

Metcalf Park Community Bridges – Liberation Hub

Location: 2600 N 38th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53210

Metcalf Park Community Bridges (MPCB) is a resident-led organization committed to developing the built environment that reflects the desires and values of the people most directly impacted. Our mission is to cultivate resident-led development rooted in social Justice. To establish a framework where neighbors collectively exercise their voice, access critical resources, and create pathways toward economic, political, social, and cultural self-determination.

The proposed redevelopment at **2600 N 38th Street** represents a catalytic, community-driven investment that will transform a long-vacant site into a vibrant, multi-use liberation hub. This project is not merely an improvement to the built environment—it is a stabilization strategy, an economic development asset, and a blueprint for neighborhood-led revitalization in one of Milwaukee's most historically divested areas.

This project is designed to be delivered in **two phases**, generating immediate impact while laying the foundation for long-term, sustainable community infrastructure.

Why This Project Matters Now

Metcalf Park is a neighborhood disproportionately affected by historic redlining, economic disinvestment, food insecurity, and housing instability. Private market forces have failed to deliver high-quality amenities, supportive services, or economic opportunities at the scale residents deserve. The lack of stable, accessible community infrastructure limits residents' ability to organize, build wealth, and access essential services.

This redevelopment directly addresses these structural challenges by providing:

- Access to basic needs (food, hygiene, warmth, dignity)
- Locally driven economic activity and micro-enterprise opportunities
- Workforce pathways and skill-building opportunities
- Safe, consistent spaces for youth, families, and elders
- Infrastructure for civic participation and community-led planning
- Increased property activation that reduces blight and enhances safety

As government agencies and lenders evaluate projects based on stability, community ownership, impact, and long-term viability, this redevelopment stands out as a strong, low-risk, high-impact public investment for multiple reasons:

- MPCB has a proven track record of delivering programs, mobilizing residents, and maintaining community trust for over a decade.
- The project is deeply shaped by resident input, increasing utilization, relevance, and long-term success.
- The development will activate a vacant site that currently depresses surrounding values and perceptions.
- The project positions the neighborhood for future economic growth, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

Phase 1: Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building (Immediate Community Benefit)

Phase 1 focuses on transforming the 2.5-story brick building into a fully activated resource center that addresses urgent needs while generating early-stage program activity.

Key Components

Community Meeting & Organizing Space

A dedicated venue for civic engagement, leadership development, public safety planning, policy discussions, and mutual aid coordination. This space will anchor grassroots democracy and build capacity for long-term neighborhood governance.

Administrative & Partner Offices

Operational headquarters for MPCB and space for aligned partners (legal aid, workforce training, social service providers, etc.). Co-location increases efficiency, reduces cost barriers, and improves access for residents.

Community Bookstore & Café

A literacy and entrepreneurship hub supporting cultural programming, resident authors, small business incubation, and intergenerational connection. This space provides a revenue-generating component that enhances financial sustainability.

Soup Kitchen and Food Distribution Center

A reliable food access point that mitigates hunger and supports stabilization for families and individuals. This builds on MPCB's existing mutual aid network, which currently helps hundreds of residents annually.

Laundry Facilities

A critical hygiene and dignity resource in a neighborhood where many households lack reliable laundry access. This component directly supports families, seniors, and residents experiencing housing instability.

ADA-Accessible Infrastructure

Compliance upgrades such as ADA restrooms and ramps ensure full inclusion and align with local and federal accessibility requirements.

Immediate Outcomes of Phase 1:

- Activation of an underutilized building
- Increased neighborhood foot traffic and safety
- Early-stage job creation
- Reduction in basic-needs insecurity
- A physical anchor that signals long-term investment

Phase 2: New Building Addition & Outdoor Activation (Long-Term Community Infrastructure)

Phase 2 expands capacity and establishes the site as a long-term community development campus.

Key Components

Flexible Multi-Use Building Addition

Designed to adapt to emerging community priorities—such as mental health services, youth programming, small business development, and workforce training. This adaptability makes the investment future-proof and responsive.

Rooftop Seating Area with Trellis

An outdoor wellness and event space that supports health programming, community gatherings, cultural events, and placemaking.

Central Courtyard

A safe, accessible, intergenerational outdoor area fostering community cohesion, children's play, summer programs, and year-round activation.

Parking & Security Enhancements

Six off-street parking stalls and secured gates supporting accessibility, safety, and operational reliability.

Long-Term Outcomes of Phase 2:

- Expanded program capacity

- Higher utilization across age groups
- Increased organizational sustainability
- Strengthened neighborhood identity and cohesion
- A permanent asset that resists displacement or market pressure

Economic, Social, and Public Return on Investment

1. Economic Development & Wealth Building

- Creates opportunities for resident-owned businesses
- Supports workforce development, certifications, and training
- Increases foot traffic and strengthens neighborhood commercial corridors
- Improves local property values and reduces long-term city maintenance costs

2. Public Health & Safety Improvements

- Provides stable access to food, hygiene, and social services
- Creates safer, activated public spaces
- Reduces isolation and supports families in crisis
- Decreases the burden on emergency services

3. Civic Infrastructure & Local Leadership

- Strengthens civic participation
- Supports long-term resident-led planning
- Builds capacity for local problem-solving and advocacy

4. Community Stability & Anti-Displacement

- Anchors permanent community-owned infrastructure
- Creates local amenities that reduce resident flight
- Helps stabilize housing by supporting families and reducing economic shocks

Why Government & Lenders Should Invest

This project meets key criteria for both public and private investment:

- ✓ Shovel-ready, community-supported development
- ✓ Strong organizational leadership and proven delivery capacity
- ✓ Direct alignment with city, county, and state priorities
- ✓ High-impact use of public dollars in an underserved geography
- ✓ Clear metrics for evaluation and reporting
- ✓ Long-term financial sustainability through mixed-use programming
- ✓ Catalytic effect on neighborhood revitalization and safety

This investment will not only transform one site—it will strengthen the social, economic, and civic fabric of Metcalfe Park for generations.

Conclusion: A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

The Liberation Hub at 2600 N 38th Street is more than a development project—it is an opportunity to support a model of neighborhood transformation driven by the people who live there. It addresses immediate needs, builds long-term economic infrastructure, and creates a permanent space for organizing, healing, entrepreneurship, and collective power.

Funding this project means investing in:

- Community stability
- Local leadership
- Economic equity
- Public health
- Neighborhood resilience
- Long-term systems of care

Government agencies and lenders have a unique opportunity to help bring this vision to life, ensuring that Metcalfe Park becomes not just a place where people survive—but a place where they thrive