



A DESIGN JUSTICE CASEBOOK



Bayview

Madison Wisconsin

2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Understanding Design Justice	4
Redeveloping Bayview.....	5
History of Bayview	7
Bayview Today	10
Residents	10
Staff	11
Board of Directors.....	11
Management Practices.....	11
Bayview’s Design Justice Process.....	13
Sequencing: A Look at the Steps in the Process.....	13
Methods.....	15
Resident Meeting Methods.....	15
Resident Interview Methods	21
Design Group Methods	21
Results	22
Doing Design Justice Work: Lessons Learned.....	27
Relationships.....	27
A New Paradigm.....	28
Choosing Contractors.....	29
Change and Worry	30
Design Justice Requires Resources	30
Design Justice Takes Time	31
Where Bayview Stands	33
For Further Information.....	34

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bayview Foundation acknowledges the participation of many critical groups and individuals in its design justice work, including its residents, staff, and board; design, construction, and data analysis partners: Chris Socha and Tom Kubala of The Kubala Washatko Architects, Kevin Burrow and Don Schroeder of Knothe Bruce Architects, Shane Bernau of SmithGroup, Scott Kweicinski of Horizon Group, Amy Hilgendorf and Sara Ansell of the University of Wisconsin School of Human Ecology's Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies, and design advocates Charity Okpara, Natalie Erdman, Sorayda Villarreal Frausto, Derell Carter, Ed Kuharski, Xong Vang, and Dawn O'Kroley. Funding for outreach supporting our design justice work was provided by the City of Madison, Wisconsin.

While many staff members participated in Bayview's design justice efforts, the extraordinary dedication and tenacity of Executive Director Alexis London, Housing Manager Diane Eddings, and Outreach Coordinator Nou Thao carried the work from aspiration to achievement.

We are grateful for all our participants' faith in the process, grit, creativity, and generosity of mind.



Mary Berryman Agard, President

Bayview Foundation

UNDERSTANDING DESIGN JUSTICE

The Design Justice Network, a leading professional association, describes design justice as a process that “rethinks design processes, centers people who are normally marginalized, and uses collaborative, creative practices to address the deepest challenges our communities face.”



Because it prioritizes impact on the community, design justice preserves what works for each community; sustains, heals, and empowers marginalized people. It honors traditional, local, and indigenous knowledge and practices.

The Network views change as something that emerges during an accountable, accessible, and collaborative process that shares knowledge and tools with residents. They see the designer as a facilitator and each member of the community as an expert in their own lived experience, bringing incomparable contributions to the design process and creating sustainable, community-centered outcomes.

In going forward, the Bayview Foundation embraces these ideas. The Foundation’s commitment to design justice is a natural outgrowth of its mission, which calls on the organization “to support its culturally diverse, low-income families, helping them realize their aspirations by providing affordable housing, fostering cultural pride, and building community through the arts, education, and recreation.”

REDEVELOPING BAYVIEW

Bayview is an affordable housing community in the heart of downtown Madison, Wisconsin. The Bayview Foundation was created 1966 by civic activists who opposed the city's displacement, via urban renewal, of impoverished residents. By 1971, they had developed 102 living units; in 1985 a community center was added.

Now, fifty years on, the Bayview Foundation continues to support its residents in those same facilities. Time, however, has taken a toll on Bayview's buildings necessitating a complete redevelopment of the site.



Consistent with its commitment to design justice, Bayview's vision for redevelopment is larger than updating the apartment units, Community Center and grounds. The Foundation has taken this redevelopment as an opportunity to think expansively and creatively about how people inhabit, use and experience the site and how the apartment buildings, grounds, gardens, Community Center and play areas work as a system to best serve the people who live, work and visit Bayview and the Triangle neighborhood.

Our design process has called on sustained input from Bayview residents so that the spaces created really matter to the people who inhabit and use them. We have targeted creation of specific, beautiful spaces that intentionally resist the generic and banal. We have sought to create spaces that convene people and validate their everyday experiences. We have worked toward sustainable systems that support resident-centered programs.

Residents of Bayview and the wider neighborhood, public and private funders, regulatory agencies, and private investors have responded with excitement to both design justice as an approach and the actual designs for a renewed Bayview that have emerged from it.

At present, approximately \$46 million in public and private investment for redevelopment and expansion of the housing units has been secured; a capital campaign to rebuild and expand the Community Center, provide public art, and increase site sustainability will launch soon.

This paper discusses Bayview's experiences in nurturing, hearing, and being guided by resident voices in the recreation of the Bayview campus and its facilities.

The Bayview Foundation's commitment to design justice grew in part out of a desire to avoid repeating injustices of the past. Like the founding board, Bayview's current leadership committed to preserving the Bayview site as a neighborhood for its current residents and making space for additional low-income people.





HISTORY OF BAYVIEW

As with much of the world, the history of the Bayview site traces through cycles of possession and displacement as powerful newcomers disrupted the occupancy of traditional populations.

The site's human history begins with Paleo Indians, perhaps as long as 15,000 years ago. Then, beginning about three thousand years ago, the Woodland People occupied the area. They were builders of effigy mounds. Bayview itself stands on the ghostly footprint of an historic range of mounds built between lakes Wingra and Monona, known as the Dividing Ridge Mound Group. Gravel mined from those mounds during their subsequent destruction remains, still serving as landfill beneath the state capitol. Why and how the Paleo Indians and the Woodland People vanished remains a mystery.

Then came the Oneota and their descendants the Ho-Chunk who stayed for hundreds of years. Between 1816 and 1838, a complex interplay among peace treaties, unlawful treaty encroachments, short-lived warfare, intertribal disagreements, and forced removals took place; the Ho-Chunk lost treaty rights to over 10 million acres of land. The lands from which they were removed included the Bayview site. By 1901, the Greenbush neighborhood began to take shape on the Bayview site and surrounding parts of "The Triangle," a plot of land still demarcated by Park Street, Regent Street, and West Washington Avenue.

The Greenbush was a thriving immigrant community at the poor edge of Madison with a mix of people of Italian, Jewish, and Black heritage. To outsiders, the Greenbush was a blighted collection of trash dumps, substandard houses, and marginal business. To residents it was a beloved home, a place of family, and a vitally connected community.

Greenbush residents were not consulted when, in May of 1957 the City of Madison filed an application to create the "Triangle Renewal Area." Adherents to urban renewal believed in the unqualified benefits of increasing property value, improving building stock, and expanding the tax base.

Detractors held a different view. Foreseeing the largely negative consequences of gentrification on Greenbush residents, individuals and organizations opposing urban renewal began to organize.

As efforts to redevelop the Triangle were beginning, the Madison community became embroiled in a wide-ranging debate about the need for, and wisdom of, creating public housing, the depth and impact of housing discrimination, who was responsible for ensuring that displaced Greenbush residents found affordable housing, and the roles of the city and state in ending discrimination.

Wrangling over the city's role in urban renewal and in the larger questions of human rights, however, had only just begun.

Referenda, litigation, federal approvals and suspensions of funds, town-gown cooperation in planning and development, corruption through self-dealing, the prospects for a growing collection of urban renewal districts, and electoral and union politics all came into play.

Greenbush homes and businesses were either purchased or, failing that, confiscated through condemnation. Though a relocation plan had been created, it failed to assess the availability of alternative affordable housing or address the force of the housing discrimination faced by Triangle residents of color. Bitter local political battles raged on; many simply did not believe the city had any obligation toward the displaced residents. Legal sparring intensified. Some advocated for the creation of public housing, then a controversial solution evoking starkly racist opposition.



Wisconsin Historical Society

Meanwhile, many Greenbush residents, and in particular those of color, were forced into housing even more substandard than the homes they had been obliged to leave. It was clear the relocation plan was an utter failure.

The original opponents of the gentrifying of the Greenbush continued to be concerned at the glacial pace of affordable housing being redeveloped on the Triangle. They decided to move on the issue themselves. In 1966, representatives of the Madison Common Council, Beth Israel Center, the Parent-Teacher Association, St. James Church, Neighborhood House, Memorial United Church of Christ, the League of Women Voters, the Lake Wingra Community Council, and the Madison Homeowners Association incorporated the Bayview Foundation, an independent nonprofit with the specific purpose of taking

"...all steps necessary to provide suitable housing together with appropriate community facilities in the Triangle Urban Renewal Area in the City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin in cooperation with the Federal Housing Administration, the City of Madison, and such other agencies of the federal, state and local government as may be necessary or desirable. It shall be a further purpose of this corporation upon the construction of such housing to operate the project until such time as the corporation shall transfer all interest in the project to the City of Madison. The purposes of this corporation shall be entirely non-profit and shall be exclusively to prevent community deterioration and resulting social problems."

On February 2, 1968, the Federal Housing Authority approved a grant to the Bayview Foundation of just under \$2 million dollars. By 1971, the Foundation had created 102 units of affordable housing. In 2010, the city relinquished its ownership interests in the property to the Bayview Foundation, so that its work could continue uninterrupted. Today, the Bayview Foundation continues to honor those first champions, holding firm to the belief that residents' concerns, aspirations, and guidance should shape its future.

Half a century on, change is coming to Bayview again, but this time residents have a leading voice. This time, no one is being displaced.



BAYVIEW TODAY

In order to understand Bayview's design justice experience, it is important to have a picture of its people – the residents, staff, board, outside volunteers and redevelopment partners – who came to be a part of the extended effort.

RESIDENTS



Bayview is an international community of 277 people. Over half of the population is of Southeast Asian heritage, many of whom arrived directly from refugee camps following the Viet Nam war or are direct descendants of those refugees. Just over a quarter of Bayview's residents are Latinx; a substantial number of these residents are immigrants. About 14% are Black, including both African immigrants and African Americans. The remaining 2% are people of European ancestry. This mix of cultures and languages both enriches and complicates shared communications.

88% of Bayview's residents speak a language other than English. Most household incomes are far below the HUD low-income levels. In fact, 78% of Bayview's households qualify as extremely low income and another 15% as very low income. The average income of rent subsidized households is a mere \$15,277 per year. Ages span the full life cycle with 99 children, 118 adults, and 60 seniors living side by side.

Within this community, 12 residents participate in one of Bayview's most successful initiatives, Bayview Leaders. The Leaders are a group of adults who participate in leadership and community development learning and practice. Day by day, they become more skillful. They are critical in giving voice to resident concerns, and in uniting the community across its many cultural lines.

STAFF

The Foundation has a full-time staff of 11 and part time staff of seven kind, engaged, and imaginative people, the majority of whom are people of color including staff members of Southeast Asian, African American, and Latinx heritage. Four staff members are also former Bayview residents and one is a current resident.. The diversity of staff is intentional; each member of the staff is a resource to their colleagues, able to reflect, amplify and respond to varying cultural perspectives and to connect in Bayview's many languages.

Targeted staff development activities and hiring standards over the last several years have increased staff capacity to engage in cross-cultural work, to communicate in plain language, to connect with residents in a genuine way, and to work collaboratively across their own differences. Those deep background investments earn greater closeness and trust between staff and residents. Trust, in turn, makes the honest exchanges and collaborative problem-solving associated with design justice work possible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bayview's board is also diverse. It includes members of European, Southeast Asian, African, and Latinx heritage. Over the last four years, the board has made efforts to increase the proportion of members who also live at Bayview; now, about 40% of the members are residents. In addition, the board has both Housing and Program Committees whose members include still more residents. They advise the board and serve as information liaisons to their neighbors.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Bayview built capacity to undertake its renovation over several years. Undertaking a \$50 million redevelopment is a big lift for a nonprofit with an annual budget of about \$1.4 million. At Bayview that work included reshaping the bylaws and related committee structures, recruiting people with appropriate skills to the board, increasing the percentage of board members drawn from the Bayview community, fully revamping financial policy and reporting, strengthening personnel policy and practice, hiring staff with high levels of commitment to social justice, initiating resident centered programming, changing the staffing chart, and finding formal and informal ways to increase board, staff, and resident capacity regarding affordable housing development.



Bayview's housing staff has regular contact with virtually every household. Often, their trust is first earned or lost based on the landlord-tenant aspect of the staff-resident relationship. In anticipation of the redevelopment, Bayview strengthened its housing services by hiring an experienced manager, gathering a diverse staff of skilled maintenance and grounds workers, improving rental and certification administration, and making response times and repair quality faster and better.

Those daily demonstrations of responsiveness to residents' well-being form a concrete basis for their willingness to share their wisdom in the design justice process.

Bayview program staff, including an outreach coordinator and two youth program coordinators, are intimately acquainted with program participants and their families. Their strong individual connections, understanding of and accommodation for specific needs, and their warm nature makes them deeply trusted allies.

All this is to say that Bayview's success in utilizing a design justice framework for its impending redevelopment is grounded in a broader organizational commitment to the dignity, ingenuity, and centrality of those for whom it is home.



BAYVIEW'S DESIGN JUSTICE PROCESS

Bayview's design justice process has included resident meetings of several kinds, individual resident interviews, and design charettes. These combined activities captured nearly 400 acts of participation between May 1 of 2018 and March of 2019. Each of the activities had a specific role in shaping the redevelopment.

SEQUENCING: A LOOK AT THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS

2018	
May and June	The engagement process began with an introductory meeting that answered basic questions and gathered information about participants' hopes and fears. Four of these meetings were held at different times for an adult target audience, another targeted elementary school students and yet another targeted middle and high school students. Sixty-three residents participated.
June, July, August	Two cycles of structured interviews reached a total of 105 adults, approximately half Bayview's adult population. These interviews sought increasingly fine-grained opinions on key aspects of the redevelopment.
August	Resident meetings brought staff and residents together in a conversation called "What We Heard: Reporting Back to Residents." That conversation let residents know what Bayview staff learned from earlier interviews and meetings, circling back to make sure their understanding was correct. Thirty residents attended one of two parallel meetings.

August	In the next phase of input gathering, Bayview's architectural firm, The Kubala Washatko Architects, presented draft design "patterns" – issues and solutions particular to the project – and sought input on their completeness and accuracy. Forty-two residents participated in one of two parallel meetings.
August September	Staff and architects presented the draft site plan in resident meetings titled "What We Heard and What We Did." The first half of the session included a group presentation that outlined how resident input was directly integrated into the development of the site plan. In the second half, residents divided into groups by language and participated in facilitated, structured discussions that evaluated the draft site plan element by element via a voting process. Seventy-four residents attended one of four parallel meetings.
November	Bayview contracted with Southeast Asian facilitators from Freedom, Inc., who conducted two sequential meetings to explore deep feelings about the importance of basements among Hmong residents and to brainstorm alternatives. Thirty adults participated in the meetings.
2019	
March	Staff presented an update on project progress, to keep residents in the loop. The meeting retraced the resident input process, shared new site plan elements, and provided an estimated timeline. Thirty-three Bayview residents participated.
December	Bayview created a Design Group of Bayview residents, project contractors, local architects and community leaders to more clearly articulate project values and to create a housing-specific architectural style guide based on all previous resident input. Thirteen Design Group members met four times in as many weeks.

Throughout the process, staff engaged in one-on-one conversations with residents as time and circumstances allowed. These conversations echoed, refined, and amplified information being shared in interviews and group meetings.

METHODS

RESIDENT MEETING METHODS

Resident meetings were designed to entertain residents' questions, to provide critical information, to seek their thoughts and preferences concerning the redevelopment, to demonstrate design responsiveness to those ideas and opinions, and to test whether responses offered satisfied residents' expressed wishes.

Bayview structured resident meetings very intentionally with regard to inclusiveness. Invitations were issued through the mail, by word of mouth, phone calls, in program and administrative meetings, and through both the Board of Directors and the Housing Committee. Snacks and beverages were offered. On-site childcare was provided; children were welcomed into the meeting room as well.

Meetings were conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish and Hmong. There was a definite buzzing at these meetings, because of the necessity of at least three people talking at once. Positioning language groups together in the room helped.

All process and presentation materials were developed in Plain English and used pictures as often as possible. Plain English is clear, concise English that does not use complex vocabulary, jargon, or figures of speech. It is intended to be easier for non-native speakers to understand and is crafted to fit the degree of familiarity the listener has with the topic being presented.

Meetings were designed to bring residents, staff and board together with project architects and



developers in order to increase understanding and build mutual capacities. The issue of bringing contractors into alignment with design justice work is a serious one; many Bayview staff hours were spent in communication with outside partners, introducing, explaining, repeating, reminding, and insisting that residents be centered in the redevelopment process.

Meetings were iterative. We clarified what we could and couldn't do given the parameters of the project and financing constraints. We asked. We listened. We documented what we heard. We presented what we heard back to residents and asked if we had heard right. Once that was confirmed, we presented how the project would respond to input received. Lastly, we asked if, and to what degree, proposed responses actually captured resident preferences.

In the first round of meetings, working with staff, board members, developers, and architects, residents affirmed a set of patterns that reflected their input and on which the site plan would be based. This exercise provided a clear example of how Plain English and pictures were used in Bayview's design justice work. The chart below compares language originally provided by the architectural firm for one of the patterns with a Plain English version used for resident meetings. Visuals used in the meetings were more concrete and familiar. Staff worked closely with the architects to find accessible language and images.

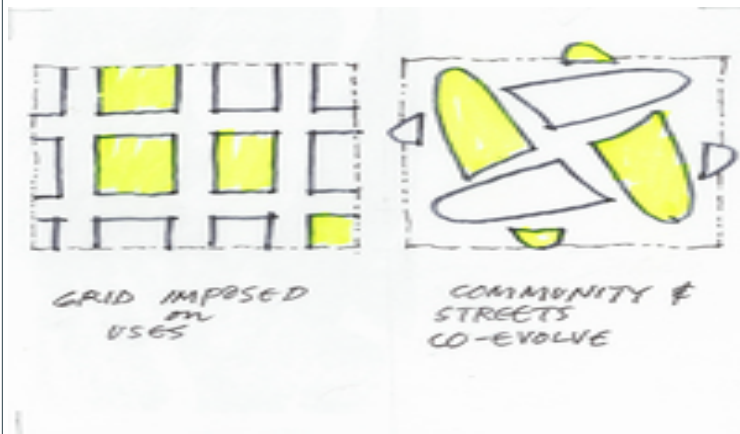
ENGLISH VERSUS PLAIN ENGLISH	
Original Language from Architect	Plain English Version Used in Resident Meetings
<p><u>Interwoven Urban Fabric.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city's desire to introduce new streets into the Triangle risks disrupting the unique existing social fabric. • Co-evolve the shape of the community with the shape of streets. Recognize that streets are about more than cars. New streets should prioritize walking and biking and accommodate cars and busses where they are least disruptive. 	<p><u>Make the street you want.</u></p> <p>The City of Madison is planning new roads through the Triangle. We can provide input on the kind of street that benefits Bayview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure it has plenty of parking for residents • Make sure pedestrians and bikers feel safe using it • Make sure it doesn't become a "shortcut" road for people not living on the Triangle • Keep speed slow

ARCHITECT'S ORIGINAL GRAPHICS VERSUS PRESENTATION GRAPHICS

Architect's Original Graphics



Graphics Used in Resident Meetings



Later, group meetings worked to describe to residents the ways in which their ideas had been incorporated into the redevelopment's site plan. Below, presentation notes from these meetings document very specific responses proposed by Bayview's site planning architects.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHAT WE DID
SAFE STREETS AND AVAILABLE PARKING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parking that is closer to the apartments • Don't want streets coming through Bayview • Improved and increased walkways and paths • Safer/easier crossings along W. Washington and Regent 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underground and surface parking as close to units as possible 2. Increased street parking with possibility of residential permits 3. Limited access roads that go along the edges of Bayview 4. Improved and increased pathways, walkways within Bayview and connecting to surrounding neighborhoods
CREATING AND PRESERVING THE BAYVIEW COMMUNITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love of the community and feeling very safe living here • Residents feel that they know their neighbors • Importance of the Community Center as a place where people come together and there are valuable programs • Playgrounds and play spaces are important • Open green space for community use is important • Concerns about safety of unsupervised children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All apartment units surround and most face a more visible and accessible Community Center 2. The green space in the center of the property is accessible and available to all residents 3. The playground is closer to the Community Center so it's safer (away from street and parking) place for kids to play and is more accessible 4. With all apartments surrounding community green more residents will have their eyes on the community, making if feel and be more safe and connected 5. Small courtyards exist between buildings so that there is private community spaces near apartments 6. Buffers along busy streets W. Washington and Regent

PRIVACY AND COMFORT

- Like townhouse style units because they have individual entries and have a peaceful, more home-like feel
- Would like additional privacy near entries
- Want more space to garden

1. Majority of the new apartments are still townhouse style units
2. Apartments are grouped in small clusters with semi-private courtyards between buildings
3. As many private entries with garden or porch space as possible
4. Increased garden space in front of apartments

ACCESSIBILITY AND IMPROVED LAYOUT

- Want apartments with bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor
- Want improved accessibility and layout within apartments
- Want apartments to have accessible entries
- Seniors want to age in place at Bayview

1. First floor one-bedroom apartments that include full bathrooms
2. Two and three-bedroom units with one bedroom and full bath on the first floor
3. Large apartment building at corner of Regent and W. Washington has elevators
4. Accessible apartment entries so that all people (age and/or disability) can enter and visit
5. Laundry on first floor
6. One-bedroom apartments scattered throughout property

BEAUTIFUL AND USABLE OUTDOOR SPACES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sunlight in apartments • Better air flow and ventilation in apartments • Want more and improved garden space • Want usable outdoor space for community gatherings, play, events, parties, celebrations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As many units are south facing as possible (more light) 2. All units will have AC 3. More windows in all units (light, air flow) 4. Increased gardening spaces near front entries 5. Open green space centrally located 6. Visible, central community play spaces

Also among the resident meetings was a pair of **narrowly focused meetings with Hmong residents** on a topic of particular concern to them – the potential loss of basements.

In order to address these concerns and concomitant anxiety, facilitators met twice with residents. In the first meeting, participants described what they liked about Bayview and then spoke specifically about what they use basements for and why they are important.

The second meeting focused on creative solutions. A facilitator described her own trip to New Orleans, explaining that its being so close to sea level meant loved ones had to be buried above the ground. Participants were asked to dream of a home designed in New Orleans. Discussion was prompted by a series of questions, for example, “Where would you put the washer and the dryer?”.

Answers to the series of questions, supplemented by discussion of a shared outdoor pavilion for family events and additional in-unit storage space options, helped residents imagine a positive model for living without basements, but also without loss.

Taking time to invest in these in-depth conversations was very productive. Using facilitators of the same cultural background helped increase clarity, comfort, and frankness around a topic that had generated anxiety.

RESIDENT INTERVIEW METHODS

Resident leaders drawn from Bayview's Housing Committee were paid with grant funds to participate in both the design and implementation of **two rounds of structured interviews**. That approach generated a remarkable response rate; just over half of Bayview's households participated in each round of interviewing.

Interviews were conducted in residents' preferred languages by people familiar to them. Interviewers asked about life at Bayview, what people liked best and least about their apartments, their hopes and fears for the future, and which neighborhood amenities were important to them. It also gathered more specific information about changes or improvements they would like to see in their apartments, the grounds, and the Community Center as well as how many additional residents they felt could be welcomed into the community. Interviews closed by asking respondents if they would be interested in continuing to participate in the redevelopment planning process.

A second round of interviews probed more deeply into issues that had emerged in earlier interviews and community meetings. The second round explored opinions concerning playground improvements, greenspaces, and gathering spaces in greater depth. It also probed resident preferences with regard to the creation of new resources, shared spaces, and programs.

DESIGN GROUP METHODS

As the project inched toward finalizing its plans for housing, the Community Center and the grounds, Bayview convened a **Design Advocates Group** that included several residents, the former director of municipal planning, two architects not associated with the project, two architects working on the project, a representative of the project developer, and several members of Bayview's senior staff. The two-fold purpose of the Design Group was to consider the architectural design of the residential buildings, including the townhouses and apartment buildings and to "design buildings that are grounded in and reflect the voices and values of the people who use them the most, Bayview residents" and to "design buildings that relate to and connect with the surrounding neighborhood, including residential homes, businesses, and nature."

The Group operated first in discussion mode and later as a visual design charette. Utilizing a blend of meeting techniques helped participants articulate project values and visualize critical aesthetic and functional standards to frame the final design work on the project.

RESULTS

Bayview's initial design justice work, in particular early meetings and interviews, were analyzed via a partnership with the University of Wisconsin's School of Human Ecology Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies. Key findings included a fundamental discovery that residents are very happy and proud to call Bayview home. They value its location, especially proximity to grocery stores, banks, and bus stops; its sense of community pride and connection; its safety, especially in terms of children and adults knowing one another; its history and traditions; its affordability; and its peaceful, intergenerational hominess. Those are, then, aspects that residents wish to keep unchanged.



Of course, residents also tagged certain concerns. In particular, they voiced a desire for central air conditioning, increased accessibility of living units, increased parking, better pest control, and a solution for wet basements.

In considering programs, they expressed a desire for increased programming for seniors, improved general maintenance, and strengthened cross-cultural communication.

The hopes and fears residents reported are consistent with the collection of things they value. For example, the most frequently mentioned hopes were for increased community programs; improved air conditioning and heating; bigger indoor and outdoor living areas; modernized building design, layout, and maintenance; and improved accessibility and parking. The most frequently mentioned fears were almost all directly connected to the potential loss of those aspects of Bayview residents treasure: decreased affordability; decreased safety, especially of children; increased density and concomitant decrease in community cohesion; continued pest problems; and disruption and displacement during the redevelopment process.

Resident opinions were documented concerning very specific aspects of the proposed site and living unit floor plans. They identified outdoor areas that matter most to them: the trash and recycling area, sidewalks, parking, greenspaces, and gathering spaces.

They pinpointed very practical considerations for living units room by room – ideas like increased space and storage space, updated layouts and design, updated appliances, improved ventilation, improved flooring and lighting, improved insulation, quieter fans, bathrooms on all floors, improved accessibility, easier to use windows, balcony access, improved insulation and thicker walls, and finished and improved basements that control dust, leaks, and pests.

Residents wanted townhouse style units preserved since they increase feelings of home, pride, and ownership. They wanted enhanced unit exteriors with more abundant and beautiful garden spaces, patios, and outdoor storage. A pavilion and green spaces were described as important in bringing families and community members together, providing for cultural celebrations and ceremonies and housing special events.

By choosing between photographs of differing models, residents as a group expressed preferences for outdoor spaces and amenities. Their preferences are actualized in the final plan, including safe spaces for children to play both adjacent to living units and on a common, internal green; paths for walking and biking; a pavilion for large gatherings; a basketball court; garden spaces for food, ornamental, and healing gardens; and outdoor cooking facilities for large group food preparation.

Conversations with Hmong residents in the special meetings on basements revealed a deep cultural attachment to having a basement for general storage, family gatherings, laundry, storm sheltering, a play area for children during the evening and in bad weather, and storage of their garden harvests. Initially, some residents felt so strongly about having a basement that its loss could force them to consider moving away. Clearly, basements had contributed a sense of security for these families. Fortunately, their own ideas for ameliorating the loss of basements could be built into the plan.



They suggested enlarging bathrooms to accommodate a washer and dryer; building individual laundry rooms with a drain, nice cabinets and sufficient space for freezer chests; and creating locking outside storage areas for garden tools and large hospitality furnishings.

They also helped define the proposed shared outdoor space. They identified critical features needed to support their traditional means of conducting family events: big sinks, stove, and grills; an ingredient preparation area; and protection from wind and rain. Many of these suggestions for capturing the functionality of basements are being incorporated into the redevelopment plan.

The Design Group consolidated ideas drawn from the extended engagement process and helped shape them into practical guidance for project architects. The group articulated a set of values to serve as a foundation for the redevelopment project. They called on project designers to create both built and natural environments that promote:

- Feeling at home in a community where people of all ages and cultural backgrounds are welcome
- Knowing your neighbors and feeling a sense of connection and unity
- Feeling safe and comfortable
- Having a sense of ownership and neighborhood pride
- Creating an inclusive definition of “beauty.” Having the opportunity to individually and collectively express self, family, and culture through art, gardening, and placemaking.
- Having easy access to friendly faces, community services, activities, and programs at the community center
- Homes and community spaces that elevate one’s spirit and feelings of self-worth



Based on those values, the Design Group undertook a wide-ranging exploration of design options. They reviewed hundreds of pictures of homes, apartments, and duplexes from all over the world to identify design characteristics of significant importance that reflected agreed upon values. They discussed how the built and natural environments might contribute to healing past trauma, which drove an emphasis on nature – the sounds of birds and proximity to water, trees and gardens; on the value of warm, bright, and varied colors; and the opportunity to personalize indoor and outdoor spaces. Finally, they produced a style guide that includes specific language and pictures illustrating design standards that address identity, gardens, porches, a modern aesthetic, natural light, color, and design elements that elevate the spirit. In this regard, the Bayview Architecture Style Guide became a thoughtfully refined statement of resident expectations, focusing the project's architects on designing a neighborhood that has value to those for whom it is home.



DOING DESIGN JUSTICE WORK: LESSONS LEARNED



RELATIONSHIPS

Design justice work is an exercise in relationship building among people who contribute to a redevelopment project such as Bayview's, or similar infrastructure undertakings. Trust is required among a variety of people whose experiences, languages, roles, skills, and perspectives vary widely. In many cases, without this work their paths might well never cross. In Bayview's case, those people included

- Residents of both Bayview and the surrounding neighborhoods;
- Its staff, board and other volunteers:
- The project developer's team;
- Two architectural firms' project teams;
- An engineering and landscaping team;
- Energy efficiency consultants
- City, county, state, and federal funders;
- Private investors;
- Municipal planning, design, and traffic engineering regulators; and
- Translation, documentation, evaluation, and facilitation contractors.



Actualizing the design justice work required all of these partners to place value on the information and opinions residents contributed to the work. Some partners came to the project with that kind of appreciation in hand; for others there was a steep learning curve. Some days, Bayview's role was to insist and insist; some days it was to laugh and celebrate. The work was long, hard, and extremely rewarding. Choosing the right partners is crucial.

A NEW PARADIGM

Be prepared for the fact that design justice constitutes a new paradigm for many of those who will participate, whether volunteers or participating professionals. Managing the work will require a great deal of patient explaining, teaching, modeling, reminding, prodding, advocating, and insisting. The wisdom and value of the resident voice must be addressed in

professional work (as with architects, developers, and landscapers) and regulators (as in those controlling required approval processes). This will be true for partners who are not invested in design justice as well as those who committed to its promise, though in different ways and to different degrees. This part of the process requires time, grace, and backbone. Do not underestimate the amount of effort this requires; it accounted for perhaps 50% of the staff hours spent on design justice work.

When working in this new way, direct contact between the residents and contractors proved valuable for both. Residents acquired new understandings of the work of the contractors. Contractors grew to value the expertise residents bring to the design process, both in representing their own lived experiences and in creating unique solutions to design challenges.

Bayview's board also played a role in this process by creating the management and structural conditions that allowed the work to succeed, allocating reserve funds at critical times to increase dollars available for architectural fees in support of design justice related work, participating in resident meetings as facilitators and observers, and supporting staff efforts in troubleshooting complex aspects of the many partnerships. Bringing leadership on board with the design justice process ensures strong organizational support for the work and protects it from competing organizational pressures.

CHOOSING CONTRACTORS

In light of the weight of this work, it is important to underline the value of selecting contractors who are interested in learning about design justice and who have both the willingness and capacity to take fresh approaches to their work. Avoid firms that produce regular or very similar template-based work; their templates won't work here. When soliciting bids, make sure bidders are notified to include costs associated with extensive contact with residents in the course of their participation. Assess the sufficiency of those costs included as a way of measuring their view of the scale of design justice partnership they foresee.

In interviewing potential contractors, listen for examples of what they have done and pay less attention to assertions of what they will do. Have they met unique challenges with flexibility? Are their work methods compatible with a design justice approach? How have they learned about resident or user preferences in other cases? Can they describe any time in which they changed their practice based on new learning? When working on a new project, where do they go first for inspiration?

CHANGE AND WORRY

In undertaking the redevelopment, Bayview's board was mindful of the stress such an undertaking places on residents. Essentially, it saw the problem of going to residents, many of whom had traumatic refugee backgrounds, and saying to them "We are going to tear down the home you have lived in for decades but don't worry, we will give you a better one." Any way you slice it, that's a worrisome message to receive.

Hence, before the board adopted a plan to redevelop the site, it issued a guarantee to residents that 1) no subsidized household would experience a rent increase on the basis of the redevelopment; and 2) no person would be asked to leave the Bayview campus as a result of the redevelopment, including during the redevelopment period.

Being able to announce the project with those assurances was helpful, but fears continued to crop up despite those promises as residents worried over what their new quarters would be like, whether their community relationships would be jeopardized, who would help them move, and the safety of children during the whole redevelopment process.

In this regard, it is extremely important to have mechanisms to stop misinformation, which travels fast where people are set on edge by anticipation of change. Constantly monitoring for worries and responding quickly with truthful information is critical. In Bayview's case, having both a board with resident members and a resident Housing Committee was critical to monitoring concerns. Staff also monitored concerns in contacts with residents during programs and one-on-one meetings. In this light, the design justice process itself can provide an ear to the ground for resident worries and creative resource for their solution.

DESIGN JUSTICE REQUIRES RESOURCES

When design justice is well done, the work is iterative and time consuming. Bayview sought and secured \$20,000 in municipal funding for its resident engagement work. That grant, together with an additional \$25,000 drawn from reserve funds, and an in-kind \$30,000 contribution from The Kubala Washatko Architects allowed for the work to be done well. The Foundation also used its operating resources to support staff time, meeting spaces, communication materials, and meeting amenities. The work does not happen for free.

Bayview also engaged volunteers to support its design justice efforts. Volunteer roles included participation in policy development, meeting planning and facilitation, contractor recruitment and selection, and designing and conducting interviews. Citizen volunteers participated in the Design Group, expanding its competencies. The critical participation of residents themselves constituted the single largest source of volunteer time. Each volunteer took a role for which their skills and interests prepared them; each was respected as a foundational resource in the work. Volunteerism can be a significant, critical source of in-kind support.

DESIGN JUSTICE TAKES TIME

Design justice work is a long-haul proposition. Bayview began this journey by crafting a roadmap that committed the organization to participatory engagement rooted in design justice. Though it was impossible to foresee where this journey would lead, we could anticipate key milestones in advance. For example, priorities for the site plan, land, community spaces and green features would each be important.



In addition to milestones that could be expected, Bayview's process included a willingness to add new processes as issues emerged, as was the case with resident desire for basements and the need to respond to that desire. Adding the special meetings around that topic allowed residents to be heard, and their concerns to be met in the context of architectural designs.

Ongoing recommitment to design justice work continues to be a part of Bayview's approach. It's a day by day, person by person effort, shaping every interaction around the redevelopment process.



Redevelopment by its nature has a long planning, approval, and implementation timeline. Design justice work is informed by that timeline. It is important to think about the lifeline of the design justice commitment as beginning with consideration of undertaking a project and ending after the evaluation of its completion. While projects vary, a given design justice process will often reach across several years. Being realistic about that up front will help ensure adequate time and resources are available to do the job right.

WHERE BAYVIEW STANDS

Bayview's redevelopment has now reached the stage where design decisions are largely complete. Although the new Bayview is not yet built, a shared vision guided by newly empowered residents and refined by extraordinary architects and landscape designers exists. It is beautiful. It is respectful of the preferences and traditions of its people. It remembers local history, preserves the best of the "old Bayview," and will elevate both the aesthetic and functional environments for its residents. Connected by equal parts of laughter, frustration, and co-creation, throughout this process participants have gotten to know one another in a deeper way. Residents have risen to the occasion by sharing their personal wisdom; contractors have risen to that same occasion by developing new levels of listening and responding. Regulators have explored new considerations in the approval process. And board and staff at Bayview have gained a deeper understanding of how best to serve the neighborhood.

This work, which continues today, is giving birth to something wonderful. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, staff continue to provide updates to residents via newsletters with lots of bright visuals and the installation of an 11' x 3' color banner presenting the most recent architectural renderings for residents and visitors to see. Soon, staff will host a community

Zoom meeting to share the renderings, receive input, and answer questions.

The beauty and humanity of these designs speak for themselves. They are irrefutable evidence of the value of design justice work.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit Bayview at
www.bayviewfoundation.org

Or Contact
Alexis London, Executive Director
Bayview Foundation
610 Bayview
Madison WI 53715
608.256.7808
alexislondon@bayviewfoundation.org

≠

Architectural renderings in the document produced by The Kubala Washatko Architects
copyright Bayview Foundation Madison Wisconsin 2021