



*West Bank*  
**BUSINESS ASSOC.**  
**MPLS**

**Strategic Plan**

*Updates and Recommendations 2013*

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**The West Bank.**

**Real.**

**Different.**

## **About our Strategic Plan**

### **The first planning session**

In 2012, we held our first long-term strategic planning session, receiving input from over 50 West Bank businesses. Our goals for the organization build on the foundation we've set in prior years and aligns with our long term organizational goals:

- Bring more traffic to the West Bank
- Help nurture positive perceptions of the West Bank community
- Improve our services and relations with small, immigrant owned, and/or independent businesses on the West Bank (everybody has unique needs!)
- Continue to help mitigate the effects of continued construction and roadway / sidewalk improvements
- Plan ahead for improvements and developments, having a voice in the process

All thoughts below were contributed by West Bank Business Association members via email, survey, and in-person brainstorming.

While this current document is intended to be useful as a stand-alone document, it's helpful to reference this first conversation.

A full version of the strategic plan can be found here:

[http://www.wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/5\\_YearStrategicPlan.pdf](http://www.wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/5_YearStrategicPlan.pdf)

### **Why create a strategic plan?**

A strategic plan does not just sit on a shelf and collect dust.

- A strategic plan gives Members /Stakeholders a **VOICE** in how the organization grows, serves, and operates.
- A strategic plan protects against arbitrary changes that can come with leadership transition by creating a **MAP** to help guide the organization.
- A strategic plan promotes & nurtures **TRANSPARENCY**.
- A strategic plan allows /Enables us to move beyond the day-to-day operations and **ACHIEVE** big goals.

Member added:

- A strategic plan provides focus.
- A strategic plan allocates resources.
- A strategic plan applies member time efficiently.
- A strategic plan puts everyone on the same plan.

## **What is your vision for the West Bank in 5 years?**

## **2013 Convening**

In 2013 we reconvened to review our plan for progress and make updates with new communities and priorities.

### Strategic Planning:

- Creates a member-driven roadmap for the organization
- Gives us an opportunity to look at “the Big Picture” and how WBBA fits in
- Provides a measure with which to evaluate success...

### Reviewing this plan regularly...

- Allows us to consider new priorities
- Gives us the opportunity to see where we’ve been
- and discuss where we’d like to go!

**Where do you want the WBBA to be in 5 years?**

## **Our organization**

### **Our Mission**

To strengthen and celebrate the neighborhood by promoting the area and connections between its residents, businesses, institutions and organizations.

### **Our Values**

- Diversity
- Planning
- Collaboration
- Community inclusion
- Thriving businesses and attractive storefronts
- Transparency
- Member service
- Partnership

### **2013 Structure - Summary of Active Committees**

- The Parking Committee
- The WBBA Board
- The West Bank Improvement District
- The Membership Committee! (New in 2013!)
- The Executive Committee (New in 2013!)
- The West Bank Ride Committee
- The West Bank Festival Committee
- Safety Committee

## **How can committees support our goals and mission?**

## Strategic Plan - Our Long Term Goals

### 2012 Strategic Plan - Summary of Goals

*The following identifies several goals coming out of our strategic planning session.*

<b>Area</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Membership &amp; Engagement</b>	Increase awareness of member benefits and obligations	1-3 years
	Increase # of members	1-3 years
	Greater representation from small / immigrant businesses	1-2 years
	Greater engagement in committees / awareness of committees	1-2 years
	Membership - a more significant part (10%+) of revenue	3 years
	Engage new members in executive leadership / committee	1-2 years
<b>Marketing / Outreach</b>	Improve website functionality	2-3 years
	Grow "West Bank" brand recognition locally and state-wide	1-3 years
	Solidify brand (business brand vs association brand)	1 year
	Increase traffic to West Bank website (and thus, businesses!)	2-3 years
	Create plan for marketing around light rail transit	2-3 years
	Increase positive area perceptions of the West Bank	2-3 years
<b>Programs</b>	Improve quality of programs (do what we do better/well)	1-3 years
	Music Festival - Grow sustainably, connect with members	1-3 years
	Implement Business Improvement District	1-3 years
	Use Great Streets / grants to help reach self-sustainability	2-3 years
	Partner and involve area organizations in program activity	1 year
	Add new programs that align with mission	2-3 years
<b>Organization / Infrastructure</b>	Improve structure of committees and transparency re: meetings	1 year
	Increase office space size / capacity	1 year
	Diversify and grow revenue streams away from grant funding	3 years
	Increase participation and engagement of delegate board	1-2 years
	Increase sustainability of positions and reduce transition	1-2 years
	Increase capacity.	1-2 years

## 2012 Strategic Plan - Summary of Deliverables

The following identifies several deliverables coming out of our strategic session.

Area	Goal	Timeline
<b>Membership &amp; Engagement</b>	Create a "New member packet"	1 year
	Begin invoicing system for members / tracking	1 year
	Connect with ADC, WBCC, work on partnership efforts	immediate
	Add member meetings and committee meetings to website	immediate
	Increase membership outreach and communications (packs), spend time each week on outreach	3 years
	Explain leadership opportunities to new and current members	1-2 years
<b>Marketing / Outreach</b>	Update website CMS system	1-2 years
	Partner with Meet MPLS, Explore MN, Central Corridor	1-3 years
	Create a standard press kit and "about the West Bank" pack	1-2 years
	Create association brand, brand guidelines	1 year
	Up visibility of site through SEO, Blogging, Communications	1-2 years
	Create next version of area brochure	1-2 years
	Work with CHANCE and University to engage students	1-3 years
<b>Programs</b>	Begin planning for Music Festival earlier, creating milestones	1 year
	Connect with new partners and sponsors	2-3 years
	Complete Outreach and sign petition for BID	1 year
	Successfully close out open grants, continue new city contracts	1 year
	Identify ways to partner specifically with 1-2 orgs per program	1 year
	Craft plan for new programs: West Bank Ride, West Bank Press	2-3 years
<b>Organization / Infrastructure</b>	Include committee meetings in member meeting reminders	Immediate
	Consider office change and/or space change	1 year
	Add service generated revenue streams	1-3 years
	Individual meetings with delegate board	1-2 years
	Create list of projects for interns, developing intern roles	1-2 years
	Create guideline manual for board, employees	1-2 years
	Create new committees around recognition and membership	1-2 years

The following summarizes our 2013 achievements as they relate to the goals and deliverables outlined in our 2012 planning session. While a great summary, they are not a comprehensive list of goals.

A powerpoint presentation of WBBA\_YearInReview.pdf can be found at:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oB2g5IUCreSEiNUotQVNiaExuQmx3X1VKNHRxM256Q1FLQlJB/edit?usp=sharing>

### **Progress Made: Membership & Engagement**

- Increased awareness of membership
- Increased # of Members - from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_
- Greater engagement in committees
- Engaged new members in leadership
- Created a membership committee!
- Created a new member presentation
- Connected with ADC and held a joint session
- Began invoicing system for members
- Announced meetings on site and via newsletters
- Increased outreach

### **More work needed**

- Greater representation from small / immigrant businesses
- Continue to get more engagement in committees
- Continue to increase member revenue
- Add a calendar to the site

### **Progress Made: Marketing & Outreach**

- Created a new site with a more user friendly CMS
- Clarified WBBA Brand vs Area Brand
- Increased traffic to websites and sub-sites
- Created a business plan
- Met with Meet MPLS to explore partnership opportunities
- Created a press release template and starting press list
- Increased visibility of the site via SEO, creating more content
- Created an updated 2013 area brochure and map!!!
- Continued working with CHANCE, Leadership Fellows and Augsburg students

### **More work needed**

- Continue marketing area
- Partner with Meet MPLS to further outreach opportunities
- Continue to work with CHANCE, Leadership Fellows and Augsburg students
- Updating of existing signage
- Wayfinding and signage
- An even better, more robust site



### **Progress Made: Programs**

- Improved quality of programs and logistics / planning
- Continued work on Business Improvement District planning
- Using Great Streets funds strategically to increase member services and engage more members
- Working with other area organizations
- Added new programs (West Bank Ride!)
- Began plans for West Bank Music Festival earlier
- Connected with some great new sponsors
- Closed out open grants and received new contracts with the city
- Partnered with new organizations

### **More work needed**

- Sustainability of programs (budgets / revenue)
- Continue connecting with new partners for non-duplication of services

### **Progress Made: Organization/ Infrastructure**

- Added new committees, increased notification of committee meetings
- Increased office size - moved!
- Increasing alternative revenue streams (member dues, sponsorships)
- Increased engagement of delegate board
- Reducing transition of staff - No turnover in 2012 or 2013!!!
- Created plan for service revenue in 2014
- Created a list of projects for interns for continuity
- Created an employee manual
- Created new committee for membership and recognition

### **More work needed**

- At end of 2013, decreased capacity due to program losses
- Additional revenue streams
- Continued improvement on our programs

### **New Goals?**

What goals do we see for our committees and staff have to make deliverables happen?

What are our new priorities?

The membership was lead in a SWOT analysis and brainstorming session to determine these things.

## **2013 SWOT Analysis**

*Identifying new and changing priorities.*

### **Strengths**

*What are the strengths of the West Bank and the West Bank Business Association?*

- Music & Art
- Big institutions and our proximity to them
- Walkability
- Engaged board
- Committed staff
- Businesses probably won't be displaced
- Entertainment district
- Available space for cheap
- Great area businesses
- New strong committees
- Local businesses
- Distinctive architecture and community
- Strong relationships with foundations
- Culture
- TWO LRT stations
- Like a tiny downtown (not to be confused with Dinkytown)
- University District Alliance
- Small town "ethic"
- Jovial Font
- Murals
- KFAI

## **Weaknesses**

*What are the weaknesses of the West Bank and the West Bank Business Association?*

- Myopic vision
- \$ resources
- Member division
- Not enough multicultural participation in board
- Streetscape
- Lack of cleanliness / parking
- City accountability / relationships with the city
- Empty and dark pedestrian walkway
- Access to Cedar for events
- Exchange to West River Parkway
- Street potholes
- Benches / Bus shelters
- Clear priorities for WBBA Staff
- Conflict around WBID
- Lighting
- Perception of a lack of safety
- Ubiquitous graffiti
- Cedar Bottleneck

## **Opportunities**

*What are area opportunities?*

- Met Transit Partnership
- Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan
- Concerts / Festivals
- LRT Traffic!
- Recycling / Trash containers
- BIke Parking
- GNF - Stadium grants
- Cedar amenities / Improvements
- All new greening, lights, streetscapes
- University as a market
- Outside events
- Festivals could be opportunities
- UMN & Augsburg student engagement
- “Free Zone” - LRT
- Investment / Development projects
- Sunday Games - How do we market?
- Historical landmarks (like the animated cowboy)
- Vikings donate football helmets. WBBA can pass out at BID forum.

## **Threats**

*What are the threats?*

- Lack of strong revenue sources
- Staff burnout
- Internal conflict
- Immediate development opportunities vs long-term place value
- Lot A Parking Lot
- City involvement / engagement not guarantee
- Los of entertainment venues
- WBID viewed as threat to some businesses
- New Development - open space / quality of life
- All the development - light rail, street construction, utilities work, disrupt traffic patterns and make it difficult for some to predict their travel to the West Bank
- Perceptions of Safety
- Disrupted traffic

## **2014 - What's on the Horizon**

- UMN Rec Center?
- Construction on 4th and 15th
- Bridge to W. River Parkway
- Lot A
- LRT!
- Cedar sidewalks
- Fine development
- Internal operations
- Joint garbage collection
- Attract, recruit, and support immigrant-owned businesses
- Viking
- Two wards
- Washington Blvd
- Opening 5th St
- Festivals / Events - communications to businesses
- Cedar Cultural Center Plaza

## **How will 2014 move us towards our vision for the West Bank?**

## **Committees - New Goals**

*The membership was invited to give feedback and suggestions for our active committees.*

### **The Parking Committee**

- *Works to ensure parking for West Bank employees and guests and customers.*
- *Serves as a representative to the city for lots A, B, C.*
  - Try to create a system for business owners who don't go to committee meetings to hear about lot closures / detours during events.
  - A must to keep the parking we have!

### **The WBBA Board**

- *Represents the organization in the community, and vice versa*
- *Fiduciary steward of the nonprofit*
- *Are members of the WBBA*
  - Board - quarterly report to membership
  - Board members should be on at least one (... committee?)
  - Monitor and encourage active participation
  - Create an alliance or relationship with ADC (what can they do for us, what can we do for them?)

### **The West Bank Improvement District**

- *Researching the implementation of an improvement district on the West Bank*
  - Continuation to be in discussion about this
  - Keep this dream alive!
  - Vision's shared - find a way.
  - Big involvement in meetings
  - Eliminate it.
  - Restructure?
  - Remove / change services

## **The Membership Committee**

- *New in 2013!*
- *Serves to define & clarify membership and member benefits*
- *Is comprised of representatives of staff, members, and the community*
- *Works to increase active membership and member participation*
  - Create a monthly summary / report
  - We need Somali members!
  - Need to understand Somali / new immigrant businesses and what they need, etc
  - Improve signage - figure out how to improve the appearance of business signage, make it look more designed (Samiya Store, Cedar Riverside daycare, West Bank Tobacco, restaurant on both 6th & Cedar, etc.)
  - Clarify role of board / members

## **The Executive Committee**

- *Serves the WBBA Organization / board as a steering committee*
- *Supervises the Executive Director*
- *Serves as an additional communication channel for members / potential members*
- *Represents the organization in the community*
- *Comprised of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary*
  - Past chair for context / continuity
  - Stop pursuing the BID
  - Need Treasurer's report at every meeting
  - Need to take a quorum at the beginning of every meeting
  - Find income producing opportunities
  - Term limits

## **The West Bank Ride Committee**

- *Works together to plan and execute the annual West Bank Ride*
- *Promotes cycling traffic to and throughout the West Bank District*
- *New in 2013*
  - Enhance and grow
  - Tie in with local sports and bike stores
  - Good opportunity for institutional engagement
  - Require bike shops to pay for BIKE FEST (that would produce more buy-in and less of a risk for the association)

## **The West Bank Festival Committee**

*- Works together to plan and execute the annual West Bank Music Festival*

- If held again in 2014, set strict budget parameters
- Fantasy pub crawl (SPRING)
- Consider “showcase” of local talent
- Cedar Riverside Renaissance festival
- Is it viable?
- Restructure to Private?
- Concert in the park - cultural celebration
- Outdoor movies in empty lot on Cedar
- Cedar Ave - Access for cars
- Require bars to pay for West Bank Music Festival (that would produce more buy-in and less of a risk for the association)
- Vet festivals - before they pull permits / advertise

## **The Safety Committee**

*- Works together with the Cedar Riverside NRP and West Bank Community Coalition to promote safety on the West Bank*

- Have a representative attend the Downtown Court watch (I’ll volunteer if nobody goes already - Susannah)
- Lighting “ambassadors” can report as eyes in the street
- New Blood
- More regular police (U, City, Park)
- Great opportunity for neighborhood collaborative engagement - WBCC, CR NRP)



## **Summary of updated goals and deliverables**

*The membership was invited to identify new goals and deliverables.*

### **Membership Recommendations: Goals and Deliverables**

#### **Goals**

- More participation at WBBA meetings by immigrant businesses
- Better communication / planning for external events
- More involvement with external fests
- Goal - stop wasting WBBA time and resources on the Business Improvement District.  
Action: vote to stop working on it
- Lot A- commuter and business parking rap
- More creative festivals

#### **Deliverables**

- Invite planners to member meetings
- Add to our notifications / calendars / reminders
- Filling potholes
- Development committee - small area plan
- Create deliverables that use quantitative goals
- Signage and wayfinding project - get funding from U Area fund
- Business Coupon Book organized by WBBA Executive Director
- Increase membership by 20%, largely through recruiting of Immigrant businesses to join WBBA
- Garbage collection
- Snow contractor shoveling organized by WBBA Executive Director
- Establish a WBBA parking and travel recommendations page on the website
- Encourage facade improvements along Cedar Ave by making more matching funds available to businesses and property owners
- Clean up fund funded by UofM community fund
- 2 6' x 6' LRT station maps of WB Businesses - Cedar Ave & 19th Ave Stations
- Representatives for this important to City! (?)

**How can we set priorities in 2014  
that use our STRENGTHS,  
address our WEAKNESSES,  
to take advantage of OPPORTUNITIES  
and mitigate THREATS?**

## Director Summary of Goals and Deliverables

At the current staff capacity of 1 FTE and 1/4 Contract communications specialist we will be able to focus on the following priorities in 2014:

Area	Deliverable
<p><b>Membership &amp; Engagement</b></p> <p>Funded by: Member dues, Great Streets Grant</p>	Facilitate 12 member meetings as seminars (topics as per requests of members)
	Increase membership by 20%
	Increase outreach to businesses with emphasis on small / East African businesses.
	Introduce services for businesses
	Continue partnering with ADC as applicable for hosting / co-hosting seminars
	Increase small business participation in meetings
	Invite outside event planners to participate in meetings
<p><b>Marketing / Outreach</b></p> <p>Funded by: Great Streets grant, Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation* (*tbd in Dec 2013.)</p>	Continue to refine website, making it more mobile-friendly and image friendly
	Explore opportunities to improve and install new wayfinding and signage
	Continue to grow mailing list / audience for online promos to support West Bank
	Increase positive perceptions of the West Bank - through articles, marketing
	Finish Loyalty Card Program / Explore continuation of it
	Plan with partners for Lightrail Opening in 2014
	Partner with Meet Mpls / Explore MN to establish West Bank as destination district
<p><b>Programs</b></p> <p>Funded by: Sponsors, Grants (These things should be funded and/or revenue generating!!!)</p>	Establish firm budgeting parameters for programs with goals around funding
	Increase member participation and support of program committees so they are supported by those that benefit directly from them. (Example - bike shop sponsorship of West Bank Ride, venue sponsorship of Festival.)
	(See individual recommendations for committees, below)
<p><b>Organization / Admin</b></p> <p>Funded by: Member dues. *Not fully funded for the amount of hours we consistently spend.</p> <p>Could be additionally funded by General Operating grants</p>	Increase use of committees to help achieve goals, increase committee participation
	Manage staff capacity and burnout by adhering to priorities and growing offerings only with supporting revenue streams
	Create additional / more streamlined reporting - example: quarterly member report
	Create calendar on site for meeting posting
	Increase strategic use of interns and volunteers to help achieve goals
	Turn more administrative work in relation to committees over to committees themselves. (Example: board secretary posting board meetings.)

Area	Deliverable
<p><b>Revenue</b> (includes grantwriting, donor development, introducing services)</p> <p>Funded by: Member dues. *Not fully funded for the amount of hours we consistently spend.</p> <p>Could be additionally funded by General Operating grants</p>	Increase applications submitted to foundations of appropriate scope (2013 goal 175K, 2014 goal 200K)
	Introduce service revenue / fees for service
	By increased fundraising, new revenue, and maximizing revenue-generating time of staff and volunteers, goal to reduce debt by a minimum of 25%
	Nurture and establish relationships with new potential donors. (Minneapolis Foundation, McKnight, Carolyn Foundation)
	Increase sponsorship dollars for events
	Increase membership by 20%

Voted unanimously at the monthly member meeting November 21, 2013.

**Recommendations for Committees**

*Based on the feedback received from members, new opportunities in 2014, and current capacity the following recommendations for WBBA committees are below. The respective committees are invited to review the following recommendations and come up with their own goals and deliverables for 2014.*

Committee	Suggested Goals / Deliverables
Parking	Preserve area parking
	Streamline procedures for event notification when lots are reserved
	Work with all West Bank businesses to address parking as an area-wide concern. (Branding of parking, availability, event mitigation, etc.)
WBBA Board	Create a board manual for incoming board members
	Institute a board member committee participation (all board members must participate on at least one committee)
	More board-led responsibility for public posting of meeting minutes & agendas, greater transparency
West Bank Improvement District	Feedback to both continue and disband this committee. Committee should conduct an outreach forum to determine continued conversation regarding this proposal.
	Committee should find additional funding sources for continued work so as not to redirect organizational resources.
	At the Monthly Member meeting on Nov 21, 2013 it was decided that No further advocacy for the WBID will be done without a formal vote of the board

Committee	Suggested Goals / Deliverables
Membership Committee	Create a quarterly report for members
	Craft outreach plan to reach Somali / East African businesses
	Increase member awareness of programs such as facade improvements
	Increase member participation in committees
	Establish “block captain” program for existing board members to help with outreach (meeting and opportunity notification, etc)
West Bank Ride	Get additional support (participation, sponsorship) from businesses that benefit from this event.
	Increase sponsorship revenue for this event
	Increase participating members / stops from 10 to 15
	Establish budgeting boundaries for the committee with “not to exceed” parameters. (Tie this in to overall budget for 2014.) Additional scope should only come with additional funding.
West Bank Festival	Get additional support (participation, sponsorship) from businesses that benefit from this event.
	Increase sponsorship revenue for this event
	Explore “showcase model” for festival throughout venues rather than along Cedar Avenue
	Increase participation to 20 active participating businesses
	Establish budgeting boundaries for the committee with “not to exceed” parameters. (Tie this in to overall budget for 2014.) Additional scope should only come with additional funding.
Safety Committee	Connect - more WBBA board participation in this committee
	Address graffiti removal, garbage removal, and safety (implement phase II of our NRP grant)
Development Committee	Craft a new committee that can serve as a conduit of information from the WBBA to city council, help serve as stewards of the small area plans we have in place, and help add to those plans as needed (as we did with the Lot A Steering Committee). This committee should keep its eye on new developments in 2014.

## **Seminars for Member Meetings and Special Meetings**

Based on member feedback, online surveys, and upcoming opportunities, following are the chosen topics for seminars in 2013-2014:

- Marketing & Branding
- Social Media
- Search Engine Optimization
- Permits, licenses, and working with the city
- Event planning / (Hosting your own, + External events on the West Bank)
- Language barriers and translation help
- Increasing pedestrian (non-vehicular) traffic
- MNSure and Employee healthcare coverage
- Cross-marketing and collaboration
- Integrating arts and visual arts into your businesses
- Meet your council members
- Credit Card / Merchant Processing (ways for small businesses to save money and take advantage of new technologies.)