

# Positioning Milo-Grogan for Success:

## Assessing Neighborhood Conditions and Building a Platform for Inclusive Growth

Given recent and anticipated market activity in Milo, this report is intended to help Milo residents and stakeholders manage future development activity so that it is inclusive and equitable.

Based on analysis of neighborhood-level data and interviews with key neighborhood stakeholders, there are many positive trends suggesting that Milo-Grogan's current and prospective residents can benefit from renewed public and private sector activity in Milo. However, this outcome is not inevitable; this analysis shows that Milo is at a crossroads in terms of continuing to be a neighborhood of choice for residents.

- FINDING 1 Economic Situation**  
While incomes are increasing, they remain significantly lower than the county average, and nearly half of Milo residents live in poverty. Housing costs are relatively low compared to the county as a whole, yet residents do not earn enough to be able to affordably pay for housing.
- FINDING 2 Development Pressure**  
Private market housing development is beginning to move eastward from Italian Village and Weinland Park into Milo's western edges. As of Q1 2018, there have been no signs of resident displacement in Milo. Milo's large number of vacant properties and structures suggest there is an opportunity to absorb new residents without displacement occurring.
- FINDING 3 Neighborhood of Choice**  
Milo should be considered a neighborhood of choice — a neighborhood that can support residents of a range of income levels. Milo's housing stock is in relatively good shape, but there is evidence that the neighborhood hasn't stabilized yet; high rates of tax delinquency and ongoing blight challenge the area. Thoughtful stewardship is necessary to stabilize housing and attract market-rate development without pricing-out current residents.
- FINDING 4 Housing**  
Milo possesses a robust stock of homes, but many units are in need of significant repairs to remain viable. Introducing a home repair program available to homeowners and qualified landlords will allow long-time residents to remain in their homes or benefit from a resurgent market if they choose to sell.
- FINDING 5 Unique Characteristics**  
Despite I-71 running through the center of the neighborhood, Milo enjoys a prime seat in the heart of Columbus where it is surrounded by important institutions and destinations. Milo-Grogan's proximity to the city's core offers access to jobs and resources in surrounding neighborhoods.
- FINDING 6 Leadership and Investment**  
Several long-standing organizations are working to chart Milo's future, but the neighborhood lacks a structure to create a collective vision. In recent years, Milo-Grogan's community, church, and business leaders have made enormous strides toward creating a vibrant neighborhood for all residents, presenting an opportunity for widespread community engagement around the future of the neighborhood.

## Recommendations

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1

### **Develop a strategic, action-oriented Roadmap for investment**

Leaders in Milo should create an action-oriented roadmap for investment, as well as set standards for housing development that complements and extends the City's neighborhood plan. Creating a roadmap for investment would allow residents to fully capitalize on much-desired market activity that has been absent for years and help residents manage site control and ensure responsible entities own and develop in the neighborhood.

2

### **Clarify or establish a neutral entity to execute the Roadmap**

To ensure effectiveness, Milo should follow the example of other Columbus neighborhoods and assign a neutral entity to steward the execution of the roadmap. This entity would be advised by a core group of invested partners, including long-standing organizations and individuals in the neighborhood.

3

### **Continue to build capacity among residents**

Milo's youthfulness, as well as experienced set of residents, creates a talent pool ready to lead redevelopment efforts in the neighborhood. There are opportunities to connect young Milo residents to effective leadership programs.

4

### **Improve neighborhood housing stock**

Many houses need major fixes, but residents pay a large share of their income toward their mortgages. Neighborhood stakeholders could establish home improvement programs for homeowners and qualified landlords.

5

### **Encourage market-rate and affordable housing**

As commercial and residential development gains momentum in Milo West, it is crucial that continuing to live in Milo remains financially feasible for families who earn a range of incomes. Milo's leaders should carefully balance housing that serves a range of price points so that existing residents do not become priced out of their rent or mortgages.

6

### **Invest in neighborhood gateways and byways**

Public and private investments should focus on the main roadway arteries of Milo. Leaders should capitalize on these commonly-used main roads with heavy traffic, and encourage commercial growth and functional improvements along them.