

Wider West Side of Gary Quality of Life Partnership: Summary and Update



Introduction

The Wider West Side of Gary Quality of Life Partnership (West Side QofL) is a group of 8-12 partner organizations who meet monthly to discuss and undertake quality of life improvements for Gary's wider west side that can be realized by building on the area's existing cultural and ecological assets. The formal QofL planning process took place in Fall 2018 into Winter 2019. Led by the Field Museum, you can read more about it in the [Gary's Wider West Side Quality of Life Process Summary](#). Out of the process emerged a shared focus on working to make improvements for Brunswick Park, and to support one another's efforts at locations such as Rees Park, Ivanhoe South Preserve, and in these places surrounding communities.

The West Side QofL Partnership is part of the regional Calumet Heritage Area, and the effort to get federal designation as the Calumet National Heritage Area (CNHA). National Heritage Areas receive federal dollars, raise matching funds, attract tourism, and promote stewardship of landscapes that have been central to American history. The CNHA effort is led by the Calumet Heritage Partnership with technical and programmatic assistance from the Field Museum.

The West Side QofL Partners

Most partners are long-time stakeholders in the City of Gary and its west side Neighborhoods. They range in size from all volunteer community groups and projects to large regional institutions and organizations. Participants include (but are not limited to):

United Urban Network
Gary Nature Project
Gary Community Partnership
Brown Faces Green Spaces
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church (lay leadership)

Calumet Heritage Partnership
The Nature Conservancy
Shirley Heinze Land Trust
The Wetlands Initiative
Faith in Place
US Forest Service
Center for Environmental Ethics and Law.

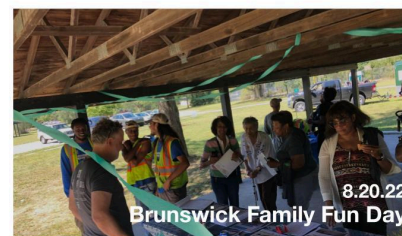
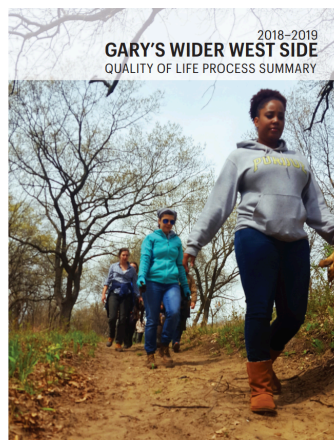
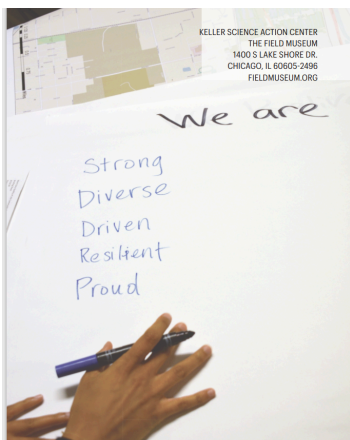
The City of Gary Departments of Sustainability and Environmental Affairs and Public Parks have been essential collaborators in our work. We have also received project support from Common Council Persons, the Gary Park's Board, and the Office of the Mayor. Legacy Foundation, First

Financial Bank, NiSource, and Donnelley Foundation and others have provided financial support for this work.

The Projects

The projects listed below started in 2017, before the Quality of Life (Q of L) Process officially began. These were early efforts to begin building trust and connections before asking partners to more formally come together for visioning and additional coordinated action. Roughly two thirds of these projects were planned and produced by our group, with the remaining third being projects of one of the member organizations that was significantly supported by other group members. A list with details about each project available on request.

- 1) Lakeshore People's Museum (2015-2018)
- 2) Ivanhoe South Event Series (2017)
- 3) Ivanhoe Community Surveys (2017)
- 4) "Six Lots" Beautification at King St. and 4th Ave. (2018)
- 5) Wider West Side QofL Planning Process (2018-19)
- 6) Brunswick Park Beautification and Stewardship (2019 - 2022)
- 7) Brunswick Park Earth Day, Wellness, and Community Event Series (2019 - 2022)
- 8) Online Story Collecting Workshop (2020)
- 9) School partnership capacity building for QofL Partners (2020-2021)
- 10) New Brunswick Park Entrance Sign (2023)
- 11) Rees Park Beautification and Garden Development (2020-present)
- 12) Deep River Salvage Day and Celebration Day (2023-present)



Join us for a FREE morning of fun activities at Brunswick Park -- a family-friendly day to celebrate the park. We will have a guided walk of the beautiful natural area on site, games, and complimentary refreshments.

Free native plants will also be available for Gary residents interested in starting their own butterfly gardens and learning more about the environmental initiatives and partnerships taking place on the Wider West Side of Gary, Indiana.

There's something for everyone to enjoy! We hope you'll join us.



WHEN: SATURDAY,
August 20, 2022
11:00AM-1:00PM



WHERE: Brunswick Park
779 Clark Rd., Gary, IN
46406



For More Info Contact:
mlongoni@fieldmuseum.org

The Future

As the projects list above illustrates, even with setbacks from Covid, we have maintained the momentum of activities and improvements that build on each other. We plan to do more in the areas of heritage celebration and preservation, recreation, ecological stewardship, and education, all as outgrowths of what we have achieved so far. We meet virtually every first Wednesday of the month, have welcomed new members in 2024, and look forward to collaborating on festive events and community improvements with all interested parties including the new leadership of the City of Gary.

Last Updated: 6/4/24