

**ULI Chicago 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Vision Awards  
September 11, 2024**



**Project Winner:** Go Green Community Fresh Market | Inner-city Muslim Action Network

**Project Team:**

Developer/Owner: Inner-City Muslim Action Network

Architecture Firm: Wheeler Kearns Architects

General Contractor: Ujamaa Construction

**Project Description:** Since its incorporation in 1997, IMAN has brought together residents and store owners around alternative community-centered models of corner stores. In 2007, an IMAN-led study found racial tensions between Arab corner store owners and predominantly African American residents. The study also established that many residents were using these stores in Englewood, and surrounding south-side neighborhoods, for their primary access to food. In response, IMAN launched its flagship Corner Store Campaign, intervening to provide incentives for stores to improve access to nutritious food and build meaningful relationships with residents. In 2015, one of IMAN's partnering corner stores, located at 63rd St. and Racine Ave. in the heart of Englewood, was destroyed in a fire. An Englewood resident, R.A.G.E. member, and corner store campaign leader encouraged IMAN to acquire and build this property as a model corner store. That property is now the Go Green Community Fresh Market, a neighborhood grocer that has transformed the once ill-reputed intersection into a destination for good food and community. Since opening in 2022, the Fresh Market has transformed the intersection, improving walkability and safety due to the presence of IMAN's Community Safety & Engagement Team (CSE) and more 'eyes on the street' from Market shoppers. CSE takes community walks and IMAN staff have connected with local businesses, bringing mint tea to neighboring businesses owners. The Fresh Market has beautified the corner with planters and the only sidewalk cafe in Englewood. Adjacent to the Market is IMAN's Griot Plaza, featuring a mural by local artist Eric Hotchkiss and providing space for cultural activity and community connections. The Fresh Market is an innovative model for food access in Englewood. As a mission-driven store, the Fresh Market is an alternative to food pantries—which provide important emergency services, but are not a long-term solution to food insecurity—and traditional for-profit grocery chains that are abandoning low-income neighborhoods. The Market is open 7 days a week, offering full-service options including a produce section, prepared foods, fresh meats and products from 25+ local and BIPOC vendors. It is a culturally harmonious retailer, hiring locally and offering products that resonate with the community. The Market offers a number of affordability programs, including a loyalty rewards program which currently has 4,900+ members and a 5% Englewood resident discount. Over 24,000 Englewood resident discounts have been applied since it was introduced in March 2023. Thanks to its non-profit model, the Market leverages grants to offer food access programs to shoppers according to their varying needs, while providing choice and convenience in a dignified shopping experience. The Fresh Market is part of the larger Go Green on Racine holistic vision for neighborhood revitalization. This includes The Regenerator, adaptive reuse of the Granville T. Woods Academy into permanent supportive housing and healthcare ecosystem; and advocacy to reopen the CTA Racine Green Line station, closed since 1994. IMAN and partners Teamwork Englewood, R.A.G.E. and E.G. Woode have formed the Go Green Development Group, a community-led entity driving this vision forward.