



**northwest**  
NEIGHBORHOODS

**2023 Annual Report**

2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan



## Our Vision:

A place where anyone can thrive.

## Our Core Values:

**Equity** – We are committed to the strategic disruption of oppressive systems of power, privilege, and marginalization so that anyone can access the quality of life our neighborhoods offer.

**Empathy** – We approach our work and the communities we serve with thoughtfulness and consideration.

## Our Mission:

As a community-led organization, we equitably foster diverse, vibrant neighborhoods that are physically and socially connected, where anyone can thrive.

**Creativity** – We embrace change, innovation, and new ideas as we implement our work.

**Collaboration** – We empower our staff, community, and partnering organizations to meet shared goals.

**Integrity** – We strive for excellence, grounding our work with transparency and accountability.

**Courage** – We take bold action on behalf of our communities, even when it is not easy.

## Our Strategic Goals:

### Creating Accessible Pathways to Economic Prosperity

1. Maintain, provide, and increase housing affordability for residents with low incomes.
2. Improve housing quality in Cudell, south Detroit Shoreway, and southern Edgewater.
3. Promote upward economic mobility for individuals and families with the greatest needs.
4. Engage in community building and advocacy efforts that ensure residents have access to resources to meet their basic needs and improve their health and well-being.
5. Foster sustainable economic development by supporting a diverse business landscape that mutually benefits the residents and businesses of Northwest Neighborhoods.

### Cultivating Accessible, Healthy, and Connected Neighborhoods

6. Advocate for greater accessibility and placemaking to socially and physically connect the neighborhoods.

### Strengthening an Effective & Cohesive Organization

7. Invest in Northwest Neighborhoods' staff, internal operations, and systems so Northwest Neighborhoods is effective, efficient, and an employer of choice.
8. Maximize Northwest Neighborhoods' current assets and prioritize resource allocation in alignment with Northwest Neighborhoods' core values and mission.





## Introduction

Northwest Neighborhoods (NWN) is the nonprofit organization providing affordable housing and community development services for Cleveland's Cudell, Detroit Shoreway, and Edgewater neighborhoods. Our service area spans from West 45th to West 117th Street, north of I-90, and our community of nearly 28,000 residents is among the most racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse in Cleveland.

Northwest Neighborhoods is not your typical community development organization; central to our work is owning, managing, and protecting affordable housing in 15 properties for our most vulnerable residents.

We are pleased to present our **2024-2028 Strategic Plan**. From September 2022 to May 2023, NWN completed a strategic planning process to renew our organization's mission, vision, values, and goals, following our 2021 formation from the merger of Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Cudell Improvement, Inc. Our committee of NWN board and staff members worked with local firm Sangfroid Strategy to guide the planning process, supported by research from the Center on Urban Poverty & Community Development at Case Western Reserve University. More than 300 residents, community businesses, funders, and organizational partners provided their input in our strategic planning. (Thank you!)

Our new Strategic Plan is truly visionary, and it places affordable housing first, both in providing quality housing directly and supporting home repairs for residents. This work is especially critical as housing displacement pressures are increasing and homeownership rates are declining in our service area.

We are already hard at work implementing our Strategic Plan, as you will see within this report. We are centering our tenants' experiences, realigning our time and resources, and reinvesting in ourselves to meet the Strategic Plan's bold goals.





## 2023 accomplishments (continued):

- We continued development of our 16th affordable housing property, Karam Senior Living (*pictured left*), which will add 51 senior apartments and a new Walz branch of the Cleveland Public Library at West 80th Street and Detroit Avenue by 2026. In 2023, we secured an additional \$5 million to address the sharp increases in construction costs since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

## Improving housing quality

**WHY:** The average age of homes in our service area is 113 years, and aging homes need many upgrades and repairs. Data also show elevated blood lead level rates in Cudell and Detroit Shoreway — four percentage points higher than the Cleveland average — posing danger to our children’s health. (CWRU Poverty Center, 2023)

### 2023 accomplishments:

- We expanded our Senior Home Repair Assistance Program to provide grants of up to \$1,000 (previously \$500) to homeowners who are age 60+ or permanently disabled. We completed more than a dozen repair projects, which included siding, plumbing, and porch repairs (*pictured right*).
- We continued our process of improvements to our portfolio of 14 historic properties, including lead remediation in partnership with CHN Housing Partners.
- We finished surveying all 7,823 parcels in our service area (*pictured bottom right*) as part of the City of Cleveland’s property inventory. The data prove what we knew from experience: Distressed or vacant buildings are primarily in the southern parts of our service area and often have out-of-state owners.
- To support the Lead Safe Cleveland initiative and our housing advocacy, we collected contact information for local landlords and organized a series of landlord engagement events.



## Upward economic mobility

**WHY:** Poverty rates are 20.9% in Edgewater, 28.3% in Detroit Shoreway, and 36.7% in Cudell, with the latter being significantly higher than the City of Cleveland average (31.4%). Meanwhile, there are about 85 nonprofit organizations in NWN's service area, with many providing human services. (CWRU Poverty Center, 2023)

### 2023 accomplishments:

- NWN's largest economic mobility program, free tax preparation (*pictured right*), served 750+ households below \$60,000 annual income. As a partner of the Cuyahoga EITC Coalition, led by Enterprise Community Partners, we manage the Gordon Square tax site, which ensures \$1,000,000+ in residents' refunds stay in our community.
- For our 500+ residential tenants, NWN provided many connections to social service agencies, including The Centers, Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center, and EDEN Inc.
- We organized a series of financial literacy workshops for residents with local banking partners.



## Community building and advocacy for resident resources

**WHY:** Child poverty is strikingly high in our service area at 40%. Our community also struggles with unemployment, food access, and other resources (CWRU Poverty Center, 2023). Northwest Neighborhoods takes a network-weaving approach to connecting residents and resources. This means fostering real relationships between partners, stakeholders, resident groups, and individuals.

### 2023 accomplishments:



- We continued our partnership with MyCom, Cleveland's youth development network, to manage our Youth Leadership Council (12+ youth annually), youth summer employment opportunities, and grants to youth-serving organizations.
- We supported back-to-school giveaways (*pictured left*) by St. Luke's Episcopal Church and Story Church, with free meals and 350+ backpacks distributed.
- We continued our contributions to Near West Recreation, which provides sports and activities for 1,300+ children annually – regardless of families' ability to pay.
- We assisted Councilmember Jenny Spencer with a Spring Clean-Up in Cudell and Detroit Shoreway, and volunteers filled 2 dumpsters with litter and hauled away 120 tires.

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## 2023 accomplishments (continued):

- We used communication methods tailored to our most vulnerable residents by mailing 43,000+ newsletters in English and Spanish, producing twice-monthly e-newsletters, and sending text message announcements.
- **We supported many community events:** Edgewater NeighborFest (*pictured left*), Snow Day in Detroit Shoreway, NWN mixers, Historic Haunts, Juneteenth at St. Luke's, GardenWalk, Ward 15 Movie Nights, Dyngus Day, Scoot Cold Brew markets, Recess at Neal Terrace, City recreation center events, and more!

## Sustainable economic development

**WHY:** NWN's service area is much more densely populated than Cleveland overall, with nearly twice as many residents per square mile. Despite this, economic disparities remain, as do many vacant commercial properties.

### 2023 accomplishments:

- We provided 586 instances of assistance to members of our diverse business community for resource connections, zoning approvals, storefront renovations, and more.
- We assisted newly opened businesses in our service area: Sweet Pork Wilsons (*pictured right*), Spotlight Bar & Grill, La Playa Fresh Seafood, Restaurante Guanaquitas, Old 86 Bar, Cleveland Massotherapy, Lake Erie Scoops, The Judith Café, Kismet Clay & Cacti, and Classic Gyro.



- We own and manage 50,000+ square feet of commercial space, home to 15+ small businesses and nonprofits. Our commercial application process prioritizes entrepreneurs of color, women, and LGBTQ-owned businesses.
- We are the nonprofit owner of the Capitol Theatre (*pictured left*), which celebrated its 102nd year and appeared on the new Cleveland Monopoly board. As an anchor of the Gordon Square Arts District, the Capitol offers new movies and special films on three digital screens, and its \$5 Bargain Mondays make cinema more accessible to all.
- Our Capitol Theatre Committee of board and staff members worked to evaluate our theatre's operations, explore new programming, and plan for long-term sustainability of this asset.

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## 2023 accomplishments (continued):

- We served as a steward of the Gordon Square Arts District through services to the Special Improvement District (GSAD-CIC), a separate nonprofit organization. We managed 80 monthly service hours of Clean & Safe Ambassadors (*pictured left*), who removed 61,000 pounds of trash. Additional services included landscaping, snow removal, power washing, streetscape maintenance, and marketing.
- We identified 14 businesses to receive grants totaling \$20,000, with support from Cleveland Neighborhood Progress.
- We began stakeholder engagement for a Lorain Avenue Master Plan to collaboratively address vacant and distressed commercial properties while supporting residents and small businesses. The master plan will coincide with the City's development of the Lorain Avenue Midway for safer bike and pedestrian facilities.

# CULTIVATING ACCESSIBLE, HEALTHY, AND CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS

## Connections through accessibility and placemaking

**WHY:** We know health and quality of life for residents are directly tied to both the built environment and interpersonal connections. In our strategic planning process, survey respondents indicated key priorities across the service area, including improvements to transportation, green space, and pedestrian safety.



## 2023 accomplishments:

- From 2020 through 2023, we completed a \$145,000 effort for 214 new tree plantings (*pictured left*) in Cudell and Detroit Shoreway. This work included tree maintenance as well as coordination with the Ward 15 Tree Canopy Steering Committee. Program funders included Cuyahoga County, Cleveland Tree Coalition, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, and Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, with additional contributions from the City of Cleveland.
- We organized a "Walk & Roll" event through our service area, from south to north, to Edgewater Park, where attendees enjoyed our free summer cookout.
- We continued advocacy for complete and green streets to allow healthy and safe transportation modes. We assisted Bike Cleveland with a "Better Streets" committee of Cudell and Detroit Shoreway residents, who successfully solicited traffic calming installations by the City on West 85th Street.

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### 2023 accomplishments (continued):

We completed a 3-year legacy project of Cudell Improvement with the installation of about 40 new street signs (*pictured left and right*) in Edgewater and Cudell to show residents' pride in their neighborhoods. This work was made possible by resident surveys, our volunteer committee, and local designers.



# STRENGTHENING AN EFFECTIVE & COHESIVE ORGANIZATION

## Staff, internal operations, and systems

**WHY:** Investing in our internal operations, systems, and staff is critical to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the organization's mission and activities.

### 2023 accomplishments:

- We completed our 2024-2028 strategic planning process with the help of our board, staff, partners, and broader community. This was made possible by generous support from the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation.



- Our board and staff (*pictured left*) continued building a more cohesive culture, which has allowed greater collaboration and coordination across our roles and old "silos."
- We improved our internal technology use with an upgraded website, customer relationship management (CRM) software, and other systems.
- We increased the productivity of our board and staff committees: Executive; Finance; Governance; Housing and Asset Management; Tenant Advocacy; Marketing, Events, & Fundraising; Economic Development; Personnel; Capitol Theatre; and Community Organizing & Outreach.

## Assets and resources

**WHY:** Aligning our resources with our core values and mission will help NWN achieve its goals efficiently, maximize the impact of our work, and contribute to building trust, credibility, and strong relationships in the community.

### 2023 accomplishments:

- We completed an independent financial reassessment with assistance from Cleveland Neighborhood Progress.
- We also completed an audit of our 15 properties and our land parcel holdings. This has laid the foundation for a fully integrated, values-based, fiscally sustainable model for asset management.
- We were the fiscal agent for \$177,300 in grants for community projects by 13 local groups.
- Our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan guided realignment of our largest resource – staff time – with mission-driven goals: being an equitable housing provider, prioritizing our service area’s most vulnerable residents, and strengthening our organization for its future.

## Sponsors and Donors

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

The McGregor Foundation

The Charles M. and Helen M. Brown Memorial Foundation

Enterprise Community Partners

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation

Patricia & Charles Mintz Philanthropic Fund

ThirdFederal Foundation

First Federal Lakewood

Jewish Federation of Cleveland

Councilmember Jenny Spencer

Patrick Grogan-Myers

Randall Shorr and Charles McKnight

Kenneth Taylor

**Ready to support our strategic goals and our vision of  
a place where anyone can thrive?**

We're seeking sponsors and donors for this next 5-year journey!

Email us at [info@nwneighborhoods.org](mailto:info@nwneighborhoods.org) so we can create a sponsorship package to show our appreciation for your support.

You can also donate online at [nwneighborhoods.org](https://nwneighborhoods.org).

**Thank you!**

# 2023 NWN Award Recipients



## **Irene Catlin Leadership Award**

**Paula Kampf**, for tireless leadership through “angel actions” counter demonstrations during Near West Theatre’s Drag Story Hours, voter drives, the “Yes on Issue 1” campaign, and more



## **Sean Kilbane Neighborhood Investment Award**

**Chad Slaby (Bombshell Salon)**, for investing in the community through the storefront renovation program and by giving free haircuts and coffee to residents and unhoused neighbors



## **Zone Family Public Service Award**

**Lauren Sammon**, for service on behalf of students as a local teacher and as a dedicated advocate for the dogs at the Cleveland Kennel and founder of CLEpups.com



## **Northwest Neighborhoods Community Spirit Award**

**Nicholas Moses Ngong**, for community organizing, particularly through Cudell & Detroit Shoreway Neighbor Nights, helping residents build connections and share resources



## **Northwest Neighborhoods Community Spirit Award**

**Faouzi Baddour**, for decades of advocacy in Cudell, most recently in the “Save Cudell Commons” effort to protect greenspace and trees from destruction by construction plans

# Northwest Neighborhoods CDC

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## Staff

Bridget Kent Márquez  
Interim Executive Director

Emily Bischoff  
Director of Community Involvement

Christopher Brown  
Safety & Community Outreach Coordinator

Kena Chappell  
Director of Healthy Homes

Emily Fallick  
Financial Support Coordinator

Rob Grant III  
Neighborhood Operations Specialist

Annika Johansson  
Executive Systems Administrator

Josh Jones Forbes  
Director of Communications

Alicia Kokish-Moreno  
Accounting Specialist

Chelsey Kovar  
Director of Economic Development

Nitza Peguero  
Compliance Specialist

Evelyn Smith  
Events & Membership Coordinator

Tasha Thompson  
Property Manager

Eddie Walker  
Groundskeeper

Belinda White  
Accounts Payable Clerk

Ethan Wiggins  
Neighborhood Development Coordinator

## Board

### Residential Representatives

Jeff Barge (NW sector)

Vince Caringi (NE sector)

Moneeke Davis (SE sector)

Michael Flickinger (NW sector)

Paula Furst (SE sector)

Paterson Gauntner (NC sector)

Nikki Hudson (NC sector)

Emma Jochum (SW sector)

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Trish Parham (NE sector)

Luciana Salles, **Secretary** (SE sector)

Jonathan Steirer, **Vice President** (SW sector)

Morgan Taggart (NC sector)

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(Cleveland Housing Solutions)

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(Slone & Co. Funeral Directors)

Dean Van Farowe  
(Calvary Reformed Church)

Chalana Williams (First Federal Lakewood)

### Special Directors

Millie Caraballo (Manufacturing Works,  
La Sagrada de Familia)

Anshawn Ivery (CMSD,  
Garrett Morgan High School)

Ellen Kirtner-LaFleur  
(Cleveland Housing Network)

Margarita Roman  
(NWN Tenant Representative)

Melanie Shakerian (Legal Aid)

Nick Stroup (EDEN)