

## 6.8 Make Mautene Court happen.

### ACTION > Advocate

Continue to work the Alderman's office to create a green and attractive plaza on Milwaukee Avenue.

### ACTION > Spend the Budget

Allocate a portion of the SSA annual budget to the ongoing maintenance and management of Mautene Court.

A sub-committee of the SSA has developed a series of design concepts (the proposed concept is illustrated below) for Mautene Court and is currently coordinating with Alderman Flores, CDOT, and the Department of Planning and Development on implementation options. The SSA should continue to pursue the implementation of this project, which will create a new plaza on Milwaukee and elevate awareness of the SSA, as the SSA has played a large role in advocating for the reclamation of this forgotten public right of way for usable, beautiful public space. This public space is also an important demonstration site for stormwater management practices (See Recommendations 6.3 and 6.4).

The Department of Planning and Development has agreed to redevelop Mautene Court along these lines provided that a local entity, in this case, the Chamber of Commerce, has signed a maintenance and management agreement. The SSA intends to extend Cleanslate's contract to include sweeping and emptying garbage bins in Mautene Court and will similarly extend its landscaper's contract to take care of the Court's trees as they would any other street tree.



Figure 97. Sketch of Proposed Mautene Court Design Source: WPB SSA

## 6.9 Extend the sidewalks of overbuilt streets to create new public spaces, or urban living rooms, along Milwaukee.

### ACTION > Advocate

Coordinate with CDOT and the Alderman to reduce the width of overbuilt street sections to accommodate new urban living rooms (see Figures 99 a. and b.).

### ACTION > Spend the Budget

Consider allocating SSA dollars to pay for the street furniture, plantings, and public art within these new public spaces.

Beyond streets, sidewalks, and the streetwall, small open spaces and plazas – gathering and relaxing spaces – inform the pedestrian experience. In Wicker Park Bucktown, and along Milwaukee Avenue in particular, the people-watching is great, but the compact and cluttered corridor affords little breathing room where people can stop and take in their surroundings.

There are opportunities, in addition to Mautene Court, to find new open space within this dense fabric. The SSA should seek to reclaim the short, overbuilt streets just off Milwaukee – on Wood and Hermitage – that dead end at the Blue Line (see Figure 98), transforming them into a series of outdoor public living spaces. The concept is to extend the sidewalk on the northwest side of the

streets, adjacent to the building side, where the sun is maximized and create urban living rooms dedicated

to people watching, public art, and outdoor seating. Some of this space could also be

used by nearby restaurants for outdoor seating. Due to the fact that the

rear alleys are connected, only one lane of traffic is needed.

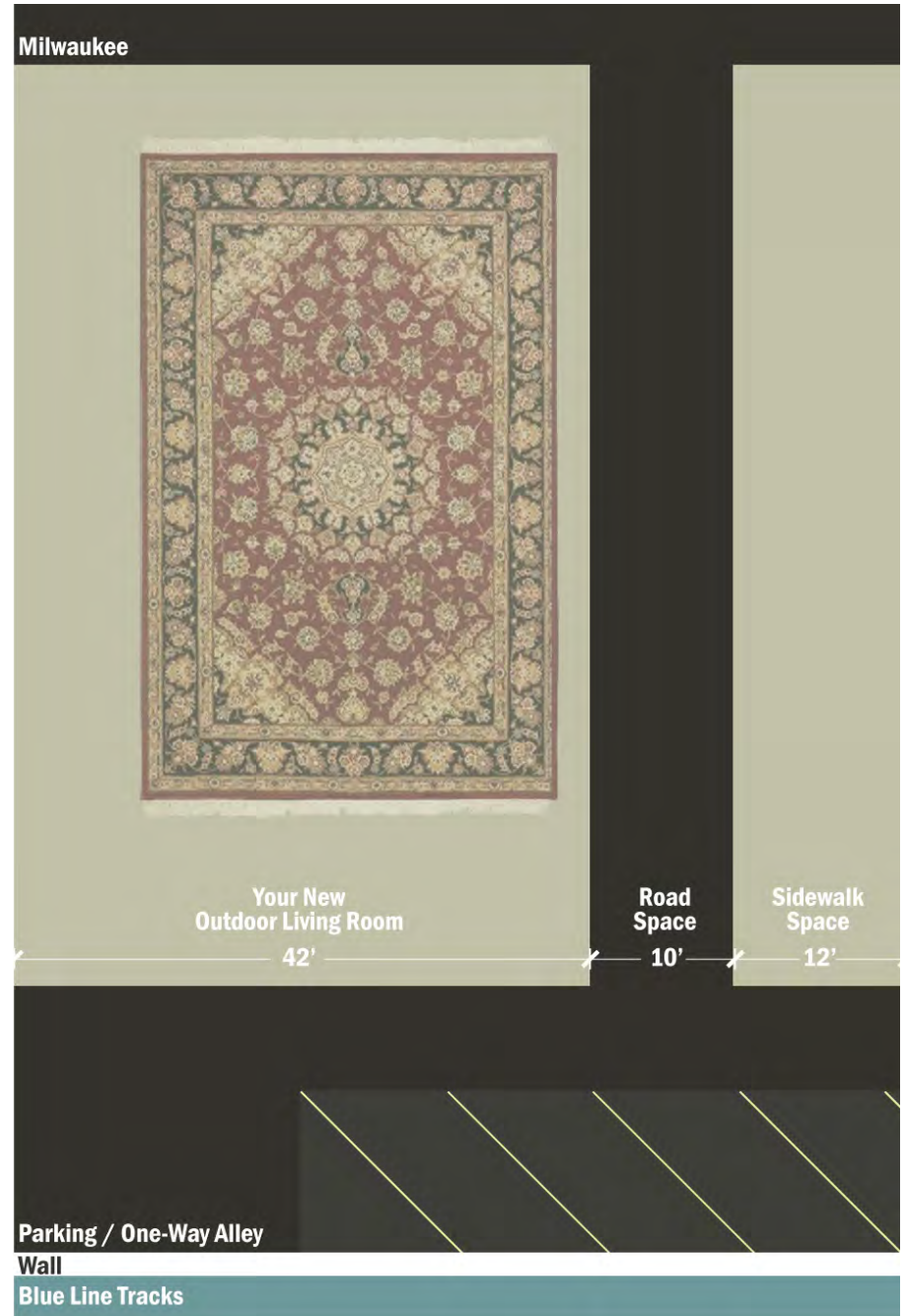
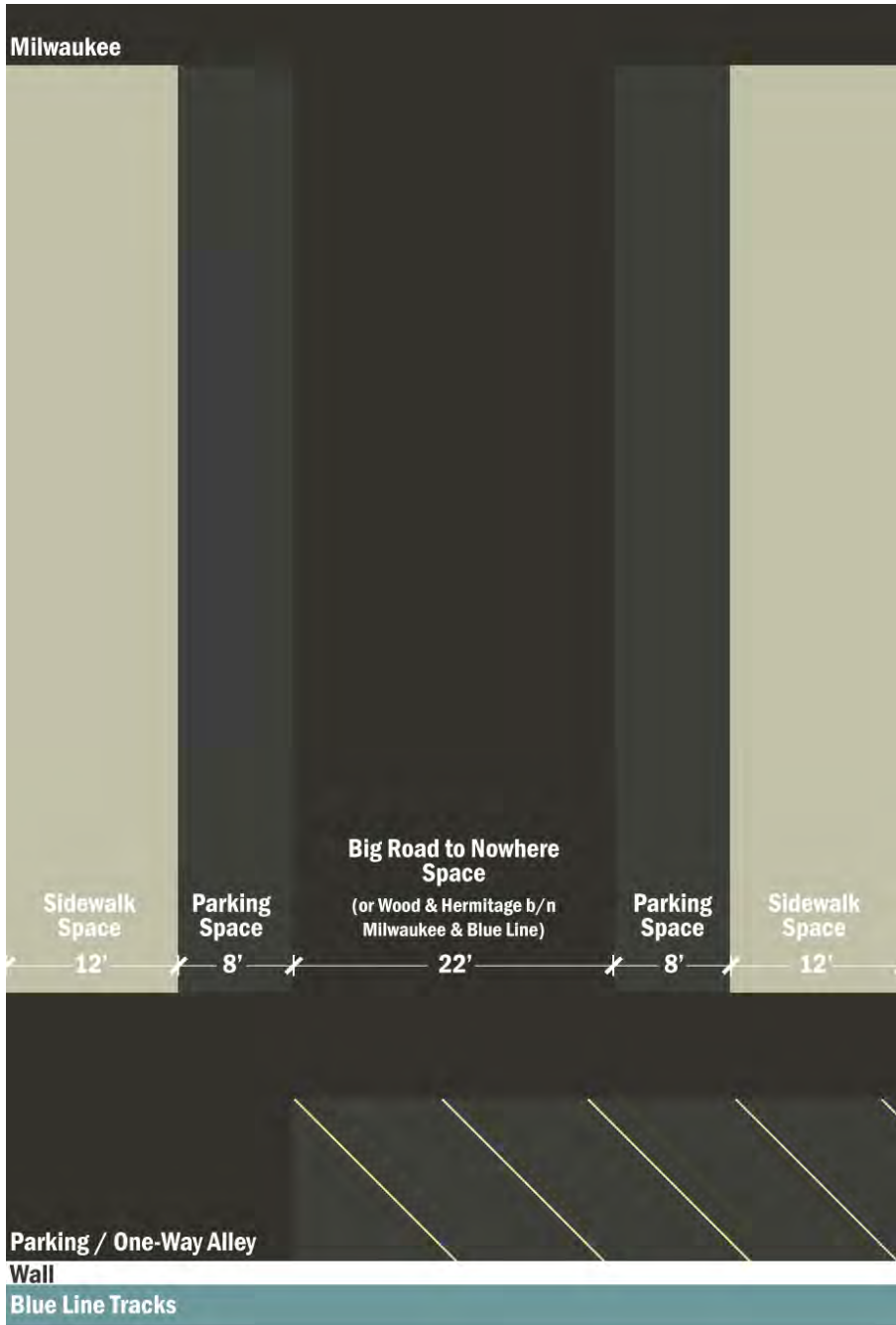
This enables a possible

30 foot sidewalk extension (see

Figures 99 a. and b.).



Figure 98. Proposed Urban Living Room Diagram and Locator Map



Figures 99a. and b. Plan View of Existing Conditions and Proposed Layout of Urban Living Rooms



While Wood and Hermitage “off Milwaukee” are the optimal first candidates, other areas should be considered for new urban living rooms to reclaim overbuilt roadways. The proposed intersection improvements to the six-corner intersection as well as Milwaukee, Beach, and Wood (described in more detail in Recommendations 7.51 & 7.54) each include new open spaces that will add significant value to the pedestrian environment.



Figures 100a. and b. Photo of Existing Conditions and Rendering of Proposed Urban Living Room



## 6.10 Reclaim the Polish Triangle.

### ACTION > Advocate

Work closely with the City to create a series of incremental improvements that free the Polish Triangle from its current challenges.

The Polish Triangle is a hotbed of controversy enveloped in competing ideas for what to do to make it an attractive and significant gateway to WPB. There is no silver bullet for the Polish Triangle as its current flaws are steeped in a wide array of issues. These include:

- **Its size** – even if there was an earnest desire to spend the dollars to improve infrastructure on the site to support retail, the resulting business would be tiny in order to leave space for bus and rail access and open space.
- **The lack of supporting infrastructure** – to add programming means spending the majority of dollars not on architecture but on water and power.
- **Coordination with CTA** – the Triangle is essentially a roof to a rail station. Any significant change will require constant CTA coordination.
- **High traffic volumes (and speeds)** – even if the Triangle was beautifully designed (some say it is now), it will still be surrounded by 80,000 cars a day.
- **Long crossing distances** – what is carrying those 80,000 cars? 72 to 83 feet of pavement on all sides. How do we connect a small plaza to the community across such wide streets?
- **Low quality of adjacent retail** – the development around the Triangle over the past decades has been unfortunate. The majority of retail uses are not ideal uses facing a plaza. The suburban style, one-story commercial developments have only perpetuated the car traffic that shrouds the Triangle.



Photo Booth suggestion from WPB Open House.

Recognizing these interconnected issues is the first step in having a serious and long-term conversation about the Triangle. In essence, what the Polish Triangle needs more than a final design is a public process. This process could include the following steps:

### Reboot the Park

Get everyone's attention by closing the park temporarily. Create space for people to write their ideas for its future, and use this time to educate stakeholders about the range of issues and barriers that impact its potential. Hold a forum to generate ideas about the Triangle, and decide ultimately whether it should be closed all together to become a monument space for a large piece of public art, or a usable plaza and amenity for surrounding uses.



*L'Arc de Triomphe monument space in Paris.*



*Figure 101. Proposed Park Closure and Re-boot of the Polish Triangle.*

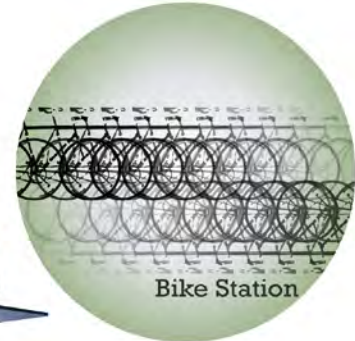
**Re-Program**

If the decision is to keep the Triangle open, create a calendar of temporary uses to test how the Triangle responds to new programming and amenities. Holiday decorations, farmers' markets, bike parking, outdoor art exhibits, among other ideas, should be explored.

**a little bit of retail**



**some local culture**



**and some new decor**

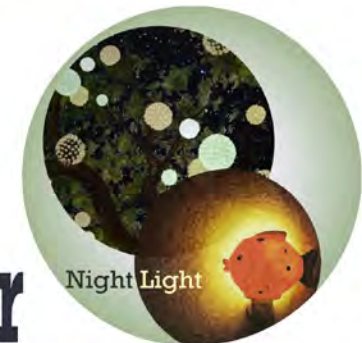


Figure 102. Site and Proposed Temporary Program for the Polish Triangle

## Reclaim Some Asphalt for Pedestrians

Around the Polish Triangle, there are additional opportunities to reclaim some of the asphalt to create larger spaces for pedestrians (see Recommendation 7.52 for more detail). New bus pull-off areas would be created, and the Triangle itself would grow.

## Try Different Traffic Patterns

Cities including Toronto and New York have closed lanes or entire streets over the course of days to test the resulting traffic patterns that emerge from the closure. The same should be done for Milwaukee Avenue, which represents the best opportunity to reclaim a street segment as an extension of the Polish Triangle. If, upon further study, full closure of the street is not an option, the segment of Milwaukee Avenue proposed for closure could instead be repaved with a different material to encourage drivers to slow down.



Figure 103a. Polish Triangle Existing Conditions Site Plan

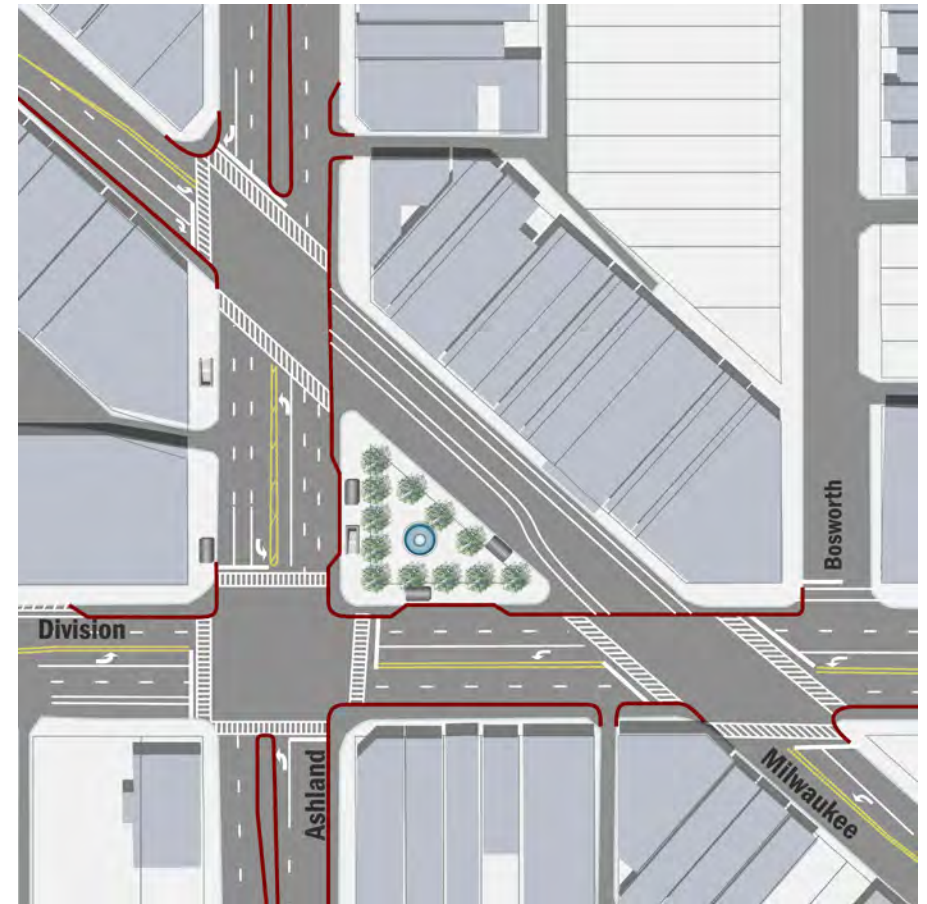


Figure 103b. Polish Triangle Diagram of Proposed Changes to Sidewalk and Road Space

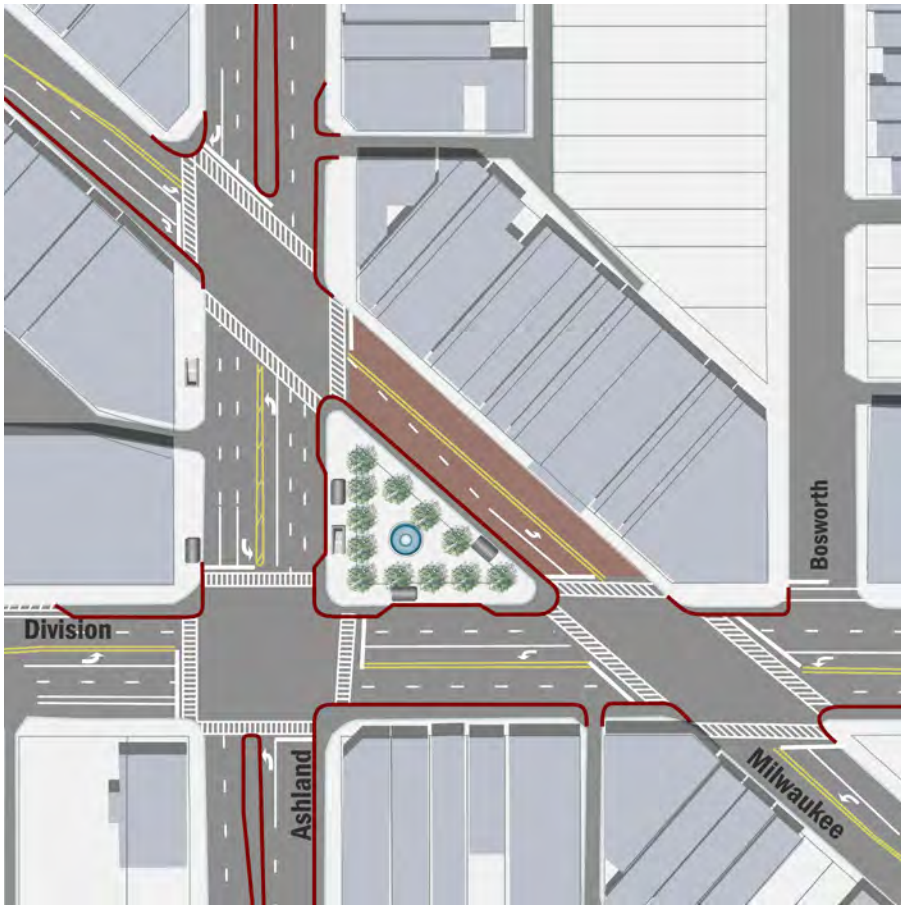


Figure 103c. Polish Triangle Diagram of Proposed Changes showing Material Change on Milwaukee.



Figure 103d. Polish Triangle Site Plan of Proposed Changes showing Milwaukee Closed to Cars.

**Redesign the Plaza (finally)**

Consider closing Milwaukee to through traffic and replacing it with planted bike boulevards and an extended Polish Triangle. This move would make a visible statement that WPB is bike friendly but would also become a significant gateway to the community. With the new found space, new permanent programming could be added including some small retail as well as a state-of-the-art bicycle station like the one in Millennium Park. If Milwaukee cannot be closed entirely, consider alternative street materials to calm traffic and mark the entryway to the community. A similar effort is underway in New York City with regards to Astor Place (<http://nycsr.org/nyc/photo-view.php?id=1>). The SSA and City should keep an eye on that project as reference for these ideas as they evolve over the next few years.



Images from the Millennium Park's Bicycle Station. Source: [www.nycsr.org](http://www.nycsr.org)



Right: Figure 104 a. and b. Existing Conditions and Sketch of Proposed Milwaukee Avenue Road Closure (closed to vehicles only) and Park Expansion.

Far Right: Figures 104 c. and d. Existing Conditions and Rendering of Proposed Astor Place Road Closure and Plaza Expansion, NYC.

Source: <http://nycsr.org/nyc>