies are outlined in the Housing and Infrastructure section.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** *Provide resources to existing and new businesses in Martindale Brightwood*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Organize existing businesses for mutual support and collaboration*

STRATEGY 1.2 *Identify new and potential businesses*

**GOAL 2.** *Create more available space for businesses to operate within Martindale Brightwood*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Reuse existing facilities*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Create new facilities*



## EDUCATION

Education has always been integral to the quality of life in Martindale-Brightwood. Alongside communities of faith, small businesses, and dedicated non-profits, schools have been a crucial part of the neighborhood's fabric throughout the community's rich history. The history of education in Martindale-Brightwood has been defined by dedicated educators and schools that range from IPS schools and public charter schools to religiously-affiliated private schools and high-quality early childhood options. Despite a redoubtable history, Martindale-Brightwood has also been significantly impacted by policy decisions that have led to tremendous levels of education instability. As a result of IPS being found guilty of having segregated schools in 1973, the Indiana State Supreme Court mandated the one-way busing of African American students out of Center Township neighborhoods, including Martindale-Brightwood, to outlying townships. This decision meant that for most families their 'boundary' school district - starting in the early 1980's through 2017 – was Perry Meridian, 35 minutes south of the neighborhood. This policy catalyzed multiple decades where disinvestment in education in Martindale-Brightwood led to substantial instability. Since 1980, 27 schools have closed within a half-mile radius of the Martindale-Brightwood community. As a result of this instability, education opportunities and attainment have been limited.

Throughout the past four decades when school closures have been too often a defining feature of the education context in Martindale-Brightwood, non-profits, churches, and neighborhood leaders have stepped up to provide crucial consistency, wrap-around support and programming, and mentorship. Building on that commitment, over the past decade educational institutions have established a renewed commitment to the community, strengthening collaboration with existing assets, and making new investments in alignment with the neighborhood's previous quality of life plans. As a result of that approach, education options in the community have stabilized and students in the community are poised to realize long-term attainment gains. At the heart of this revitalization is the collaboration between KIPP Indy Public Schools and the Edna Martin Christian Center. In the 24-25 school year, KIPP Indy will educate over 80% of the students that go to school every day in Martindale-Brightwood. Together, KIPP Indy and EMCC have strengthened educational options for students from birth through college, built the first new high school in the community in direct response to the previous quality of life plan, and strengthened collaboration with key community institutions like Oasis of Hope Baptist Church and Frederick Douglas Park as well as residents. While there is still a significant journey to travel as far as attainment is concerned, student results have been encouraging: 100% of the 186 students that have been enrolled as seniors in KIPP Indy Legacy High's first two graduating classes have graduated on-time, with 90%+ going on to enroll at 2 or 4-year higher ed institutions or high-quality career, technical education certification programs. Students at KIPP Indy consistently perform in the top quartile of schools in the city for academic growth, and the community has provided robust support to ensure that more students are attending school every day and able to sustain their enrollment year over year.

## EDUCATION CONTINUED

In addition to KIPP Indy and EMCC, The Oaks Academy, James Russell Lowell at School 51, and Martin University all play integral roles in the neighborhood's education environment. As the community looks to the next five years, stakeholders are focused on significantly impacting quality of life across four key areas within education:

- 1) strengthening the pipeline for high-quality early childhood education so that students enter kindergarten prepared and ready to access grade-level content;
- 2) increasing the number of seats at neighborhood schools so that families in Martindale-Brightwood don't have to leave their community to find a great school;
- 3) continuing to strengthen collaboration between community institutions, residents and families, and schools in order to improve student attendance, attainment, and retention; and
- 4) improve student preparedness for and enrollment in high-quality postsecondary programs.

Martindale-Brightwood's rich history provides the inspiration that today's educators and leaders need to build on the investments, increased collaboration, and outcome momentum that the community has experienced over the past decade. Students in Martindale-Brightwood are brilliant, resilient, and have limitless potential, and as we look to the next five years the neighborhood is poised to support them in new ways so that they have countless options and can pursue pathways that align with their passion and purpose.



# EDUCATION GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** *Ensure families have a strong pipeline for children 0-5 for early childhood developmental and educational opportunities and interventions.*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Expand the number of children and families participating in home visiting programs such as Parents as Teachers, Healthy Families, or Nurse Family Partnership*

STRATEGY 1.2 *Implement appropriate early developmental assessments and intervention access with Martindale Brightwood children 0-5*

STRATEGY 1.3 *Ensure that children 0-5 can access high quality early childhood education opportunities in Martindale Brightwood*

**GOAL 2.** *Students can successfully complete their K-12 education at high quality, neighborhood schools.*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Ensure that Martindale-Brightwood schools have enough seats to accommodate neighborhood students*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Provide high-quality instructional systems and practices to maximize growth & proficiency for all students, including diverse and Multilingual Learners*

STRATEGY 2.3 *Provide identity affirming, well-rounded K-12 offerings to students.*

STRATEGY 2.4 *Provide Quality Out of School Time (OST) options to provide experiential learning for students and support families with the assurance of a safe, welcoming learning environment.*

**GOAL 3.** *Increase collaboration between schools, community, and families to support student success*

STRATEGY 3.1 *Ensure Martindale-Brightwood schools implement vision for consistent, authentic family engagement to support student success*

STRATEGY 3.2 *Implement family and community engagement programming and support to ensure financial and social stability and high levels of engagement among families.*

## GOALS & STRATEGIES CONTINUED

**GOAL 4.** *Ensure students have a positive post-secondary plan including college, certifications, military, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship*

STRATEGY 4.1 *Graduate students from high school ready for success in career and college*

STRATEGY 4.2 *Develop & implement sustainable college and career counseling model to maximize post-secondary success, as defined by enrollment in 2 or 4 year college, military, CTE, and employment*

STRATEGY 4.3 *Young people achieve, persist, and complete in their positive post-secondary plan*

STRATEGY 4.4 *Adult and Non-traditional students undertake post secondary education and training to advance in their career goals*



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Like everyone, the residents of Martindale Brightwood have a right to expect that their homes are free from pollution and their neighborhood provides a healthy place for them and their families to live and raise children. While that has not always been true in Martindale Brightwood, community leaders continue to fight to ensure a cleaner, healthier environment.

When established in the nineteenth century, both Brightwood and Martindale were industrial districts, characterized by an adjacent land use mix of factories and residences. In the twentieth century, neighbors increasingly connected industrial pollution with their health problems from asthma to cancer. Particularly egregious was the operation of a smelter which for twenty years emitted airborne lead contaminants which went into the lungs of neighbors and the soil of neighborhood properties. Later, neighbors also discovered the extent to which dangerous industrial solid waste had been deposited in the ground throughout Martindale Brightwood

Complaints and legal actions by neighbors as early as the 1930s were ignored or rebutted by business and government officials who successfully leveraged racist power structures. But beginning around 2005, neighbors organized the Martindale Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative (MBEJC) and enlisted the US Environmental Protection Agency to force the National Lead Company to remediate ground in 225 properties. In 2016, after testing determined that contamination remained in some lots and also discovered more contaminated properties, another wave of remediation served an additional 101 properties.

The MBEJC, working closely with the Martindale Brightwood Code Compliance Committee continues its vigilance to reverse past environmental challenges. But data on lead blood levels in Martindale Brightwood children 5 years and younger shows a decrease in the ten-year period ending in 2021. The fight for environmental justice continues, but there has been progress for the people of Martindale Brightwood.

In this Quality-of-Life Plan, the MBEJC & Code Compliance Committee commit to lead continuing efforts to organize and educate neighbors, mobilizing them to advocate for the community's environmental interests. The plan also will empower young neighbors in this work, passing the torch to a new generation of Martindale Brightwood neighbors who can address historic inequities and prevent problems with future development.

Leaders will also expand their actions to monitor air quality, particularly auto emissions; to explore cleaner transportation options; and to create more green spaces that filter emissions. Historically, Martindale Brightwood has been a gardening community and reviving that tradition supports food access and self-sufficiency. Developing and implementing new, alternative and renewable energy sources for homes, businesses, and transportation, and also increased energy conservation, will benefit the environment and while reducing economic burden for neighbors.

Water quality will also be a priority and a collaboration begun in 2024 between Martindale Brightwood and Citizens Energy to replace lead service pipe connections between homes and water utility lines promises to further decrease exposure of neighbors to dangerous contaminants in the water they consume.

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONTINUED

**GOAL 1.** *Governmental, civic, and corporate stakeholders collaborate with Martindale Brightwood and respond accountably to the interest and concerns of residents and youth.*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Community Advocacy: Organize community meetings and advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about specific environmental issues and demand accountability from government officials and stakeholders.*

STRATEGY 1.2 *New developments and projects in Martindale Brightwood perform Environmental Impact Assessments prior to development and provide results of those assessments to the community.*

**GOAL 2.** *Empower Martindale Brightwood residents to solve environmental issues with public information, education, and organizing.*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Inform and educate residents about environmental topics, such as pollution, conservation, and sustainability.*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Empower young residents to become environmental advocates.*

**GOAL 3.** *Reduce the burden of energy costs on Martindale Brightwood residents.*

STRATEGY 3.1 *Collaborate with energy companies and other organizations to provide residents with information and resources to save energy and reduce costs*

STRATEGY 3.2 *Homeowners, organizations, and businesses in the community access and benefit from renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind or geothermal.*

**GOAL 4.** *Implement initiatives to improve air quality in Martindale Brightwood.*

STRATEGY 4.1 *Residents and youth understand the importance of clean air and access real-time data on air quality.*

STRATEGY 4.2 *More use of clean transportation options reduces vehicle emissions in the neighborhood.*

STRATEGY 4.3 *Improve air quality and provide natural filtration through expanded green space and more trees*

**GOAL 5.** *Ensure access to clean water supply*

STRATEGY 5.1 *Citizens Energy replaces lead pipe connections from houses to water mains throughout Martindale Brightwood*

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 6.** Increase access to healthy and affordable food options within Martindale Brightwood

STRATEGY 6.1 Residents grow and consume more locally grown vegetables, fruits and other foods

STRATEGY 6.2 More vendors offer affordable, healthy food options for residents

STRATEGY 6.3 Residents make healthier food choices



## GOALS & STRATEGIES CONTINUED



RESTORATION | RESILIENCE | REVITALIZATION

## HEALTH & WELLNESS



Health and Wellness of its people are key pillars of any community's Quality of Life. Several entities located in or serving Martindale Brightwood contribute to increased health and wellness and will be part of the implementation of this plan, which proposes the formation of a collective impact coalition, relying on coordinated engagement and communication between residents and stakeholders. While we have made progress, there remains much to do.

One statistic provides a stark measure of health inequities that challenge our neighborhood. According to health records, in 2018 the estimated life expectancy of a child born in Martindale Brightwood was 62 years, compared to 76 years for Marion County.

In neighborhoods like Martindale Brightwood, residents face significant health disparities. Nationally, Black people show a higher occurrence rate than white people of chronic and infectious diseases. Black neighbors are more likely to have high blood pressure, but less likely to have their high blood pressure controlled by medication.

In 2021, 22.7% of adults in Martindale Brightwood were diagnosed with diabetes and 49.4% of the MB population 18+ years were described as obese. There are also glaring health disparities for the Martindale Brightwood residents in terms of maternal health, birth outcomes, and infant health. In 2022 this rate was 31.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, with infant mortality among Black people 2.4 times higher than for white people.

We know that people of all ethnicities and cultures experience mental health conditions. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shares that 1 in 4 adults 18+ years, and 1 in 3 among adults aged 18 to 25, had a mental illness in the past year. When considering the mental health of Black Americans, historical and cultural factors have led to significant disparities. For example, nationally 25% of Black people seek mental health treatment when needed, compared to 40% of white people.

The health disparities facing communities such as Martindale Brightwood can be attributed in part to several significant structural barriers to health equity. Income inequality challenges many households. Lack of health insurance is also a key barrier to health care access for the population. SAVI notes that in 2022, 12% of the total population of Martindale Brightwood was without health insurance including 5.5% of children lacking health coverage. While access to health insurance increased during COVID relief funding, Indiana's potential rollback of those supports in 2024 threatens many of the most vulnerable neighbors with removal of those benefits.

Limited health literacy (LHL) represents an additional barrier to health care access and utilization in the neighborhood. Often written information about health and health insurance is written at or above a high school reading level, hampering access of people to navigate health care and insurance systems. With these facts, the Health and Wellness of the Quality of Life Implementation plan commits to create and conduct Advocacy and Education, enabling information that empowers

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

residents to become healthier and more well. Post pandemic, encouraging investments toward bridging this gap are underway. Health providers are working with residents and stakeholders toward more accessible access points for quality, comprehensive health care at little to no cost. Providers such as IU Health, Eskanazi Health, Community Health Networks and HealthNet continue to direct resources toward efforts to alleviate access barriers with fidelity to the community's goals and strategies. In the case of HealthNet, the provider's Martindale Brightwood facility has been prioritized for more centralized provider access, while the Edna Martin Christian Center, the Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper and One Voice lead initiatives and efforts to boost resident connectivity through programs and direct resident engagement.

**GOAL 1.** *Residents have voice and power in the neighborhood's health and wellness system and services*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Organize a Martindale Brightwood Health & Wellness Coalition of residents and partners to oversee and monitor the health and wellness of the neighborhood, then act and advocate to improve health and wellness.*

**GOAL 2.** *Residents access affordable, quality health services when they need them.*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Establish local health clinics and mobile health clinics in the neighborhood*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Residents understand and successfully navigate the health care system*

STRATEGY 2.3 *All residents are covered by health insurance.*

**GOAL 3.** *Martindale Brightwood residents and youth engage in healthy lifestyles and practices.*

STRATEGY 3.1 *Increase options for physical activity, healthy eating, stress management, and other elements for a healthy lifestyle*

STRATEGY 3.2 *Reduce options for unhealthy practices*

**GOAL 4.** *Residents and youth understand the importance of mental health and access mental health services when they need them*

STRATEGY 4.1 *Address the stigma surrounding mental health and increase resources for mental health support.*

STRATEGY 4.2 *Ensure access to mental health services and information about those services*

## HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Several Martindale Brightwood stakeholders are partnering to increase the supply of accessible, affordable, quality housing for the diverse people who call the neighborhood home. The Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation (MBCDC) has long led in the development of housing and infrastructure resources for the community and will take leadership in these Quality of Life strategies. Oasis Christian Community Development Corporation developed and manages more than 200 affordable rental units. In 2022, Edna Martin established a new community development subsidiary that has already acquired three homes for rehabilitation in 2024 and another 13 lots for development in the next five years. The Edna Martin Community Based Development Organization (EMCBDO) also partners with Intend Indiana to provide Homeowner Education that includes assistance with securing mortgage financing.

In recent years, Martindale Brightwood has seen steady growth in housing activity in recent years for both new construction and renovation with 722 residential building permits issued between 2016 and 2022. Still demand for housing has outpaced supply with 1138 applications for home purchase or improvement loans originating for Martindale Brightwood during that same six-year period. High demand for housing may contribute to a decline in the residential vacancy rate to 22% in 2022. However, housing vacancies in Martindale Brightwood are more than double the Marion County vacancy rate of 10%.

Residents have noted that new home construction has concentrated in the southwest section of the neighborhood, adjacent to the Monon Trail for new market-rate housing that attracts new residents to the neighborhood. Long time neighbors fear this new development threatens the character of Martindale Brightwood, pricing homeownership out of their reach. Some data may reinforce concerns about gentrification, including a significant increase in median assessed value of homes, from just under \$24,000 in 2016 to more than \$55,000 (more than double) in 2022. Racial disparities in access to home financing may also indicate signs of gentrification. Beginning in 2018, more white applicants than Black applicants have applied for mortgages to purchase houses in the neighborhood. In 2022, 38% of mortgage applicants were white compared with 27.5% of Black applicants. Mortgage approval for Martindale Brightwood homes also reflect racial disparities with 70% of white applicants approved by lenders compared to only 44% approval of Black mortgage applicants.

Overall, the Martindale Brightwood homeownership rate has decreased 10% from 2010 to 2022 and the current homeownership rate of 39% lags 10% behind Marion County and is 20% lower than Indiana. During this same period, the median monthly rent has increased from \$700/month to over \$1,000/month. In 2022, about 43% of Martindale Brightwood residents are burdened with housing costs greater than 30% of their monthly income. This burden falls much harder on renters, Renters report a greater burden with 55% renters spending 30% of income on housing compared to 25% of homeowners.

Fortunately, the neighborhood can rely on leadership from MBCDC, Oasis of Hope, and EMCBDO to implement strategies described in this QoL plan. Furthermore, in the last two years, several new investments have been promised for development of housing and infrastructure. In 2021, the City of Indianapolis Lift Indy program allocated \$3.5 million to be used by Edna Martin and the Martindale

## HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED

Brightwood CDC for several redevelopment projects. That same year, the City announced a home ownership tax increment financing district (HoTIF) focusing on the Hillside Neighborhood which designates some property taxes for residential redevelopment. The 30th & Monon Project plans significant residential development immediately west of the neighborhood in former industrial areas. The Connected Communities initiative supported by the Lilly Endowment and the Central Indiana Community Foundation promises investment to better utilize access to the Monon and other Greenways, and also investment in other vehicular and pedestrian transportation options. Creating a comprehensive housing and infrastructure strategy for an underserved community involves addressing several key aspects: housing accessibility, infrastructure development, community engagement, and sustainability.

By following these steps, the housing and infrastructure strategy for the Martindale Brightwood community can be both comprehensive and sustainable, aiming to improve residents' quality of life and foster inclusive economic growth.



# HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1. Assessment and Needs Identification:** *Housing and Infrastructure goals, strategies and actions are based on quantitative and qualitative data that accurately describes the current reality.*

**STRATEGY 1.1 Community Consultation:** *Engage with community leaders, residents, and local organizations to understand the needs, concerns, and priorities regarding housing and infrastructure*

**STRATEGY 1.2 Data Collection:** *Gather demographic information, housing conditions, infrastructure deficiencies, and environmental considerations (e.g. flood risk, brownfields)*

**STRATEGY 1.3 Needs Prioritization:** *Identify critical areas such as affordable housing, sanitation, and transportation infrastructure.*

**GOAL 2. Housing Development:** *Residents have more access to affordable, quality housing options.*

**STRATEGY 2.1 Affordable Housing Initiatives:** *Partner with developers, nonprofits, and government agencies to increase affordable housing options through subsidies, grants, and tax incentives.*

**STRATEGY 2.2 Mixed Income Housing:** *Promote mixed-income developments to ensure diversity and inclusivity within the community.*

**STRATEGY 2.3 Renovation Programs:** *Establish programs to renovate, repair and upgrade existing housing stock to improve living conditions and energy efficiency.*

**GOAL 3. Infrastructure Improvement:** *Residents have increased mobility as well as more secure, affordable and sustainable energy.*

**STRATEGY 3.1 Transportation:** *Enhance public transportation networks, create pedestrian friendly infrastructure, and improve road conditions to facilitate connectivity and mobility.*

**STRATEGY 3.2 Energy Access:** *Promote renewable energy adoption, update electrical grids, and provide energy efficiency incentives to reduce utility costs.*

**GOAL 4. Community Empowerment and Engagement:** *Residents are informed, prepared, and confident to take action to improve quality of life in Martindale Brightwood.*

**STRATEGY 4.1 Capacity Building:** *Offer training programs in construction skills, entrepreneurship, and community leadership to empower residents*

**STRATEGY 4.2 Local Governance:** *Foster participatory decision-making through community meetings, advisory boards, and regular updates on project progress.*

# GOALS & STRATEGIES CONTINUED

STRATEGY 4.3 *Cultural Preservation: Incorporate cultural heritage into urban planning and infrastructure design to maintain community identity and pride.*

**GOAL 5. Sustainability and Resilience:** *New developments promote improved environmental quality and protect the neighborhood from hazardous effects of climate change.*

STRATEGY 5.1 *Green Infrastructure: Implement green spaces, urban gardens, and sustainable drainage systems to improve environmental quality and resilience to climate change.*

STRATEGY 5.2 *Resilience Planning: Develop strategies to mitigate natural disaster risks (e.g. flooding, tornadoes) through infrastructure preparedness programs.*

**GOAL 6. Monitoring and Evaluation:** *Community voices guide continuous improvement of housing and infrastructure strategy implementation.*

STRATEGY 6.1 *Feedback Mechanisms: Regularly solicit feedback from residents and stakeholders to adjust strategies and address emerging issues.*

**GOAL 7. Policy & Advocacy:** *The neighborhood addresses root causes to overcome systemic challenges connected to housing and infrastructure, while ensuring long-term improvement in the built environment.*

STRATEGY 7.1 *Policy Development: Advocate for policies at local and regional levels that support affordable housing, sustainable development practices, and infrastructure investment.*

STRATEGY 7.2 *Legal Protections: Ensure equitable access to housing and infrastructure services through legal protections against discrimination and displacement.*

STRATEGY 7.3 *Strategic Planning: Develop a long-term vision for the community's growth and development, incorporating flexibility to adapt to changing economic, social, and environmental conditions.*

STRATEGY 7.4 *Legacy Planning: Foster intergenerational equity by ensuring that future generations benefit from improved housing, infrastructure, and community resources.*

# NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

Martindale Brightwood's neighborhood revitalization strategies have long employed a collective impact approach, leaning heavily on coordinated engagement and communication between MBs tapestry of residents and stakeholders. The neighborhood engagement trajectory in fact is rooted in the legacy that is the Greater Citizens Coalition of Martindale Brightwood (GCCMB), which long identified the need to align MB residents until a singular umbrella to be activated where collective neighborhood advocacy is required. At its most granular, MB resident-led engagement begins in each of the individual neighborhood associations: Ralston Hovey, Hillside, Oak Hill and Brightwood Concerned Citizens. Each allied around an Asset Based Community Development Approach, residents of these quadrants coalesce through a resident led Community Congress: One Voice Martindale Brightwood. With a mandated resident-majority representation, One Voice has built capacity post pandemic to ensure residents maintain agency in the determination of neighborhood investments. Embedded under the Congress umbrella also critical advocacy arms: The Code Compliance and Land Use Committee, Environmental Justice Collaborative and most recently the Hillside HOTIF committee, each of whom make regular recommendations to the City, utility corporate partners and other relevant policy makers in determination of critical infrastructure enhancements, housing and broader community development activities.

The resident-led congress is bolstered by MOVE-MB, a stakeholder coalition designed to leverage community resources and implement strategies through the integration of programs, services and coordinated community engagement activities. Several of the entities contributing to the development of this comprehensive implementation plan comprise this collaboration.

The culmination of these collective assets position MB to engage an aggressive neighborhood engagement apparatus necessary to achieve the goals and strategies outlined. Of critical importance, the Martindale Brightwood's stakeholders adhere to connectivity and inclusivity, which not only purposefully incorporates youth and intergeneration voice and participation, but welcomes new and returning residents, committed to the neighborhood's vibrancy. Over the next five years, ideally these efforts will result in the historic perseveration of neighborhood identity and the further cultivation of resident leadership at all age levels through continued engagement opportunities and communications strategies.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** *More neighbors demonstrate increased engagement in the Martindale Brightwood community.*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Employ a Community Builder to serve the engagement of neighbors and community stakeholders.*

STRATEGY 1.2 *Welcome new neighbors to Martindale Brightwood*

STRATEGY 1.3 *Connect with current neighbors to engage them in the Martindale Brightwood community.*

**GOAL 2.** *Establish a sense of community and pride by engaging residents in neighborhood events and activities.*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Collaborate opportunities for neighbors to connect and support one another.*

**GOAL 3.** *Establish a physical location to provide a Welcome and Information center, location for meetings, and represent the community.*

STRATEGY 3.1 *Secure a building for One Voice Martindale Brightwood.*

**GOAL 4.** *Educate and empower residents and youth to take on leadership roles in the community.*

STRATEGY 4.1 *Enable Youth to lead and advocate in Martindale Brightwood.*

STRATEGY 4.2 *Build Capacity of residents and youth to lead in Martindale Brightwood.*



## PUBLIC SAFETY

Marion County has experienced an unprecedented surge in violent crime including homicides and non-fatal shootings from 2020 to 2022 with the Black community experiencing a disproportionate level of violence. Martindale Bright would have countered this trend when examining its peak violent crime rates within the same 10-year time span. Between 2010 and 2021 violent crime in Martindale Brightwood increased from a rate of 26.5 per 1,000 in 2010 to 35 per 1,000 in 2021; however, there was a decline in overall violent crime from a peak of 41 per 1,000 in 2016. We note that between 2010 and 2021 robbery declined from a rate of 7.6 robberies per 1,000 people to 5.0 robberies per 1,000. Larceny or theft of personal property that can be carried away declined from a rate of 41.1 incidents per 1,000 people to 32.2 incidents per 1,000 people, or a decline of 21.7%. The collaborative reviewed juvenile charges data but opted not to include as many of the charges are geocoded to the juvenile detention center located in the community. The data for Martindale Brightwood thus reflects an inordinately high rate of juvenile charges that are not happening in the community.

Martindale Brightwood's public safety approach is deeply rooted in an asset based mentality that recognizes collective responsibility to ensure the neighborhood becomes the beloved safe and peaceful community its residents deserve. The approach is multifaceted, utilizing city public safety resources in exchange and in partnership with resident and stakeholder collaboration. While historically, the neighborhood has experienced crime rates disproportionate to the city average, various data sets suggest interesting trends that may in fact prove positive neighborhood movement in terms of overall safety and stability.

Additionally, of paramount importance to the neighborhood is the eradication of a perception that becomes less accurate by the day. That is that Martindale Brightwood is simply a hotbed of criminal activity that endangers the lives and vitality of the entire neighborhood. On the contrary, despite continued pervasive activity, it can be asserted the neighborhood's trajectory is trending positively as neighbors and stakeholders organize. While very real challenges persist, the emergence of organized resident and stakeholder collaboratives will continue to be cultivated throughout this plan's implementation. A particularly encouraging innovation for example, stakeholders and neighborhood partners are lending greater attention to neighbors returning from incarceration. Considerable resources incorporated during the pandemic have enabled stakeholders to create wrap around solutions that address skill deficits, housing and food insecurity and afford access to other critical supportive services embedded in this implementation plan. These efforts bear greater prospects that our returning citizens are not only stabilized, but are afforded opportunities to contribute to the overall safety and well being of the neighborhood.

In recent years, Martindale - Brightwood has been considered a hotspot for crime. Community leaders see quality education and a bigger focus on self-sustainability as key areas for reducing crime in the neighborhood. The Martindale-Brightwood CDC (Community Development Corporations) was awarded an elevation grant from the city to address root causes of violent crime and to empower neighborhoods.

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** *The public and the media view Martindale Brightwood positively, as a strong community with many assets.*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Control the narrative on public safety & crime in the community.*

**GOAL 2.** *Residents in Martindale Brightwood organize and collaborate to build a safe and peaceful community*

STRATEGY 2.1 *Foster resident's beliefs and abilities to address public safety collectively*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Establish a Martindale Brightwood Collaborative of key advocates to lead action on crime and public safety issues*

STRATEGY 2.3 *Create opportunities for community members of all ages to lead efforts related to crime and public safety.*

STRATEGY 2.4 *Through all the pillars of the Quality of Life Plan, address root causes for crime and violence*

**GOAL 3.** *The Martindale Brightwood community collaborates with Indianapolis authorities to proactively address crime and increase safety in the neighborhood.*

STRATEGY 3.1 *The Martindale Brightwood Collaborative establishes working partnerships with local law enforcement, city officials, and social services to address root causes of crime.*



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Martindale-Brightwood Quality of Life Plan (MB QoL Plan) for Workforce Development is designed to empower our community by providing diverse opportunities and skills training, ensuring all residents' career success and economic stability. This plan will prepare our residents with the necessary information, skills, and knowledge to be employment-ready while connecting them with local employers. Our comprehensive approach includes developing targeted job training programs in collaboration with local educational institutions (Martin University, Marion University, Ivy Tech, ect.), ensuring that residents are equipped with industry-specific skills tailored to the needs of our local job market.

We will create a centralized information center at 37 Place to provide residents with up-to-date details on employment pathways and opportunities within the Martindale-Brightwood community, making it easier for individuals to navigate their career options. This center will be complemented by community outreach programs to disseminate valuable information through local events and digital platforms. Additionally, our plan emphasizes the importance of job training programs that prepare residents for available jobs and directly connect them to employment opportunities through job fairs, hands-on work experiences, internships, and apprenticeship programs.

Strengthening relationships with local employers is a cornerstone of our plan. We will establish employer advisory councils to ensure our training programs are aligned with industry needs and develop partnerships to create more internship and apprenticeship opportunities. To incentivize employers, we propose implementing programs that offer subsidies for on-the-job training provided to residents in addition to continued career coaching to stabilize and sustain hired talent.

Our implementation strategy involves engaging stakeholders, utilizing data-driven decision-making, and conducting regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure the success and adaptability of our plans. By securing funding from diverse sources, including government grants and private partnerships, we aim to ensure the sustainability and scalability of our programs. The expected outcomes of this plan include increased employment rates, enhanced economic stability for residents, improved overall quality of life, and stronger community ties through collaborative efforts.

This plan is a call to action for the Martindale-Brightwood community to join us in this transformative effort to uplift our workforce and ensure a prosperous future for all. Together, we can create a vibrant and economically stable Martindale-Brightwood, where every resident has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1.** *Prepare residents with information, skills, and knowledge so that they are ready for employment and connect them with employers.*

STRATEGY 1.1 *Provide information to residents about employment pathways and opportunities.*

ACTION 1.1.2 *Develop a neighborhood workforce development resource guide*

ACTION 1.1.3 *Create a satellite site with a community-based partner to reach residents*

STRATEGY 1.2 *Provide job training for residents and connect them to employment opportunities.*

ACTION 1.2.1 *Cultivate a solid, skilled talent pipeline.*

ACTION 1.2.2 *Increase the amount of income for our current talent pipeline*

ACTION 1.2.3 *Provide in-school and out-of -school youth education and training opportunities to gain employment, retain, and advance their career of choice*

ACTION 1.2.4 *KIPP Forward- High school career and college readiness (14-18 yr old)*

STRATEGY 1.3 *Strengthen Relationships with Employers to Provide More Employment Opportunities*

ACTION 1.3.1 *Attract and build relationships with employers specifically that focus on “Better” and “Career” jobs*



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Below, when we use the word “we,” it is referencing both the youth and the FHC partners— not just adults.

Martindale Brightwood has been blessed to have so many members of its community be willing to share their many experiences, knowledge, and expertise. At the Felege Hiywot Center, we have gone to the members of our community again and again. We believe that the youth “stand on the shoulders of our community elders.”

Both the students themselves and the adult leaders at FHC put this into action by engaging the youth directly in crafting this plan. In Fall 2023, students in each grade level at KIPP high school worked with facilitators in guided discussions to arrive at the goals and strategies. During these sessions, most students were skeptical that their input would matter, but soon they learned that not only they were heard, they got involved in creating a five year plan.

In our vibrant Martindale Brightwood community, we want to emphasize that the participation of youth is not just encouraged, but essential for a thriving future. By breaking down generational barriers, we aim to engage more young people in community activities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

After the initial brainstorming, the results from our discussion indicated that the primary catalysts for youth violence in the community are Emotional Environment, Health, Education, and Lack of Youth Engagement and Education.

To address the growing impacts of mental health issues among our youth, we are establishing accessible resources and normalizing public dialogue around these concerns. This initiative seeks



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

to create a supportive environment where mental health is openly discussed and appropriately managed, ensuring every young individual feels heard and valued.

Understanding the justice system is crucial for our youth. We are committed to creating a support network for those who have encountered legal challenges, helping them move beyond their past mistakes. Additionally, we will build a consistent dialogue around personal and community accountability, promoting a fair and just society.

Our youth deserve to tell their own stories, countering negative stereotypes with genuine narratives. Through strategic partnerships with other community groups, we will amplify their voices and share their unique experiences, fostering a positive and realistic portrayal of our young members. Youth are not just the future; they are integral to our community today. By promoting intergenerational leadership, we ensure that young people are actively involved in decision-making processes that shape our community now and in the future.

Lastly, addressing food deserts and hunger is critical. We will educate our youth on the science of producing food and the impact of food shortages on health. By engaging them in food production, we aim to alleviate hunger and reduce the anger and violence often associated with food insecurity.

We often think of this reminder that can be found in Unity Park: "This is about us: The Youth. Learning how to be self-sufficient and take care of our community while the elders are guiding us and looking on with admiration. We look to them to remind us of the past, for us to preserve the rich history of our neighborhood as we go forward."



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## **GOAL 1. More youth are engaged in the community**

STRATEGY 1.1 *Break down generational barriers that may impact opportunities for youth in the MB community*

## **GOAL 2. Establishing accessible mental health resources**

STRATEGY 2.1 *Establish resource for the growing impacts of mental health on the youth of the MB community*

STRATEGY 2.2 *Normalize public dialogue surrounding mental health concerns*

## **GOAL 3. Ensure youth better understand the justice system**

STRATEGY 3.1 *Creating a support network for those who have become involved in the justice system and are trying to move beyond those mistakes*

STRATEGY 3.2 *Build consistent dialogue around both personal and community accountability*

## **GOAL 4. Youth are telling their own story**

STRATEGY 4.1 *Counter the negative, public stereotypes surrounding the youth of MB and replace it with the genuine stories of the youth of the community*

STRATEGY 4.2 *Build strategic partnerships with other community groups to spread the message*

## **GOAL 5. Youth are fully integrated into community now, not just preparing them for the future**

STRATEGY 5.1 *Build Intergenerational Community Leadership for today and tomorrow*

## **GOAL 6. Youth engage in producing food to alleviate food desert and hunger with leads to anger and violence**

STRATEGY 6.1 *Youth education in the science of producing food and effect of food shortage in health*



RESTORATION | RESILIENCE | REVITALIZATION

## GET INVOLVED

To become involved or for more information on the Quality of Life Plan Pillars, Strategies and Actions, contact the organizations listed below:

### **Arts & Culture**

*The Harrison Center*  
[www.harrisoncenter.org](http://www.harrisoncenter.org)  
[info@harrisoncenter.org](mailto:info@harrisoncenter.org)

### **Economic Development**

*Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation*  
<https://mbcdc.org>  
(317) 924-8042

### **Education – Schools**

*KIPP Indy Public Schools*  
<https://info.kippindy.org>  
[info@kippindy.org](mailto:info@kippindy.org)

### **Education – Martindale Brightwood Education Zone**

*Edna Martin Christian Center*  
<https://ednamartinc.org/>  
[info@ednamartinc.org](mailto:info@ednamartinc.org)

### **Environmental Justice**

*Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation*  
<https://mbcdc.org>  
(317) 924-8042

### **Health & Wellness**

*Martindale Brightwood Health & Wellness Coalition*  
[MBhealth.wellness2025@gmail.com](mailto:MBhealth.wellness2025@gmail.com)

### **Housing & Infrastructure**

*Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation*  
<https://mbcdc.org>  
(317) 924-8042

### **Neighborhood Engagement**

*One Voice Martindale Brightwood*  
[onevoice@mbovc.org](mailto:onevoice@mbovc.org)

### **Public Safety**

*Brightwood Community Center*  
<https://www.brightwoodcc.org>  
(317) 602-4780

## GET INVOLVED

### **Workforce Development**

*Edna Martin Christian Center*  
<https://ednamartinc.org>  
[info@ednamartinc.org](mailto:info@ednamartinc.org)

### **Youth Engagement**

*Felege Hiywot Center*  
<https://fhcenter.org/>  
[info@fhcenter.org](mailto:info@fhcenter.org)

### **Neighborhoods (2024)**

**One Voice Martindale Brightwood, Kenya McMillin – President**  
[OneVoice@mbovc.org](mailto:OneVoice@mbovc.org)

**Brightwood Concerned Citizens, Vernon Compton – President**  
[vrcompton.vc@gmail.com](mailto:vrcompton.vc@gmail.com)

**Hillside, Jacklyn McMillan Gunn - President**  
[erdie6@aol.com](mailto:erdie6@aol.com)

**Oakhill, Wiletta Atkins - President**  
[watkinswilms@gmail.com](mailto:watkinswilms@gmail.com)

**Ralston Hovey Arsenal Andrew J. Brown, Hattie Carlis - President**  
[hattieokundaye@gmail.com](mailto:hattieokundaye@gmail.com)

**Martindale Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative, Elizabeth Gore - Chair**  
[lizgore280@gmail.com](mailto:lizgore280@gmail.com)

**Martindale Brightwood Code Compliance Committee, Jacklyn McMillan Gunn -Chair**  
[erdie6@aol.com](mailto:erdie6@aol.com)

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*One Voice Martindale Brightwood initiated and led the development of this Quality of Life Plan. One Voice is the community congress representing Martindale Brightwood's four neighborhood associations: Brightwood Concerned Citizens, Oakhill Civic Association, Hillside Neighborhood Association, and Ralston Hovey Andrew J. Brown Neighborhood Association.*

**The following leaders, drawn from these four neighborhood groups, were at the forefront of this project:**

*One Voice Martindale Brightwood – Executive Committee*  
*Kenya McMillan, President*  
*Delma Williams, Vice President*  
*Jacklyn McMillan Gunn, Secretary*  
*Sh'Ron Rucker, Treasurer*

**We also wish to recognize these former presidents of One Voice Martindale Brightwood for their leadership during past Quality of Life Plans:**

*Shirley Webster*  
*Pat Ladd*  
*Amy Harwell*  
*James Wilson*  
*Charles "Tony" Knight*  
*Phyllis Banks*

**These Neighborhood Associations and community based organizations also contributed significantly to the plan's development.**

*Brightwood Concerned Citizens – Vernon Compton, President*  
*Hillside – Jacklyn McMillan Gunn, President*  
*Oakhill – Wiletta Atkins, President*  
*Ralston Hovey Andrew J Brown - Hattie Carlis, President*  
*Hillside HOTIF*  
*Martindale Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative – Elizabeth Gore*  
*Martindale Brightwood Code Compliance and Land Use Committee – Jacklyn McMillan Gunn*

*The MOVE-MB Collaborative consists of dedicated stakeholders who serve the neighborhood through a Collective Impact Model, and consists of the following organizations:*

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*Brightwood Community Center  
Citizens Energy Group  
Eastern Star Church  
Edna Martin Christian Center  
Felege Hiywot Center  
The Harrison Center  
HealthNet Corporation  
The Indianapolis Recorder  
Indy Parks – Frederick Douglass park,  
KIPP Indy Public Schools  
Martin University  
Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation  
Mirror Indy Newspaper  
Oasis Christian Community Development Corporation  
One Voice  
Stop the Violence*

## **Additional supporters of MOVE-MB include:**

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Reb. Robin Shackleford, Indiana House District 98  
Rep. Greg Porter, Indiana House District 96  
Sen. La Keisha Jackson, Indiana Senate District 34  
Councilor Ron Gibson, Indianapolis City-County Council District 8  
Councilor Jesse Brown, Indianapolis City-County Council District 13  
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*Garrison Frazier*

*Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center*

*Indianapolis Public Schools*

*Indianapolis Urban League - IAAQLI*

*Intend Indiana*

*Lilly Endowment, Inc.*

*Local Initiative Support Corporation*

*United Way of Central Indiana*

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*Edna Martin Christian Center*

*IndyParks – Frederick Douglass Park*

*KIPP Indy Schools*

*Martin University*

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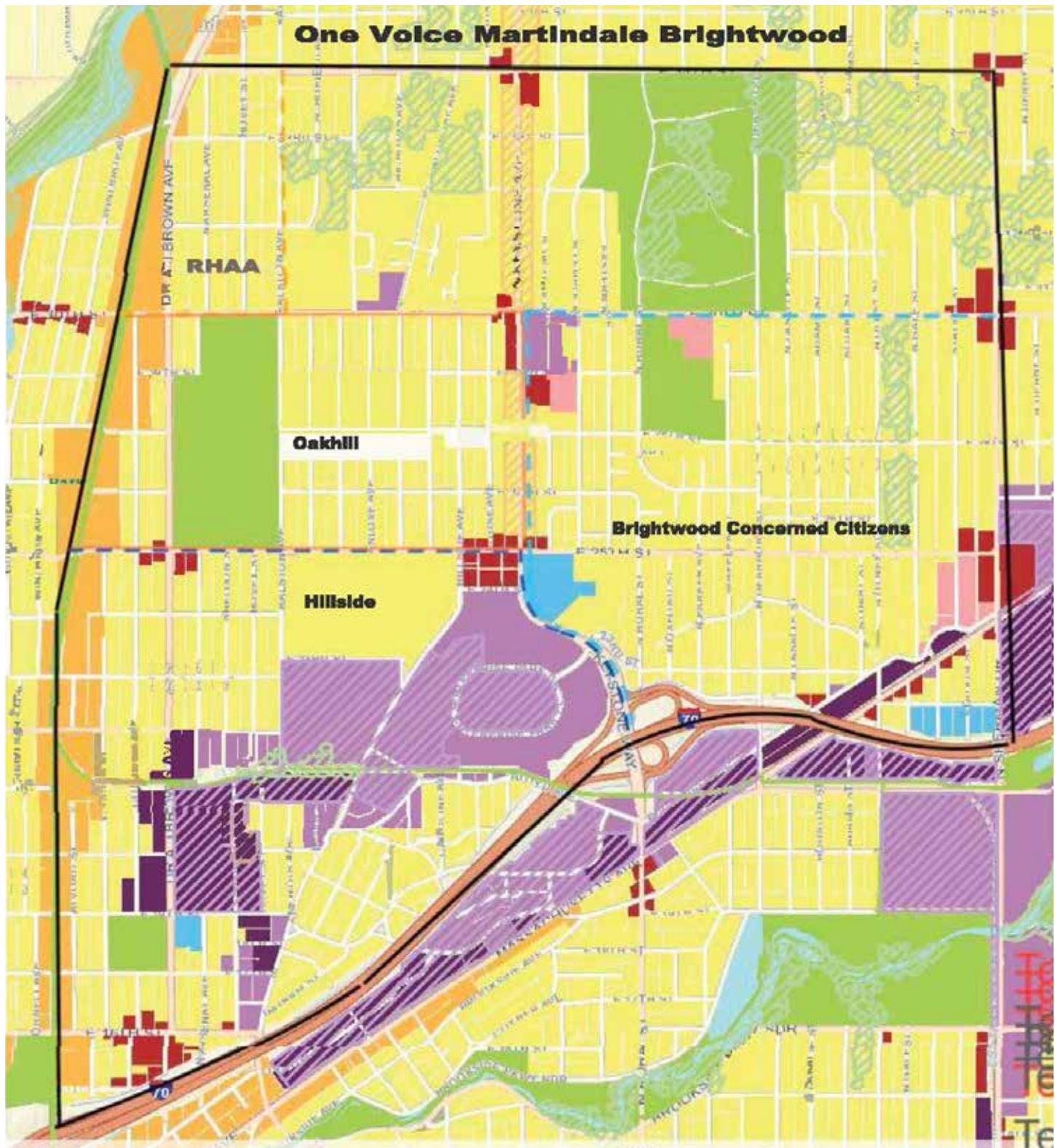
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## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX



