City leaders joined Congressman André Carson and community members on November 14 to unveil a mural that marks the start of a $2 million revitalization effort for a near-west side neighborhood. In the Spring of 2010, redesign work will begin on a section of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St from Burdsal Pkwy (24th St) to I-65 (30th St).

The project is being paid for with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) which allows for the capture of property taxes in a certain area to be used for the area’s economic development. Another $2 million in TIF funds is in reserve for future development opportunities.

“This is a destination place for the county,” said Deputy Mayor of Neighborhoods, Olgen Williams. We want this street to represent Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that represents who he was and what he stood for.”

The project announcement was made in conjunction with the grand opening of a new restaurant and the unveiling of a new mural depicting Dr. King and President Barack Obama. The Mural is on the south side of Down Home Cookin’ at 26th and MLK.

“It’s fitting that this beautiful mural pays tribute to the legacy of Dr. King and the future leadership of President Barack Obama,” said Congressman Carson. “The MLK neighborhood has a rich history—one that we must embrace and celebrate. And while we honor this past, today’s event is about looking ahead to the tremendous hope and opportunity that exists in this area.”

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) awarded $12,500 to the restaurant for the mural and other façade improvements. “This work represents our desire to stimulate the rebirth of vibrant, walkable neighborhood commercial centers,” said LISC Executive Director Bill Taft.
“We still need you, the residents …to come to the table,” said UNWA President Kim Flowers. “Every second Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. we have a meeting at the UNWA building, 1426 West 29th Street. You can find out about everything that is happening and give your input because we can agree to disagree but we can make it happen for our community.”

Bids will soon be let for construction which will include a gateway at 30th Street making the area more pedestrian friendly. MLK will be narrowed to one lane each direction with a turn lane and parking on both sides of the street. Complete information on the area development plan can be found at: