



**2020-2021
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

Dear Neighbors

The end of 2021 brings us to an important milestone: five years since Our West Bayfront was launched as an organization with a mission of enhancing the quality of life in the West Bayfront neighborhoods. What started with conversations among neighbors has grown to a full-scale neighborhood revitalization effort that draws on the strengths of residents and other members of the West Bayfront community, and on partnerships that are growing stronger every day.

There are signs of progress everywhere in our community: renovation of homes and historic buildings, continued improvements to our parks and public spaces, and installation of public art that reflects the voices of West Bayfront residents. Residents and organizations are working together to keep neighbors safe and healthy through vaccination clinics and by participating in neighborhood associations. Volunteers brought back our favorite community events, participated in neighborhood cleanups and formed new relationships despite the hardships caused by the pandemic.

As 2021 draws to a close, let's take a moment to contemplate what we have accomplished together as a community and pat each other and ourselves on the back. And then, let's continue this great work for the next five years and beyond.

*Candace Battles, Chairperson of the Board of Directors
Anna Frantz, Executive Director*

**View a video by MenajErie Studio showcasing the work of
Our West Bayfront in the last five years:
www.ourwestbayfront.org/2021video**



The mission of Our West Bayfront is to enhance the quality of life in the West Bayfront neighborhoods of Erie by promoting civic involvement, thoughtful development, historical preservation, and neighborhood pride.



404 West Eighth Street

On Feb. 5, 2021, Our West Bayfront celebrated the grand opening of its new office and community space at 404 West Eighth St. The historic building was constructed in 1882 and previously housed Howard's Photography. Extensive renovations transformed this space into a the OWB office and a new hub for neighborhood activity. The building houses three affordable apartments and a second office space.

This project is a cornerstone to OWB's Re-Store West Eighth Street initiative, which seeks to grow and expand neighborhood-oriented businesses along West Eighth Street. OWB thanks the many partners of this project, including the PA Housing Finance Authority, Erie Community Foundation, Erie Community Gaming Revenue Authority, Erie Insurance, and PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

OWB Volunteers Make a Difference in Our Community

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Our West Bayfront volunteers continued to show up and make a difference in the neighborhood. More than 550 volunteers contributed more than 2,600 hours to support neighborhood cleanups, organize community events, distribute information door-to-door, and host neighborhood meetings. Your interests and skills can help make an impact.



Join the Our West Bayfront volunteer team at www.ourwestbayfront.org/volunteer

**"When you live in a nice neighborhood, you just feel better!"
- West Fourth Street resident**

**“OWB has done so much amazing work in the past few years for our residents!”
- West Fifth Street Resident**

Great things are happening in the West Bayfront neighborhoods

Vacant Property Renovations

In 2020-21, Our West Bayfront renovated three vacant buildings, bringing the total number of occupied residential units owned by OWB to seven. OWB is grateful for its partnership with Housing and Neighborhood Development Service, or HANDS, which provides management services at these properties.

OWB acquired three vacant residential properties in 2021. These include two from the Erie Land Bank. OWB is currently working to secure financing to rehabilitate them into affordable, safe housing for OWB community members.



Property Repairs

Our West Bayfront continued to assist OWB property owners with grants to help make home repairs and improvements with a particular focus on geographic areas identified in the OWB Community Plan. In 2020-21, OWB worked with property owners along West Eighth Street as part of the Re-Store West Eighth Street and Liberty Street initiative, which is supported in part by

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. During this time, OWB assisted a total of 10 property owners with repairs, distributing \$66,514 in grant funds that were matched by \$63,621 in owner contributions. Since 2017, OWB assisted 116 properties with more \$508,000 in grant funds.

West Bayfront Events



The West Bayfront Events Committee brought free events and activities back to the community after the challenges of 2020. The committee hosted fun and engaging events including Eerie Fall Fest at Gridley Park, the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Gridley Park National Night Out, and West Bayfit at Bayview Park.

OWB is grateful for the participation of UPMC Hamot, which provided free COVID-19 vaccines at many of these events. We are also thankful for the several local businesses and organizations that provided financial support and for the hundreds of volunteers to make these events possible.

**“I enjoy hearing good things happening in our neighborhood!”
- West Fifth Street resident**

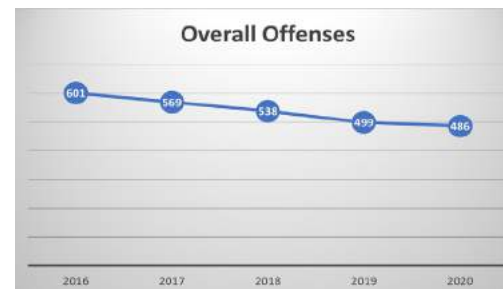
Public Safety



Our West Bayfront continued its “Lights on OWB!” project to improve lighting and visibility on OWB blocks while strengthening neighborhood relationships. Through this program, volunteers distributed 280 LED light sensor bulbs to their neighbors, ensuring that residents can walk home safely in the evenings. OWB installed new litter receptacles at 10 locations, which residents agreed to help monitor and maintain. Security cameras were installed at six locations in areas identified through crime mapping and

neighborhood input. This project was made possible through funding from the Erie Community Foundation and Erie Insurance through the PA NAP Tax Credit program.

A collaboration with Gannon University’s criminal justice program shows that safety is improving in the West Bayfront community. Student Lindon King, under the supervision of Chris Magno, Ph.D, associate professor of criminal justice, analyzed crime data to show a five-year decline in the number of offenses.



Parks and Public Space Improvements

In August of 2020, a new work of public art entitled ‘The Pontiacs’ was created by Tom Ferraro, Ed Grout, and Ron Bayuzick with input from local historians Johnny Johnson and Fred Rush, Jr. The work was installed on the backstop at Pontiac Field.

In early 2021, one of the region’s most popular “selfie” locations was created with the installation of the ERIE sign at the top of Erie Bluffs. New swinging benches were installed nearby along with a welcome sign highlighting the fascinating history of the park and the neighborhood. Electrical and Mechanical Systems Inc. and the City of Erie provided lights for the nearby basketball court to make it possible for players to get a few extra

hours of playing time in. After a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the splash pad resumed operation in the summer of 2021, delighting park visitors of all ages.

A few blocks away on West Second Street, the Sun Gate artwork was installed at the top of Cascade Path, which links the neighborhood to the waterfront. The piece was also designed by Ferraro, Grout and Bayuzick and is a continuation of the ArtForce project based out of Strong Vincent Middle School. Through this project, students helped develop artwork along Cascade Street to highlight the physical connections between the neighborhood and the waterfront.



280
LED sensor lightbulbs distributed

2,600+
volunteer hours to support community events and projects

10
properties assisted with repair grants

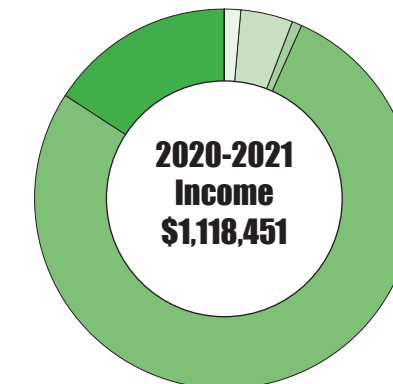
10
new trash cans located throughout the neighborhood to help prevent litter

6
active neighborhood associations/watch groups serving their neighbors

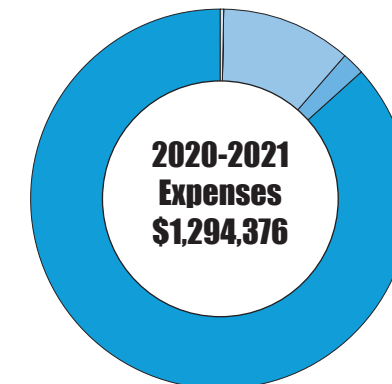
6
properties outfitted with security cameras

Financial Report

Unaudited financials for the period 7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021



- Grant Income \$867,778
- NPP Gannon Grant \$175,000
- Donations \$47,515
- Rental Income \$15,612
- Gannon Annual Support \$10,000
- Other Income \$2,546



- Project/Program Expenses \$1,118,299
- Management \$140,613
- Owned Property Expense \$28,467
- Event Expenses \$5,183
- Miscellaneous \$1,814

OWB Board of Directors

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Candace Battles | Erika Ramalho |
| Almitra Clerkin | Chuck Scalise |
| Lisa Heidelberg | James Sherrod |
| Walter Iwanenko | Katherine Bool Shafer |
| Mike Jaruszewicz | Nicholas Taylor |
| Erica Jenkins | Katrina Vincent |
| Floyd McClure | Jason Wiczorek |
| Marsha Marsh | |

OWB Staff

- Anna Frantz, executive director
 Marissa Litzenberg, AmeriCorps VISTA
 Daniel Baker, intern
 Jessica Belousov, intern
 Chloe Kernan, intern
 Lindon King, GIS intern

www.ourwestbayfront.org
(814) 871-7050 • info@ourwestbayfront.org
404 West 8th Street
Erie, PA 16502

**“Thanks for the trash can on my corner, I pick up litter daily.”
- West Seventh Street resident**

**View a video documenting the transformation of Bayview Park:
www.ourwestbayfront.org/bayview/video**



**“No other individual or entity can bring together many partners like OWB.”
- West Seventh Street resident**

Thank You to all the Supporters, Partners, and Sponsors who help Build a Better Bayfront Community!

Gifts received July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

OWB Supporters

Anonymous
Auto Express Kia
Candace D Battles
BayCrete, Inc.
Bauer Specialty
Joel & Lesley Berdine
Robert Biebel
Ann Bomberger and Pat Bywater
Richard Boruta
David Guy Bryan
Jane Causgrove
Elizabeth Crawford
Joseph Cristello
Eric Dahlstrand
Aubry DeMarco
Caroline and David DiPlacido
Lisa Dippold
Kimberly A Emerling
Philip English
Erie Area Council of Governments
Erie Arts and Culture
Estate of Ferris Beard
Gretchen Fairley
Kaitlyn Falk
Tom and Cathy Ferraro
Carroll Gallagher
Jenny Weigold Geertson
Gene Davis Sales & Service
Darren Gladney
Sherri & Court Gould
Brian & Linda Graff
Donna Green
Michelle Griffith-Aresco
Robert and Diane Guthrie
Ann Haibach
Dinner Is Served By Lisa Personal Chef & Catering
Electrical & Mechanical Systems - The Herbrtritt Family
David A Hodas
Carol & Tom Hoffman
Mike Jaruszewicz
E. Jenkins
Russell Smith and Katrina Johnston-Smith

Tom & Rebecca Kennedy
Hannah Kirby + Samuel Caraballo
George Klaphor
Gregory Kroeter
Seph Kumer
Bob and Laurie LeSuer
U Frame It & the Poster Annex
Barb & BJ Lechner
Anna Frantz and Matthew Levy
Bren and Kathy Lindell
Lori Lindley
Sara Little
Tim & Jill Mannino
Maya Brothers, Inc.
Floyd & Williestean McClure
McDonald, Illig, Jones, & Britton LLP
Dennis McGuire
Jacques and Melinda Meyer
Marco & Betsy Monsalve
Sterrett Mott Breski & Shimek Law Firm
Thomas G NeCastro
Network for Good
Becky Perry
Joan Peterson
Jeffrey & Erin Phillips
Erika Ramalho
Karola Ranft
Cynthia and Robert Reid
Thomas Robie
The Ropski Family
Olivia Rutkowski
Nick & Connie Rybak
Charles G Scalise
Schaffner Knight Minnaugh & Co.
Joe & Rhonda Schember
Nancy Shea
Ryan Shea
Jay & Cass Shimek
Sisters of St. Joseph
Brian Keith Slawin
Deb & Ray Sobina
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph G. Spaeder
Marlene S. Spires

Laurel Swartz
Eran Swartzwelder
Andy and Pat Tellers
Jerry and Marlene Trambley
Tom and Carol Tupitza
Donald and Karen Wagner
Mary Watson
Melissa & Jason Wiczorek
Renee Wright
Nik & Anine Zaphiris

2021 Event Supporters

Anonymous
Andora's Bubble Tea
Bay and Harbor Neighborhood Association
Bayfront Convenience Store
Boulevard Park Association
Burton Quinn Scott Cremation and Funeral Services
Sam Catania
Cathedral Preparatory School
Copper Carriage
The Cross
Dusckas Funeral Home and Cremation
Ember and Forge
Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul
Erie Ale Works
Erie County Department of Health
Erie Downtown Partnership
Erie Martin Luther King, Jr. Center
Erie Reader
Erie Seawolves
Erie's Public Schools
expERIENCE Children's Museum
Fat Lenny's
Familiar Spirit Band
Federal Resources Corporation
First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant
First United Methodist Church of Erie
Gannon University
Garden Court Association
Gateway Neighborhood Association

Great Lakes Insurance
Hagen History Center
Hamot Health Foundation
Hoffman United LLC
House of Hospitality
Housing Authority of the City of Erie
JW Architecture and Design
Gary Kanonczyk
Greysave
Kingsley United Methodist Church
Kiwanis Club of Erie
Seph Kumer
Lake Erie Variety
Luther Memorial Church
Maple Donuts
Master Barbers
Marquette Savings Bank
McGill, Power, Bell & Associates, LLP CPA
Mercyhurst University
Chuck and Betsy Nelson
Pineapple Eddie Southern Bistro
Porky's Pizza of Erie
Radius Cowork
Romolo Chocolates
Salvation Army
Saint Peter Cathedral
Smith Provisions
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Three B Saloon
Tops Markets
U Frame It
United Way of Erie County
Wegman's
West Bayfront Neighborhood Watch
West Side Saints Neighborhood Watch
Woman's Club of Erie

Our current fiscal year that started July 1, 2021 shows great progress. On August 10, 2021 we were thrilled to have 86 donors donate nearly \$11,000 on Erie Gives Day. This funding is already helping to advance the priorities outlined in this report.

