

# CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

**AuburnGreshamChicagoSouthwest  
EastGarfieldParkEnglewoodHumboldt  
ParkLittleVillageLoganSquareNorth  
LawndalePilsenQuadCommunities  
SouthChicagoWashingtonParkWest  
HavenWoodlawn**

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

**T**here is no tradition more important to the American Republic than that of men and women coming together on behalf of their communities. That is precisely what has been happening in the New Communities Program in Chicago, where literally thousands of neighborhood residents have assembled over the last year or so to think about their communities and their future. The results are quality-of-life plans—summarized in the pages that follow—that set the tone and goals for these communities over the next several years.

By definition, community development people are optimists. Their mission is to make the neighborhood a better place for the people who live and work there, to bring investment and services back, to make the neighborhood more livable and to preserve healthy parts of the civic fabric.

These individuals are the true heirs of the founders of our country, who were motivated by one principle in particular: human liberty. Liberty, though, is not a given. Rather, it is achieved through personal engagement in a democratic civil society in which the general welfare of that society is of the utmost concern. That in my mind is exactly the task that the many participants in the NCP process accepted when they took on the challenge of these quality-of-life plans: to create a society in which men and women, from highly disparate backgrounds, find their freedom through their personal dedication to the common weal.

We have all been greatly aided in this process through the generosity of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and in particular through the very personal interest of its president, Jonathan Fanton. We're grateful to a number of other funders as well, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Living Cities, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, Partnership for New Communities and Polk Bros. Foundation.

The pages that follow are a powerful expression of American freedom. We hope that they stir your imagination and re-ignite your own commitment to the American ideal.



Andrew Mooney  
Senior Program Director  
LISC/Chicago

# CONTENTS

## PROCESS AND PRODUCT

Why Plan? Cross-Community Issues

**4**

## NEW PLANS

### AUBURN GRESHAM

Chicago's Best-Kept Secret

**8**

### CHICAGO SOUTHWEST

Making Connections

**10**

### EAST GARFIELD PARK

Growing a Healthy Community

**12**

### ENGLEWOOD

Making a Difference

**14**

### HUMBOLDT PARK

Staking Our Claim

**16**

### LITTLE VILLAGE

Capital of the Mexican Midwest

**18**

### LOGAN SQUARE

A Place to Stay, a Place to Grow

**20**

### NORTH LAWDALE

Faith Rewarded

**22**

### QUAD COMMUNITIES

Connecting the Past, Present and Future

**24**

### WOODLAWN

Rebuilding the Village

**26**

## PLANS UNDERWAY

### PILSEN

Creating a Healthier Community

**30**

### SOUTH CHICAGO

Beyond Steel

**32**

### WASHINGTON PARK

Rebuilding the Neighborhood

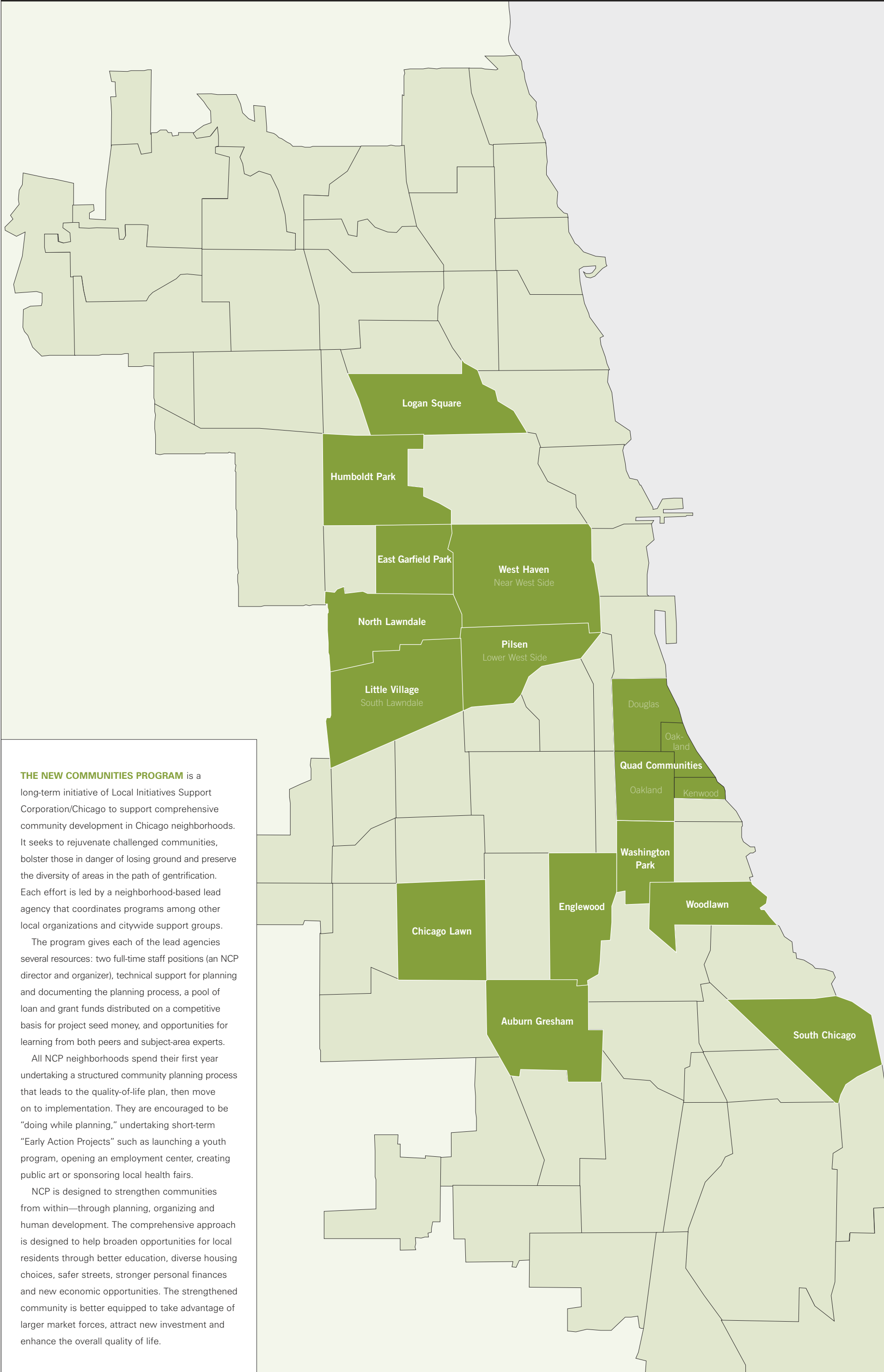
**34**

### WEST HAVEN

More than Bricks and Mortar

**36**

# NEW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM



**THE NEW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM** is a long-term initiative of Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago to support comprehensive community development in Chicago neighborhoods. It seeks to rejuvenate challenged communities, bolster those in danger of losing ground and preserve the diversity of areas in the path of gentrification. Each effort is led by a neighborhood-based lead agency that coordinates programs among other local organizations and citywide support groups.

The program gives each of the lead agencies several resources: two full-time staff positions (an NCP director and organizer), technical support for planning and documenting the planning process, a pool of loan and grant funds distributed on a competitive basis for project seed money, and opportunities for learning from both peers and subject-area experts.

All NCP neighborhoods spend their first year undertaking a structured community planning process that leads to the quality-of-life plan, then move on to implementation. They are encouraged to be “doing while planning,” undertaking short-term “Early Action Projects” such as launching a youth program, opening an employment center, creating public art or sponsoring local health fairs.

NCP is designed to strengthen communities from within—through planning, organizing and human development. The comprehensive approach is designed to help broaden opportunities for local residents through better education, diverse housing choices, safer streets, stronger personal finances and new economic opportunities. The strengthened community is better equipped to take advantage of larger market forces, attract new investment and enhance the overall quality of life.

# WHY PLAN?

Planning can be more, much more, than a necessary step toward successful doing. Involve enough wise, energetic and committed people, and the very act of planning becomes a force in itself, an engine capable of pulling bold dreams into the realm of accomplished reality.

That's why neighborhoods participating in the New Communities Program begin their journey of community rebirth by first crafting comprehensive, grassroots quality-of-life plans. They do so not to specify exactly where and how each and every improvement will be executed (though the plans summarized here do contain precisely drawn physical proposals, and all projects are assigned to specific entities for action). Rather, the New Communities plan in order to inspire. They plan to draw in those who would otherwise hang back, to reenergize the faithful, and importantly, to identify and recruit new partners—from City Hall to the local bank—that will be needed for the heavy lifting of turning plans into realities.

## Some history

Heavy lifting? The work of reconnecting America's distressed neighborhoods to the economic mainstream remains one of the most difficult challenges we face as a nation. Many strategies and programs were attempted during the late 20th Century. Some worked, others did not. With the New Communities Program, LISC/Chicago and the MacArthur Foundation aim to build on that experience by employing the "best practices" that have emerged from past community redevelopment efforts in Chicago and around the nation.

Quality-of-life planning is one such practice. Granted, the idea of cataloguing a neighborhood's assets and liabilities, then plotting its uplift, is as old as Jane Addams, who did it in 1895 as part of her pioneering social work on Chicago's West Side. Most neighborhood planning since then, however, has been conducted from above, often by professionals sent by city hall. The notion of comprehensive, community-based planning—planning that doubles as an organizing tool—is relatively new. Several of its features were developed in New York City during the 1990s, where the technique was pioneered by Anita Miller and the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program, a sweeping redevelopment of the South Bronx.

The rationale behind comprehensive, community-based planning stems from two hard lessons. First, redevelopment strategies based solely on housing production, say, or job training, are rarely enough to turn around a neighborhood weighed down by an assortment of interwoven problems. Second, top-down planning, where outsiders decide what's needed, is not nearly so effective as planning that involves neighborhood residents at every step and, in the end, produces community "ownership" of the plan.

## Different strokes, single purpose

The quality-of-life plans summarized here are unprecedented both in their scope and manner of preparation. Nine neighborhood plans are fresh off the press and make their public debut at a May

18, 2005 roll-out celebration. Englewood's plan is near completion and summarized here in draft form. Three others are well into their implementation phase, having been completed three to five years ago under an NCP pilot program called the New Communities Initiative. Washington Park's is a preliminary physical plan around which a more comprehensive quality-of-life plan will be crafted.

No two neighborhoods did their planning in exactly the same way. All, however, relied on staff support provided by a lead community organization selected by LISC/Chicago. And all received technical assistance—ranging from demographic research and mapping to artists' renderings of new parks and commercial strips—from the Chicago-based planning firm Camiros Ltd. All NCP neighborhoods also had the services of LISC-provided "scribes" who chronicled each meeting and helped draft final plans.

## Sticky dots and issue buckets

Beginning in mid-2003 and throughout 2004, thousands of neighborhood residents and stakeholders, from block club members to hospital presidents, participated in the planning process. They met in church basements and in park field houses. They met weeknights and on weekends. Some communities, like Chicago Lawn, began with a systematic survey of neighborhood leaders conducted with one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. What better way to recruit key neighborhood players? Others, like Logan Square, started with a bus tour of local problems and opportunities, followed by a mapping exercise in which both were plotted on large-scale maps with color-coded sticky dots.

After much soul-searching and debate, each neighborhood produced a vision—a statement of what their communities might ideally become. Then, over subsequent meetings, each planning task force, often working through committees that focused on specific issues (housing, education, commercial redevelopment, health) hashed out a no-nonsense list of strategies and projects to realize that vision. Several neighborhoods winnowed down their lists by asking residents to "invest" a limited allocation of play money into "issue buckets." Projects garnering enough support were then assigned to an organization or entity that commits to pursuing that project to completion... within a specified length of time.

## Plans from the heart

And what projects these are! They impress, however, not by dint of monumental size or flashy design. This is not large-scale urban renewal, not Robert Moses-style mega-planning brought to the neighborhoods. The quality-of-life plans impress because they reflect the pragmatism and common sense of people who know, more intimately than any expert ever could, what's troubling their communities... and what can be done to make them better places to live.

No outside designer, for instance, likely would have deduced that a major problem facing Chicago Lawn is the shadowy business of moving rent-subsidized families into bungalows purchased by absentee speculators, following foreclosure of federally-insured mortgages.

Who better than the senior citizens of Auburn Gresham to address the problem of maintaining a single-family home on a fixed pension and with arthritic hands? Or the teenagers of North Lawndale to explain how access to a computer and broadband Internet will help them finish school and get decent jobs? Who better understands the value of having a full-service pharmacy and grocery store in the neighborhood than the folks who are making it happen in West Haven on the Near West Side?

## Getting it done

These plans aren't wish lists. Every quality-of-life plan engages directly with the complexities of implementation, either by building on work already in progress or by assigning new tasks to organizations ready and able to push to completion. Where technical expertise is needed—to help develop a neighborhood employment program, for instance, or secure land for a pocket park—new partnerships are being struck between NCP groups and experts such as Project Match and the Trust for Public Lands.

Indeed, most NCP neighborhoods already have jump-started implementation by tackling an "early action project" or two during their planning process. Humboldt Park's Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. launched "BickerBikes" to teach teens how to repair, and safely enjoy, bicycles. The Little Village Community Development Corp. cleaned up and restored Perez Plaza, a neglected veterans' memorial park on 26th Street. Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corp. kicked off the 1st Annual African-American Arts and Film Festival at the Thurgood Marshall Branch Library.

The major projects identified in the plans—redeveloping a retail street, say, or establishing a local chamber of commerce or arts council—will take longer, of course. That's why the full version of each plan concludes with a "schedule and priorities" matrix showing each project's time frame on a five-year scale, plus the lead and partner organizations that will help make it happen.

Partnerships are key. Success will require that every sector step up: public and private, religious and philanthropic, community leaders and just plain stake-holding folk. Together we have planned. Together we can make the plans real. Together we will build New Communities for a new century.

# CROSS-COMMUNITY ISSUES

Reading across the plans, it becomes clear that for all their uniqueness there are a number of cross-cutting issues that emerge. Some of them—like a struggling public education system—are not too surprising. But others, like valuing income and racial diversity, cut across neighborhoods in different ways. While several neighborhoods raised similar issues, their approaches to solving them reflect their particular needs and strengths.

## The issues engaged

Grassroots planning is a powerful tool and an indispensable ingredient of the New Communities Program. But it is not enough. Many of the problems that have laid low our urban neighborhoods are national in scope, structural in nature, and oftentimes too complex to be solved by any single community.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation, with the help of funders such as the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is in the business of working with community-based organizations to find neighborhood solutions to such daunting cross-community issues. So are a number of other highly capable technical assistance organizations and foundations, many of them members of the national funders' collaborative known as Living Cities. LISC will work closely with these partners and the NCP communities to help develop workable strategies and leverage new resources aimed at reconnecting neighborhoods to the nation's economic mainstream.

NCP partnerships already are bringing proven "best practice" techniques to bear on key issues identified by the neighborhoods themselves as necessary to achieving a higher quality-of-life. Our aim, over the next several years, is to sharpen these tools, to grow our roster of both sponsoring and strategic partners, and ultimately, to make these tools accessible to any neighborhood, anywhere, that wants and needs them.

## BUILDING FAMILY WEALTH

Poor neighborhoods are systematically drained of precious dollars that, if captured and circulated locally, could seed the beginnings of renewal. To engage directly this poverty trap—and to boost the amount of money being earned in these communities—eleven NCP neighborhoods are being helped to establish a Center for Working Families, or something similar. It's a kind of economic department store, built on a model developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, where residents can get help finding a job or job training, obtaining financial services such as personal bank accounts and borrowing wisely to avoid high-interest loans. The most immediate boost—averaging \$2,000 per family—often comes when volunteer tax preparers from the Center for Economic Progress help residents file their federal income tax returns and claim the earned income tax credit.

## REDUCING CRIME AND INCREASING PERSONAL SAFETY

Is my neighborhood safe? It's a question that trumps all others when it comes to building stronger neighborhoods. Essential programmatic tools include strong block clubs with effective linkages to community policing programs such as the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). But while watchfulness can be effective at pushing away drug dealing and gang violence, it's not enough in neighborhoods where large numbers of ex-offenders are stuck in the triangle of gangs, guns and drugs... especially when current laws make finding a good job or a decent apartment nearly impossible.

North Lawndale, in an intriguing "two-fer," is working with ex-offenders, and counseling other young men and women about careers in law enforcement and even readying aspirants for the Chicago Police Academy entrance exam. Little Village is having success with its Violence Prevention Collaborative, which has organized a series of joint workshops with residents and local police. East Garfield aims to work with parents and pastors to create "safe passage" patrols around schools to shepherd children safely home from classes. And Chicago Southwest is quietly developing "safe havens" for young people looking to leave the gang life. Different neighborhoods, different strategies.

## PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND FOSTERING MIXED-INCOME COMMUNITIES

The high cost of housing, especially family-sized rentals, has been exacerbated by the systematic de-densification of public housing and the scaling back of federal rent subsidies. The shortage is most acute in gentrifying neighborhoods, like Logan Square, Near West and Mid-South, where developers are converting older rental buildings into luxury condos and where rising tax assessments are forcing working-class owners (and tenants they might have) to sell and move on.

LISC/Chicago has been a national leader in packaging low-income housing tax credits and has helped many community development corporations finance construction of affordable rentals. Yet the old formulas need to be retooled, not just to meet a growing need, but to stretch limited subsidy dollars and to serve special populations, such as the homeless and the addicted, that have been historically under-served and need supportive housing.

Neighborhoods are working hard to keep their communities economically diverse by pushing for policy changes, like Chicago's proposed "set-aside" ordinance, and through old-fashioned rehab and development. Logan Square hopes to preserve expiring Section 8 buildings in partnership with Hispanic Housing Development Corp. Humboldt Park has a number of projects and partners whose aim is to create new housing for seniors, homeless youth and working families. And Chicago Southwest, Woodlawn, South Chicago and Quad Communities want to build housing that is affordable to local artists.

### **COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**

Modern chain retailers, with their suburban focus and feel, have been slow to rediscover the buying potential of urban neighborhoods, many of which remain woefully underserved. When they do move in, “big box category killers” tend to disrupt the scale and walk-ability of traditional retail districts and to wipe out smaller, locally-owned competition. Older communities need help marketing themselves... without “selling out” their neighborly character.

Several experiments are showing early results. The city-savvy market survey firm MetroEdge is helping Quad Communities trump the extraordinary unmet need for retailers on the mid-South Side, which exports \$450 million a year in retail spending for lack of competitive stores. (A new plan for Cottage Grove Avenue aims to change that.) Auburn Gresham is exploring the feasibility of a tax increment financing (TIF) district along 79th Street, where the new BJ’s Market and Bakery is showing what can be done. On the North Side, in Humboldt Park, LISC is helping the Division Street Business Development Assn. gear up to join Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. in an affordable housing-over-retail-stores project called La Estancia.

LISC/Chicago, meanwhile, is gathering what works best into a workshop and toolkit to be called Retail Business Chicago.

### **EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Better schools and positive activities for school-age children rank at or near the top of every New Communities’ needs list. No matter how affordable or safe a neighborhood, no matter how good the shopping, families that have the wherewithal to choose their neighborhood will eventually choose one with good schools. Little wonder that Chicago’s Mayor Richard M. Daley, like elected officials in Washington and across America, has made better schools a top priority... or that so many not-for-profits have rallied to the cause. The City’s Renaissance 2010 plan, which calls for replacing failing schools with excellent ones, is recognized as an opportunity by several NCP communities working to turn their neighborhood schools around.

What role, then, for New Communities? Turns out NCP lead agencies and partners have many ideas—including several already field-tested—on how schools and communities can work together for the betterment of both. The Logan Square Neighborhood Assn. has pioneered what has become a national model for involving immigrant parents in the schools, where they help teachers work with students while mastering skills that broaden their own career horizons. Englewood is working to make the announced closing of the local high school into a new beginning for students, parents and the community. And Pilsen is securing the capital it needs to launch an innovative college dorm, called “La Casa,” so that students from area universities can live close to home in a supportive environment. Nearly every NCP neighborhood has plans for enhanced pre-schools, safe and supportive after-school activities, and an assortment of teenage mentoring and intern programs to bridge the gap from school-to-work, and wherever possible, school-to-college.

### **Other issues in the solving**

NCP neighborhoods will tackle other critical issues, too, from the epidemic of obesity to the lack of affordable medical and dental care for the uninsured; from the community-building potential of the arts to the preservation and addition of open space, be it a neighborhood garden, an urban farm or a fully-equipped public park. And many are pursuing another asset not often included on urban wish lists: leadership. Several NCP plans cite a need to train local men and women in the personal and organizational skills needed to manage the work ahead.

LISC/Chicago and our community partners are working on that, too. We think the quality-of-life plans summarized on the following pages are testaments to our progress.

**NCP partnerships are bringing proven “best practice” techniques to bear on issues identified by the neighborhoods themselves as necessary to achieving a higher quality of life.**

# AUBURN GRESHAM

## Chicago's Best-Kept Secret

### Lead agency

Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation

Auburn Gresham has stood its ground. Though it has been buffeted by white flight, redlining and the scourges of gangs and drugs, there are no vast tracts of demolished housing in this predominately African-American community. To the contrary, most side streets have a full complement of well-maintained bungalows, two-flats and apartment buildings. And there are hidden gems, such as the lagoons along Winneconna Parkway, that would be the envy of any neighborhood.

But Auburn Gresham needs new blood. Population is slipping (down 6.5 percent during the 1990s to 55,928) and its housing stock and commercial strips—especially its 79th Street “broadway”—beg new investment. More families own than rent, and three of five owners are 55 or older and may need help—help repairing and maintaining homes, help renting vacant apartments, help raising grandchildren, and in some cases, help moving into more manageable assisted housing.

The Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation (GADC) was founded in 2000 through a collaboration among local leaders and the Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations (CANDO). Forty task force members and more than a hundred other residents and stakeholders helped formulate this plan, with its eight strategies and 35 projects, including:

### 79th Street renewal

The plan calls for development of compact business clusters on 79th Street, where empty lots and storefronts are slowly but surely being replaced by busy enterprises such as Osco Drug, a LaSalle Bank branch and, most recently, BJ's Market & Bakery. Auburn Gresham will initiate a development study to explore feasibility of a special service area (SSA) to finance streetscape improvements. It will also articulate design standards to ensure future development is both pedestrian- and transit-friendly. Where possible, GADC will promote African-American business development as part of the 79th Street renewal.

### Model Blocks

A Model Blocks target area is planned to increase housing investment and create stronger ties among neighbors. The area from 76th to 79th streets and Loomis Avenue to Racine was chosen because of its diverse mix of housing types. Improvements will include façade work, roof repairs, new doors and windows, garage replacement and energy-efficient appliances—not to mention old-fashioned organizing. The Morgan Way Homeowners Association will serve as a model for community beautification and resident engagement.

### “Transit village” at Auburn lagoons

New public and private investment will be pursued to develop a transit-oriented residential and commercial complex on vacant and underutilized land near the lagoons of Auburn Park and the winding Winneconna Parkway. The village will include a “town square” gateway, new housing and a Metra station at 78th Street and Fielding Avenue.

### Art and film festival

GADC staged the inaugural Thurgood Marshall Library African-American Art and Film Festival—three days of free films, art exhibits, storytelling and poetry slams. More than 500 attended, with 45 signing up for library cards and 20 registering to vote. Following this event, library attendance has increased and a Winter Blues Festival furthered the goal of making arts and culture part of the way of life in Auburn Gresham.

### For more information

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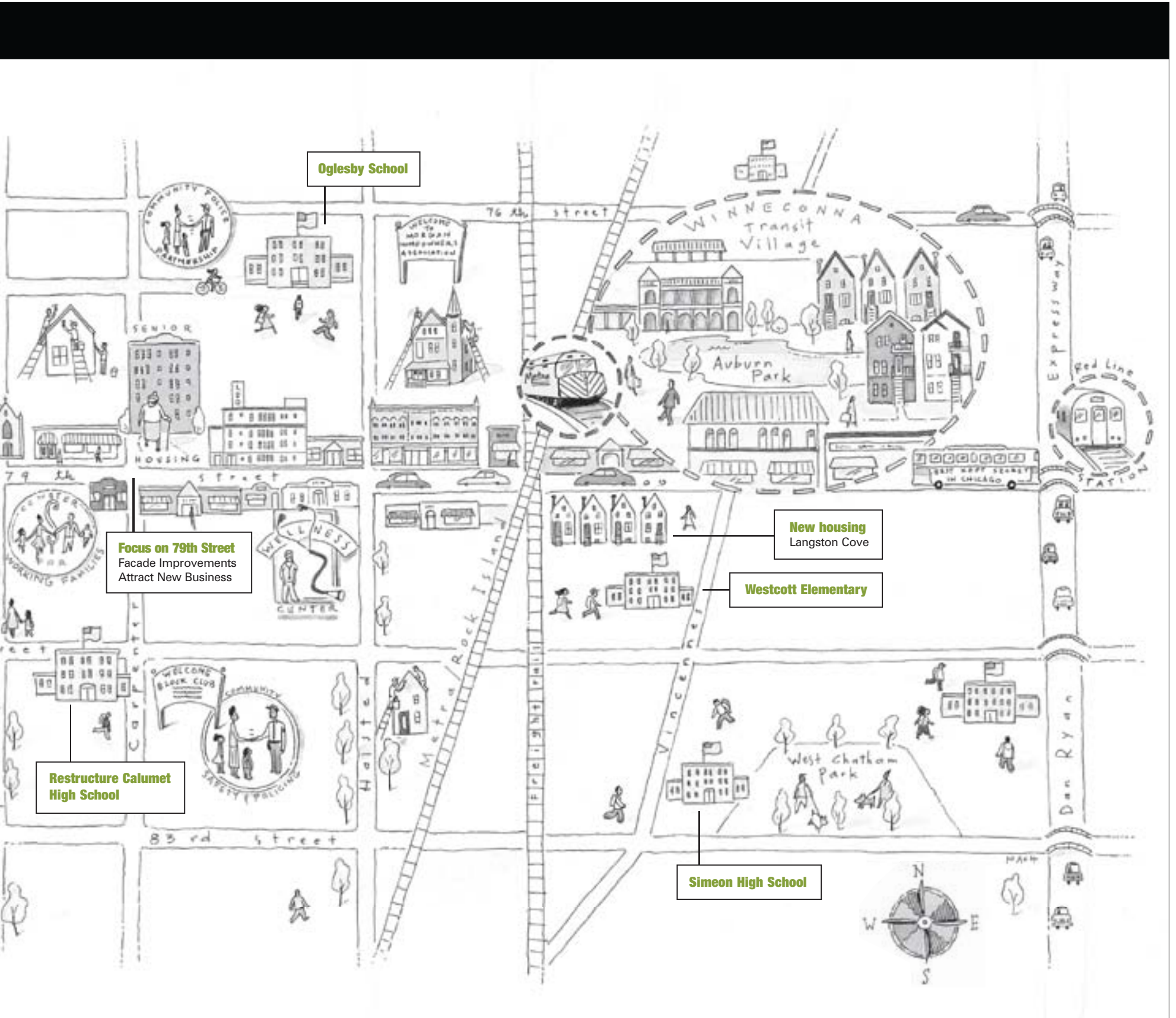
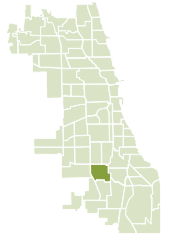
## KEY PROJECTS





**Strategies**

- 1. Encourage local business ownership and generate jobs for youth and young adults.**
- 2. Promote Auburn Gresham through a broad-based community marketing program.**
- 3. Preserve existing housing and develop new housing to accommodate all levels of income and special needs.**
- 4. Develop compact business clusters on 79th Street and make them pedestrian- and transit-friendly.**
- 5. Develop a transit village near Winneconna Parkway.**
- 6. Improve the quality of education for people of all ages and help students and parents maximize the school experience.**
- 7. Strengthen support systems for health and social services, safety and workforce development.**
- 8. Make enjoyment of the arts, culture and open space part of the Auburn Gresham way of life.**



Oglesby School

Focus on 79th Street  
Facade Improvements  
Attract New Business

Restructure Calumet  
High School

New housing  
Langston Cove

Westcott Elementary

Simeon High School

# CHICAGO SOUTHWEST

## Making Connections

### Lead agency

Greater Southwest Development Corporation

A new community begins with new relationships. Despite the abandoned houses that dot some blocks, the gang presence and unfamiliar faces, the people of Chicago Southwest have decided to stay and to get to know one another. There's much to build upon: great assets, including Midway Airport and Marquette Park; dozens of religious institutions and community groups; even a showcase "green bungalow block" of restored, energy-efficient homes. But also there are racial tensions and economic challenges, low-performing schools and a troubled—oftentimes exploited—housing market.

Once the white ethnic enclave that chased away the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the neighborhood saw a doubling of African-Americans during the 1990s, to 53 percent, and a gain in Hispanics to 35 percent. The community is resilient and population is growing, yet the past decade saw a drop in homeownership and a rise in the poverty rate.

Chicago Southwest includes Chicago Lawn and portions of Gage Park, West Lawn, West Elsdon and North Ashburn. Since 1974, Greater Southwest Development Corp. (GSDC) has fostered \$500 million in commercial and residential development while battling redlining and FHA/VA mortgage abuse. GSDC worked closely with a sister organization, the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP), throughout this planning process. Thirty-seven task force commissioners, more than 300 residents and dozens of institutions helped create the plan's eight strategies and 40 projects. And more than 600 turned out for the local unveiling of the plan last November.

### Stable, affordable housing

Built up solid with affordable bungalows, Chicago Southwest has been hit hard in recent years by predatory lending and mortgage fraud. The neighborhood will fight back with such tactics as a Housing Connection program featuring pre-and post-purchase counseling; a tenant-landlord network; an anti-foreclosure campaign; and an effort to curb Section 8 rents that distort the private market.

### Improved access to jobs

Though blessed with the Southwest Industrial Corridor and the newly expanded Midway Airport, a long history of plant closings and layoffs calls for a proactive response, including redevelopment of the vacant Rheem water heater site; expansion of the Sweetheart Cup factory under the new ownership of Solo Cup; and fostering of stronger youth internship and training programs with local businesses.

### Improving community health

Insufficient access to routine medical care has made the emergency room at local Holy Cross Hospital the second busiest in the state. Seniors have difficulty paying for prescriptions and many immigrants and working families

lack access to affordable health care options. The Chicago Southwest plan calls for a number of new health initiatives including public health programs in local schools, new community health centers and increased health screenings.

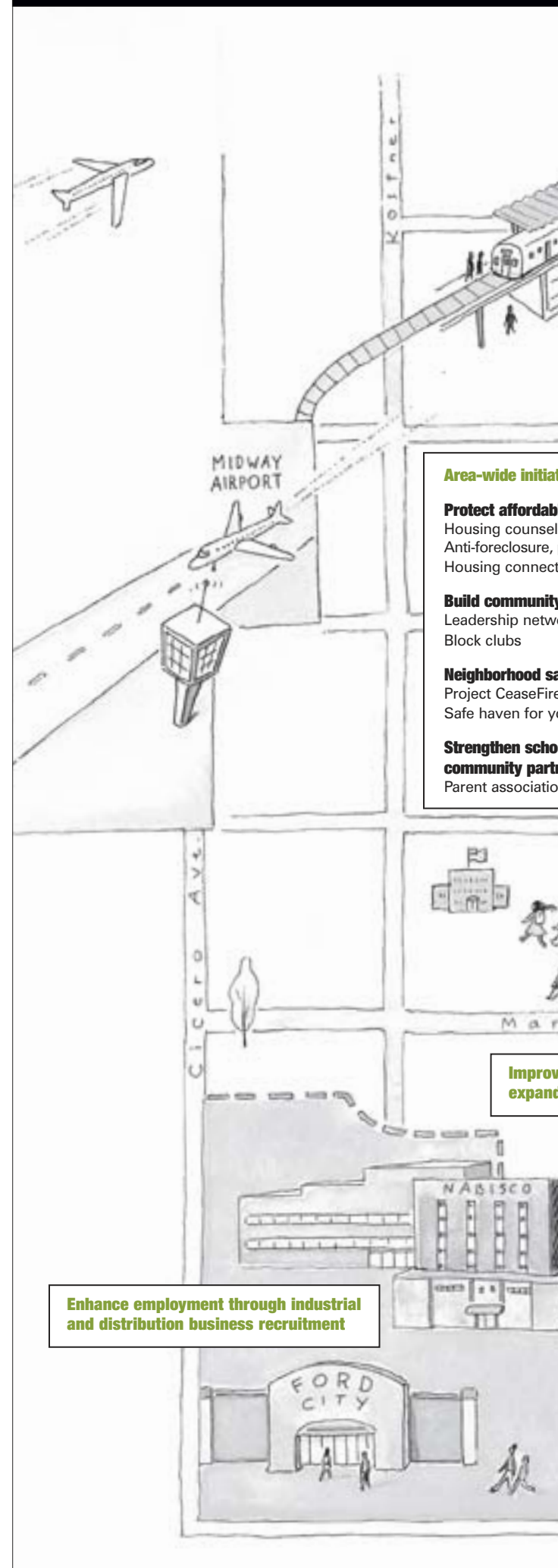
### Organizing and leadership

Seeking to recruit leaders *and* good ideas for the plan, GSDC and SWOP conducted an in-depth survey of 104 individuals identified as community leaders. Using a mix of one-on-one interviews and focus groups, the leaders were asked to identify the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Items most frequently mentioned were, respectively, community institutions, neighborhood cohesion and crime. Chicago Southwest's plan calls for renewed leadership development, especially to increase participation in the electoral process, champion civil rights, and build intercultural understanding.

### For more information

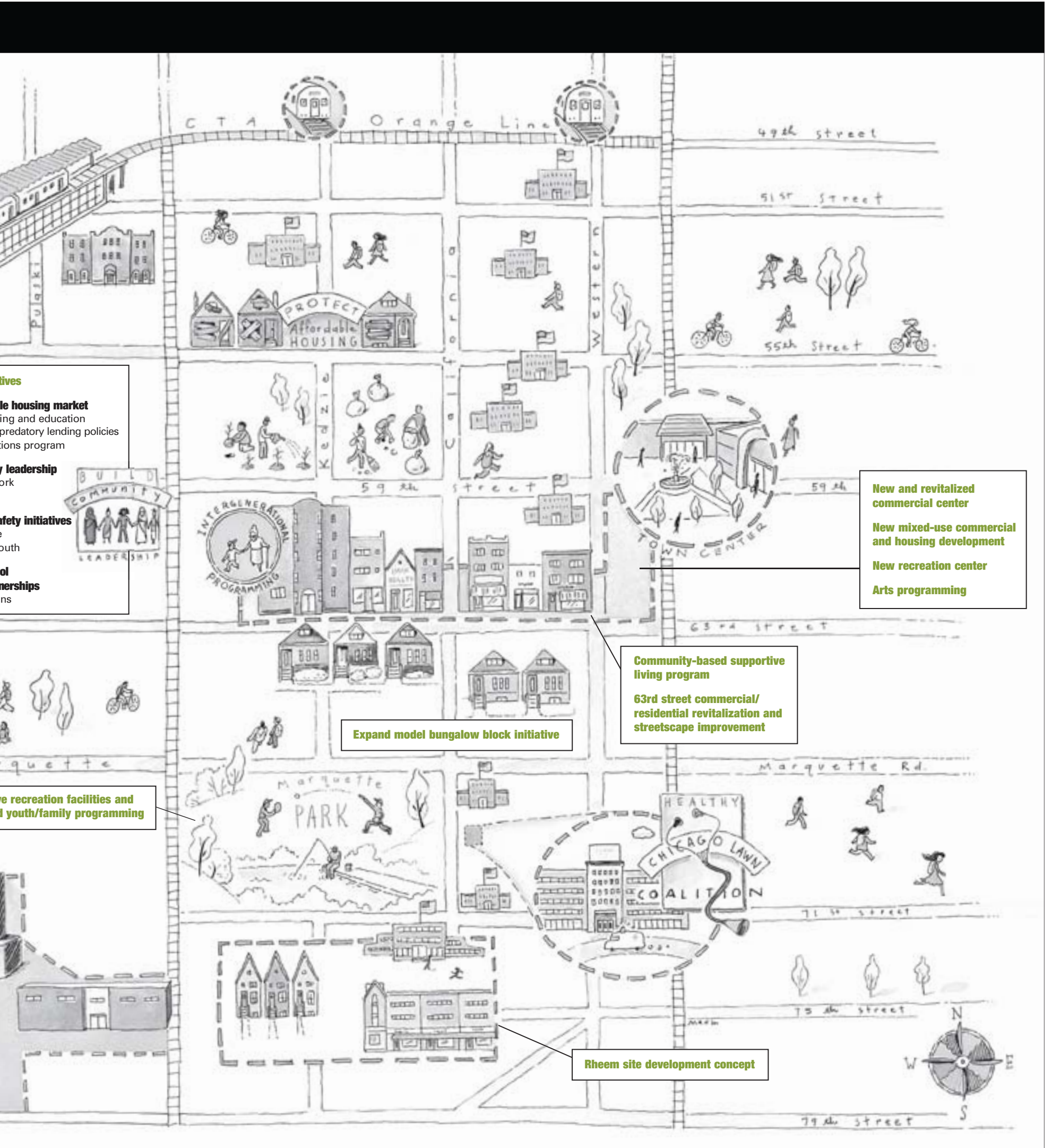
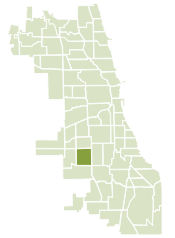
Greater Southwest Development Corporation  
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## KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. Promote stable investment and protect our affordable housing market.
2. Establish an active town center by revitalizing the 63rd Street commercial district.
3. Strengthen and sustain leadership and community commitment.
4. Create safe neighborhoods by investing in marginalized youth and young adults and building positive resident/police relations.
5. Increase access to comprehensive health care, including preventive, primary and mental health services, for residents of all ages regardless of income and immigration status.
6. Create better recreational and social opportunities for youth.
7. Expand the local employment base, prepare residents for employment, and improve access to jobs.
8. Improve local schools and strengthen their role in the community.



**Initiatives**

**Protect the housing market**  
 - Enforcing and education  
 - Predatory lending policies  
 - Eviction program

**Strengthen leadership**  
 - Community work

**Safety initiatives**  
 - Youth  
 - Police relationships  
 - Community programs

**New and revitalized commercial center**

**New mixed-use commercial and housing development**

**New recreation center**

**Arts programming**

**Community-based supportive living program**

**63rd street commercial/residential revitalization and streetscape improvement**

**Expand model bungalow block initiative**

**Rheem site development concept**

**Recreation facilities and youth/family programming**

# EAST GARFIELD PARK

## Growing a Healthy Community

### Lead agency

Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance

Art-glass water lilies and garden supply stores may seem a fragile base upon which to build a comeback. But this West Side neighborhood is beginning to rise like a spring perennial, powered by Mother Nature and a changing real-estate market. An African-American community since the 1950s, East Garfield Park was hit hard by the riots of 1968 and disinvestment that followed. More than 1,750 vacant lots give witness that the population has dropped by 45,000 since 1960, to 20,881. Despite these challenges, committed neighbors looked out for one another and a number of block clubs, churches and grassroots efforts kept community pride alive.

Neighbors helped begin the turnaround in the 1990s by convincing the Chicago Transit Authority to take on a \$300 million rehabilitation of the Green Line elevated. In 2002 Dale Chihuly's art-glass sculptures drew 600,000 visitors, raising visibility for the Conservatory and the surrounding area. Private investment, meanwhile, began pouring into the historic row-houses and greystones of Warren and Washington Boulevards.

Much more needs doing because 35 percent of residents live below the poverty level, health problems are among the worst in the city and there are growing tensions over new development. The Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, launched in 1995 with a mission "to grow community through the unique combination of people, plants and place," brought together more than 400 participants during the New Communities Program planning process, developing eight strategies and 48 projects.

### Garfield Park Community Development Council

Key to the plan is the development of the neighborhood's social and organizational infrastructure to manage community change. A new development council will help "connect the dots" among existing resources and create new capacity to guide development. Its committees and networks will focus on issue-specific areas, and it will have overall responsibility for guiding and monitoring implementation of the quality-of-life plan.

### Lake Street green corridor

East Garfield aims to develop Lake Street as a unique mixed-use "green corridor"—home for landscaping and other environmental businesses—as a key piece in Mayor Richard M. Daley's vision of making Chicago the nation's greenest city. With "el" trains running overhead, Lake Street also has potential for transit-oriented mixed-use development, especially around stations at California and Kedzie.

### A home for arts and culture

A long-term vision is to attract more artists to the neighborhood and build a "multiplex" facility with performance and gallery space. In the shorter term, an arts council will work to add arts venues through partnerships with schools, businesses and public agencies. Another priority is inclusion of public art in new developments, such as the tile mosaics at the Conservatory "el" station, which were designed by local teenagers working with the Chicago Public Art Group.

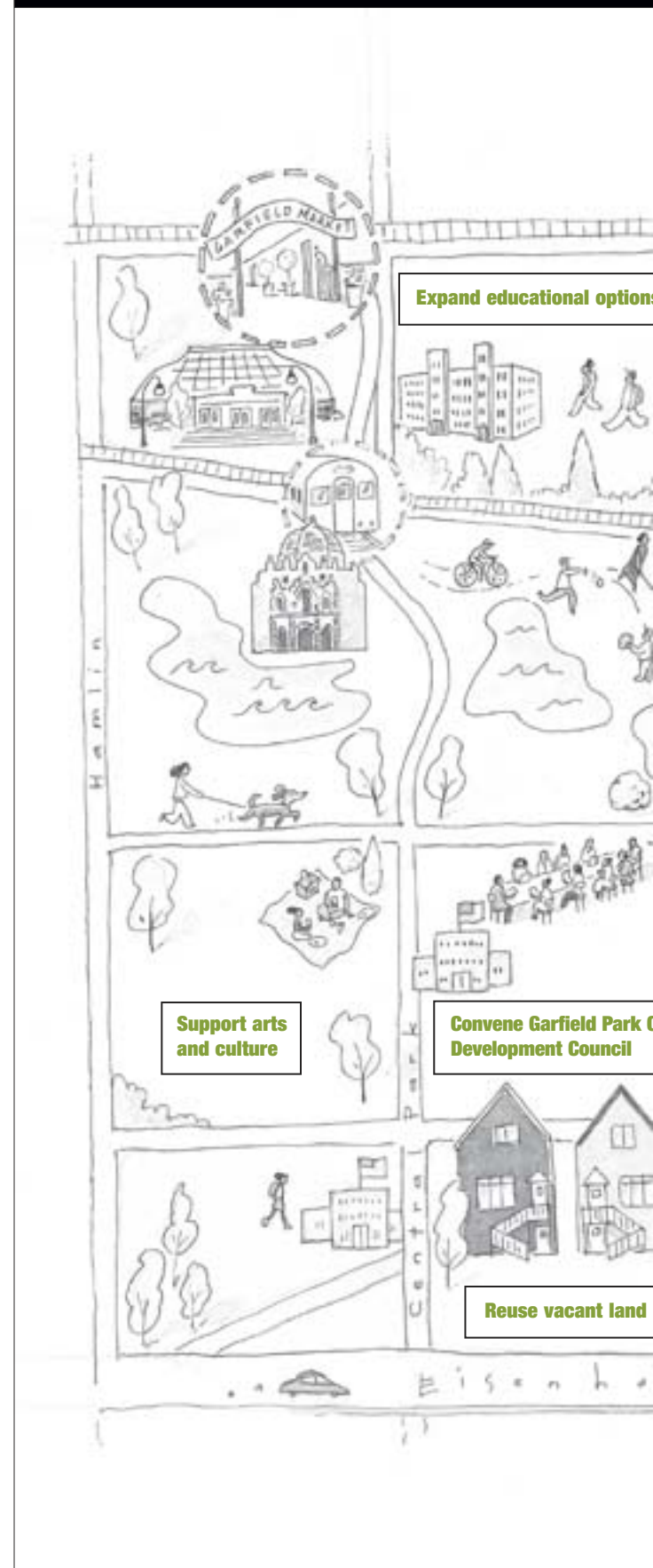
### Educators' network

As part of a comprehensive effort to improve schools, the plan calls for the development of a network of principals, teachers, parents and local school council members to seek out resources, share information and ideas, and establish an identity of excellence for neighborhood schools.

### For more information

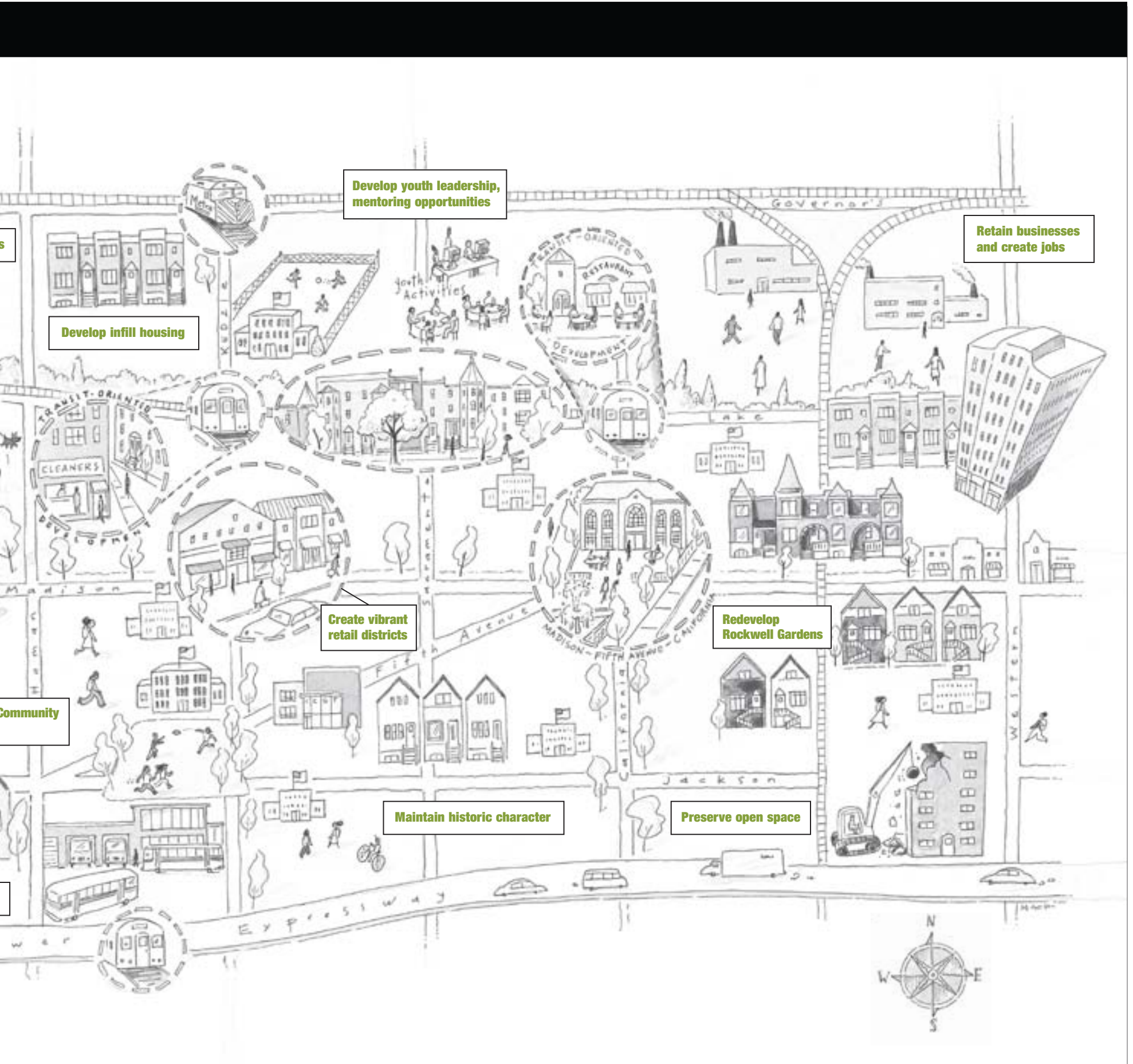
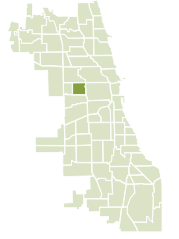
Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance  
300 N. Central Park Ave.  
Chicago, IL. 60620  
773-638-1766  
[www.garfieldpark.org](http://www.garfieldpark.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



## Strategies

1. Create a framework for locally managed community development and enhance the capacity of residents and organizations to participate in that development.
2. Establish a land-use framework to balance housing and commercial development, green space and property ownership opportunities for residents.
3. Create and maintain affordable, quality housing options to accommodate needs of current residents and a socio-economically diverse population.
4. Create revitalized and walkable business districts; strengthen and support local businesses; develop opportunities for living-wage jobs.
5. Increase academic performance and expectation of excellence for area students; develop and promote unique, quality educational options; enhance adult learning opportunities.
6. Support community artists and build on local cultural assets to enhance the image of the community.
7. Support and promote the holistic health and well-being of the East Garfield Park community and its residents.
8. Engage youth in the life of the community and in every level of program planning and development.



# ENGLEWOOD

## Making a Difference

### Lead agency

Teamwork Englewood

A proud neighborhood that has struggled for decades to reverse a declining population and job base, Englewood hopes to build on new public and private investment and its deep base of community organizations, residents, churches and service providers. A new campus for Kennedy King College, a new police station and several new housing and retail developments are planned for this African-American community and its neighbor West Englewood. Together, the two communities are home to 85,000 people.

Vacant land is one of Englewood's most visible challenges—and an opportunity as well, with more than 700 acres available for re-use. High unemployment rates, underperforming schools and worn-out shopping districts are among the neighborhood's other challenges. Though well-served with transportation including the CTA Green Line and Dan Ryan Expressway, Englewood has had difficulty connecting to the region's economic mainstream.

Teamwork Englewood was formed in 2003 to bring together neighborhood organizations and residents and to create the New Communities Program quality-of-life plan. Over the past year, more than 500 individuals and 100 organizations and churches have taken part in the Englewood planning process. The draft quality-of-life plan they produced, with 10 strategies and 48 projects, will be finalized and published in the summer of 2005.

### Sector-based job creation

Connecting residents to living-wage jobs is a primary strategy, with a focus on fast-growth sectors including medical laboratory services, health care technology, automotive servicing and construction. Job-specific training and placement will be coordinated with economic development efforts to attract new employers, including a medical testing laboratory and auto services franchise. Efforts will also support creation and growth of locally owned businesses.

### Reclaiming public spaces

A range of programs will be pursued to put back into productive use the 3,500 vacant lots in Englewood and West Englewood—and renew the neighborhood's identity in the process. Land-use guidelines suggest that isolated vacant lots be transferred to homeowners or businesses next door, while larger vacant areas be used for public plazas, performance and market spaces, community gardens and production-scale housing development. Two large vacant areas near 59th Street have been identified for creation of an urban agriculture zone that will provide fresh produce and new jobs.

### Healthy lifestyles

To address high levels of disease and poor health among residents, a walking club will be established, new outlets for fresh produce will be pursued and a health-education campaign will encourage residents to take fuller advantage of existing health resources, including immunizations for children.

### Activities for youth

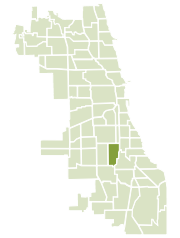
To expand recreation options, a Facilities Capital Campaign will assess the programming and potential of local parks and other community facilities and create a pool of resources to improve existing facilities. Since a lack of transportation hampers youth involvement in some programming, a transportation network will be created, for youth and elders, using buses and mini-vans owned by local churches.

### For more information

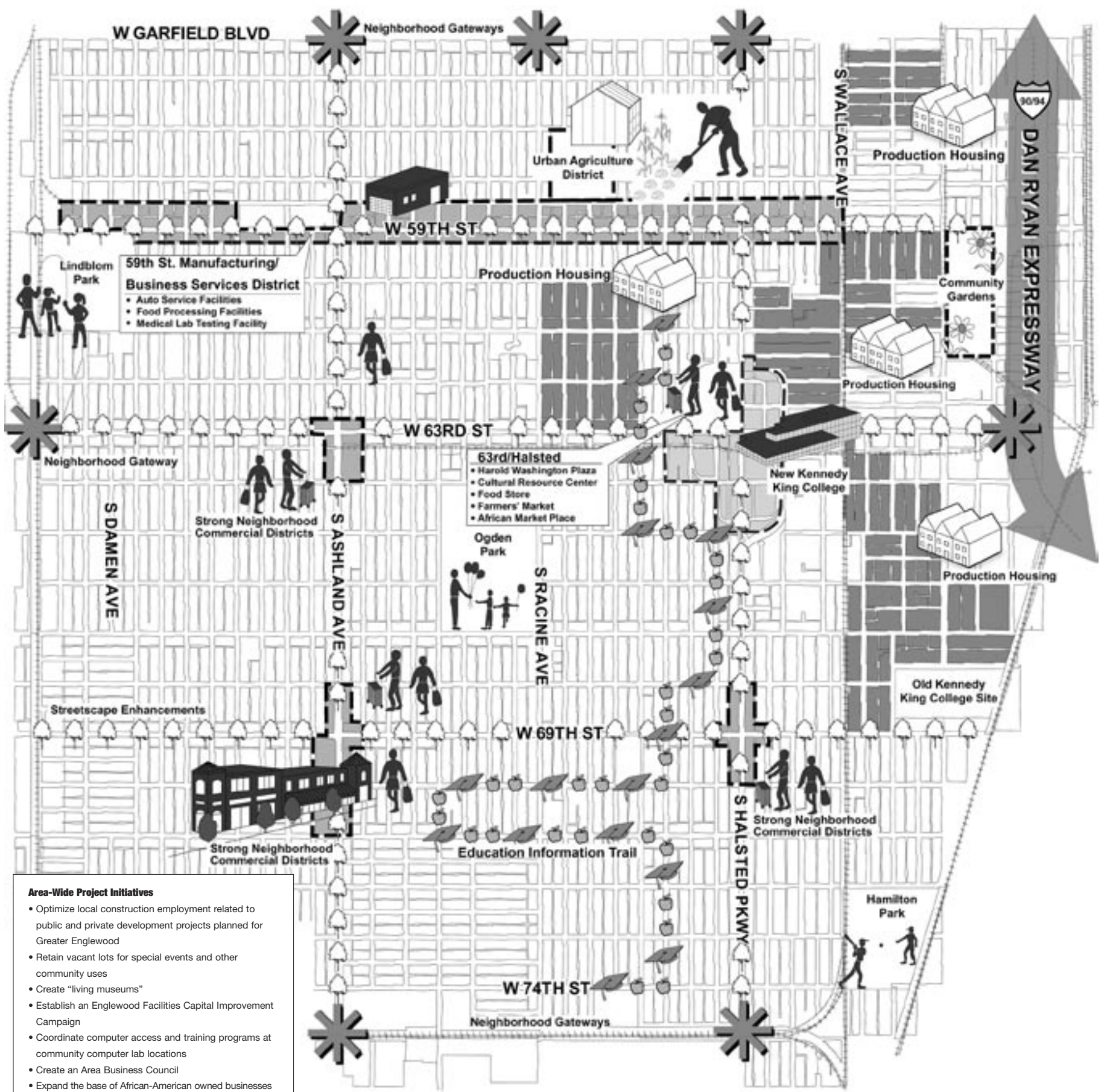
Teamwork Englewood  
815 W. 63rd St., 2nd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60628  
773-493-5000  
[www.teamworkenglewood.org](http://www.teamworkenglewood.org)

### Strategies

1. **Attract new industries and service firms that create living-wage jobs while preparing residents for regional employment opportunities.**
2. **Renew Englewood's identity by reclaiming empty spaces and enlivening the community through cultural activities, gardens, new parks and public gathering spaces.**
3. **Rebuild a vibrant and diverse retail and business community at key locations throughout the neighborhood.**
4. **Jump-start the housing market to create a balanced, mixed-income community while providing support services to local families and individuals.**
5. **Promote healthy lifestyles that include physical fitness, good nutrition and better use of health-care resources.**
6. **Improve safety and security throughout the community.**
7. **Bring new resources to local schools to expand health and social services and improve academic performance.**
8. **Create diverse opportunities for recreation, lifelong learning and civic engagement.**
9. **Create a community network to spread information, resources and expertise within Englewood and beyond.**
10. **Develop an urban agriculture district to provide business and employment opportunities and improve availability of fresh produce.**



## KEY PROJECTS



# HUMBOLDT PARK

## Staking Our Claim

### Lead agency

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation

A historic beacon for immigrants and low- to moderate-income families, Humboldt Park is being “discovered” by wealthier newcomers in search of luxury condos, proximity to Loop offices and Wicker Park nightlife. In response, the community is working even harder to stake a claim for longtime residents who wish to stay.

Familiar problems of low-income neighborhoods need attention in this proud community, split almost evenly between Latino and African-American residents. Most households are renters and nearly a third live at or below the poverty level. Gang and drug activity are serious problems, as is poor health, high unemployment and struggling schools. But a strong network of local institutions and leaders is ready to tackle these problems head-on.

With more than 37 years under its belt, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. is an accomplished developer and manager of affordable housing as well as an outspoken advocate for longtime residents and the working poor. Building on and incorporating previous planning done by the Near Northwest Neighborhood Network/Humboldt Park Empowerment Partnership and the West Humboldt Park Family and Community Development Council, Humboldt Park’s 66 citizen-planners fashioned seven strategies and 55 projects.

### Housing, retail on Division

One of many real-estate projects in the plan, *La Estancia* is a \$21 million residential-over-retail development at three sites on Division Street. It will support a twin strategy of adding affordable housing while boosting economic development along *Paseo Boricua*, the landmark Puerto Rican-themed business strip. *La Estancia* will have 57 affordable apartments, including some family-friendly four-bedroom units, and almost 13,000 square feet of commercial space.

### Better programs for youth

Humboldt Park groups will launch new programs and better coordinate existing services to help develop the leadership, education and vocational skills of local youth. Several of their “early action projects” focused on young people, including the creation of the BickerBikes program that teaches bike repair and riding skills, a youth investment club, a technology/leadership development project and a school garden.

### A community of wellness

Planners envision a community in which everyone can access culturally sensitive and affordable health care. Projects will address health education and outreach; asthma awareness and treatment; HIV/AIDS screening and treatment; affordable dental services; school-based clinics and programs to deal with substance abuse and non-active lifestyles that lead to obesity. A related effort seeks to increase the number of Latino healthcare professionals through outreach, support and training.

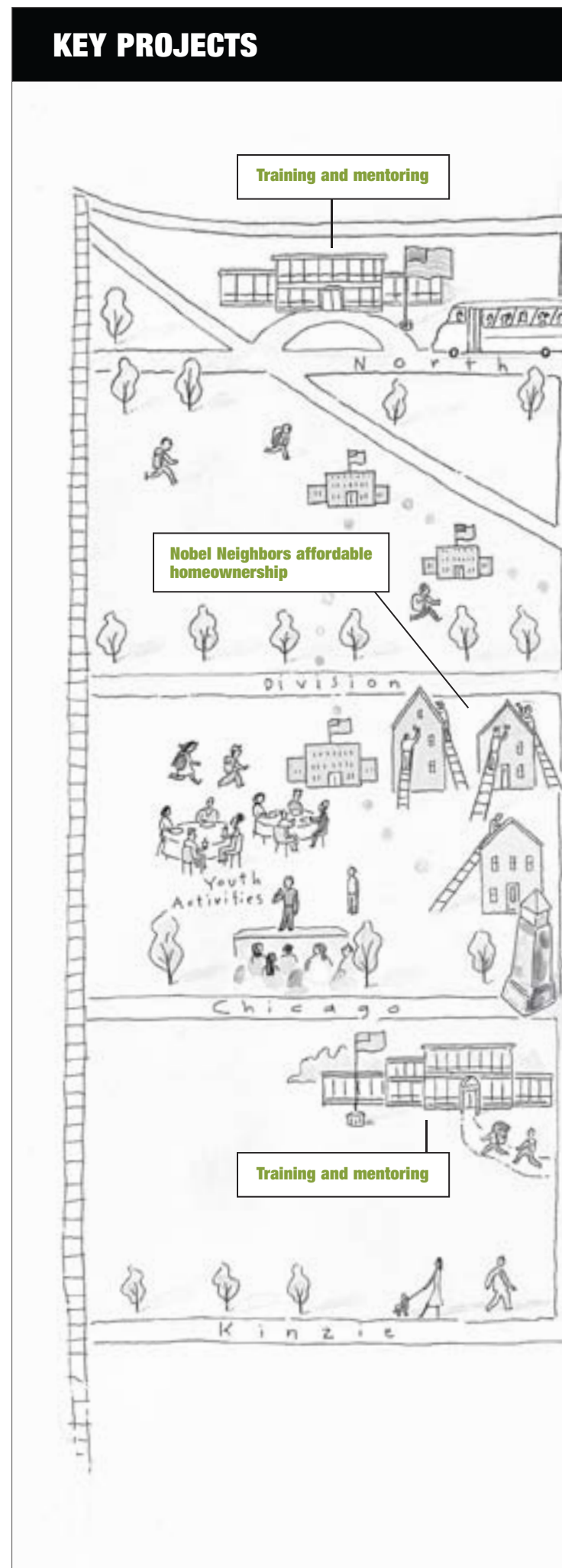
### Land trust for affordable housing

Hoping to increase community control over physical resources, the plan supports establishment of a community land trust in West Humboldt Park, where there are hundreds of vacant lots. The land trust would acquire property (10 initial sites along Hamlin and Avers have been identified) and oversee development of housing affordable to families earning as little as \$15,000 per year, half the area median income.

### For more information

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation  
2550 W. North Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60647  
773-278-5669  
[www.bickerdike.org](http://www.bickerdike.org)

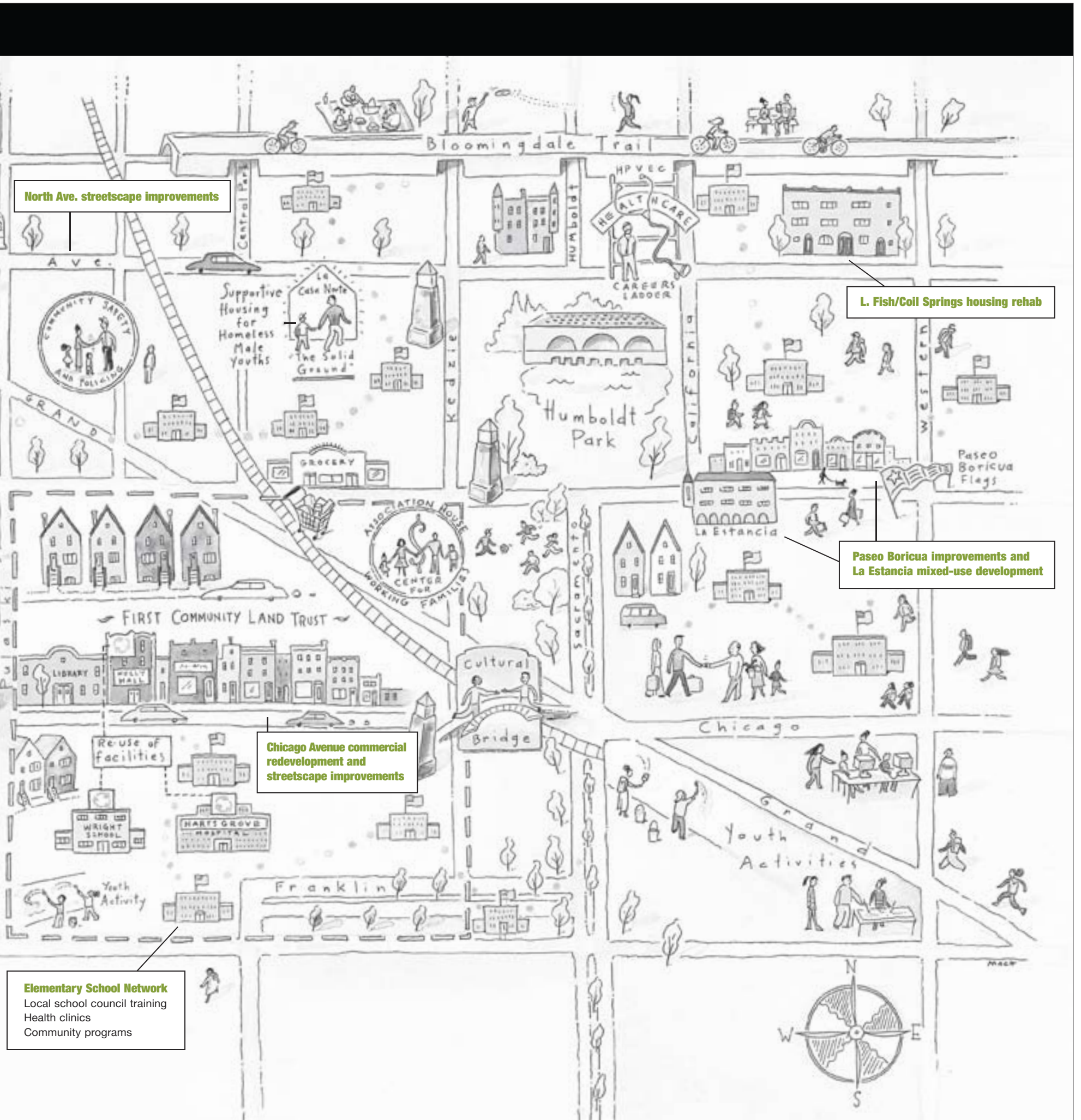
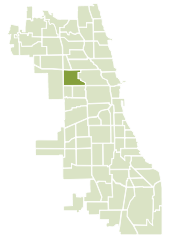
## KEY PROJECTS





**Strategies**

1. Improve local schools using a community-based and culturally sensitive approach.
2. Create a community of wellness where health is a dimension of community improvement.
3. Provide resources to sustain healthy individuals and families.
4. Increase community control over use of physical resources.
5. Productively engage youth in the community.
6. Improve physical, economic and social infrastructure through marketing, communications, beautification and safety.
7. Create jobs through training and local business development.



North Ave. streetscape improvements

L. Fish/Coil Springs housing rehab

Paseo Boricua improvements and La Estancia mixed-use development

Chicago Avenue commercial redevelopment and streetscape improvements

**Elementary School Network**  
Local school council training  
Health clinics  
Community programs

# LITTLE VILLAGE

## Capital of the Mexican Midwest

### Lead agency

Little Village Community Development Corporation

Little Village, or *La Villita*, is the retail, residential and cultural capital of the Mexican Midwest, and wants to retain that role for many years to come. A major port-of-entry, the neighborhood added 10,000 residents during the 1990s and counts a thousand businesses along thriving 26th Street and nearby retail strips.

Today's challenge is to invest adequately in human resources—especially youth and families. Half of *La Villita* residents are under 25, creating heavy demand for better schools, recreation programs and health and social services. It is among those city neighborhoods with the most violent crime and the fewest parks. Per-capita income is less than half the city average, and high school dropout rates approach 50 percent. Despite these challenges, Little Village leaders and institutions hold the community together through their hard work, activism and faith.

Since 1990 the Little Village Community Development Corporation has led the fight for more and better schools and against youth violence. More than 150 participated in a year-long planning process led by a core task force of 35 members. The process yielded eight strategies and 40 projects.

### Mixed-use site at 26th and Kostner

A longtime goal for the community is redevelopment of the vacant 40-acre industrial parcel at the western end of the 26th Street retail corridor. Residents envision a shopping center, mixed-income housing, a community services center, an elementary school and green space. A series of companion projects will support existing businesses along 26th Street, which is a powerful economic engine in Little Village.

### Violence Prevention Collaborative

LVCDC and other agencies are committed to building and strengthening this coalition of community-based organizations, churches, schools and individuals to stop violence and reduce the influence of gangs on local youth. Activities to date include a summer peace rally, Saturday morning relational meetings with 10th District police, and a gun turn-in program in partnership with Chicago Police and four churches.

### Stronger local schools

Spurred to reality by a community-led hunger strike, Chicago Public Schools is finishing construction of the Little Village High School Campus, which will house four “small schools” with distinct educational themes. Other educational advances will include opening more community schools on evenings and weekends and development of a College Resource Center and new student-teacher residence with Illinois State University, State Farm Insurance and LISC/Chicago.

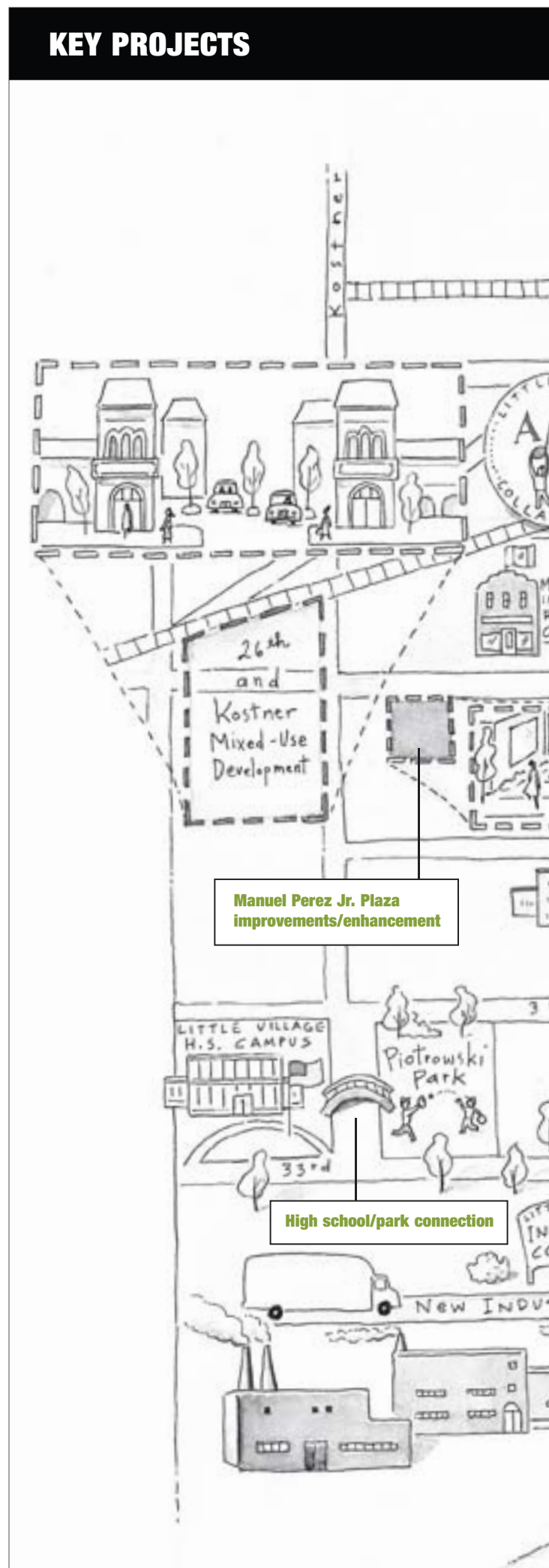
### A boost to manufacturing

Little Village will work to designate a Little Village Industrial Corridor along the neighborhood's southern edge and give it protected zoning as a Planned Manufacturing District. Already home to operations of Kraft Foods, Unilever Best Foods, La Preferida and Lagrou, Little Village will promote the district and its strong transportation links to other food processing firms.

### For more information

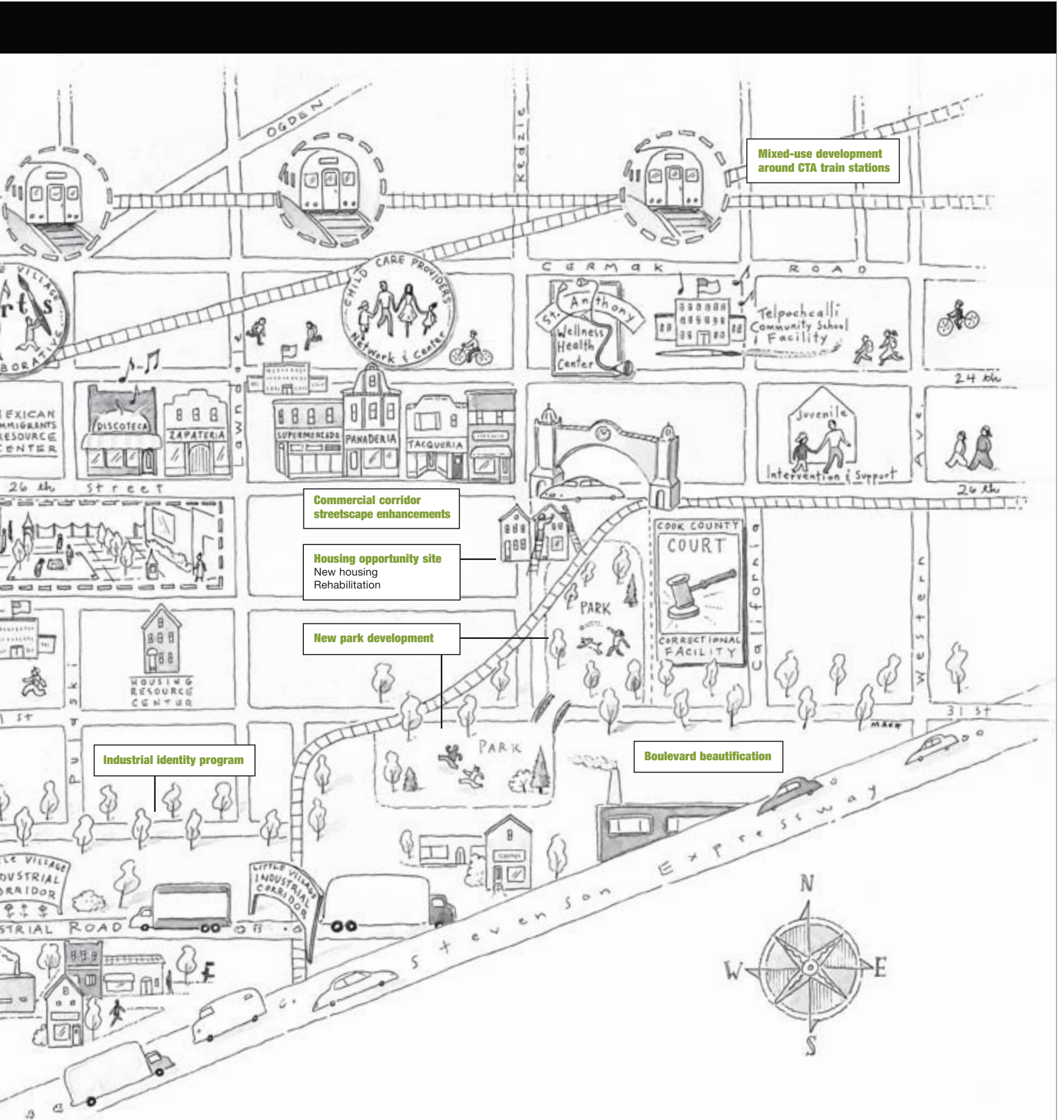
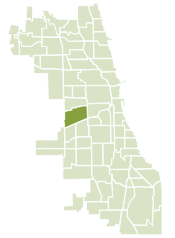
Little Village Community Development Corporation  
2756 S. Harding Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60623  
773-542-9233  
[www.littlevillagecdc.org](http://www.littlevillagecdc.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. Expand access to parks and open space by improving facilities and creating a large new park.
2. Make high-quality education for youth and adults the cornerstone of Little Village's future.
3. Create a safe and peaceful community through violence prevention, gang intervention and increased resources for youth and families.
4. Foster healthier families by improving and expanding health and social services for all residents, regardless of age, income or immigration status.
5. Improve the business district and create new mixed-use developments at 26th and Kostner and other sites.
6. Attract sustainable, environmentally friendly industry and expand economic opportunities for local workers.
7. Maintain the neighborhood's attractive and affordable housing and create new housing to meet changing needs.
8. Create and expand arts opportunities for youth and families.



# LOGAN SQUARE

## A Place to Stay, a Place to Grow

### Lead agency

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Gentrification is issue No. 1 in this neighborhood of sturdy homes and tree-lined boulevards west of the Kennedy Expressway. As of 2000, its 82,000 residents were two-thirds Latino, but declining elementary school enrollments foretell displacement by upper-income singles and empty-nesters. With rents growing 38 percent in the 1990s, nearly a third of renters now pay more than 35 percent of their income in rent, and 17 percent pay more than half.

The densely-packed brick two-flats and walk-ups west of Kedzie Avenue are filled mostly with Latino families, many newly-arrived to the U.S. or newly displaced from neighborhoods like Bucktown. Many are doubling up with relatives to make the rent, and almost all are stretching their paychecks from lower-wage jobs.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association already has the tools to prepare the next generation for higher-wage work. Five local schools are known as Community Learning Centers and hundreds of parents have become involved as Tutor-Mentors, Literacy Ambassadors and students studying English. The 42-year-old Association revises annually its Holistic Plan, and through NCP it reached out to new constituencies and crafted new projects as part of the quality-of-life plan. Over 18 months, it involved 65 task force members and more than 150 other neighborhood residents and institutional leaders, crafting eight strategies and 51 projects.

### Community schools

In Logan Square, schools are the center of community life. Parents are everywhere in LSNA schools, sharing their language and culture, their tutoring skills and, of course, their love for children. LSNA's community school programs will be enhanced in the coming years to not only raise achievement levels of students, but open new worlds of opportunity for immigrant mothers and others through expanded arts activities, citizenship classes and employment programs.

### Haas Park expansion

The long-term effort to expand Haas Park on Fullerton Avenue built up momentum during the planning process. The Trust for Public Land, with help from LISC and neighborhood donors, has purchased an option on a warehouse adjacent to the park. Next steps are to get the Park District to buy the land (it has committed \$1 million already) and make improvements including a new field house.

### Armitage Avenue redevelopment

LSNA plans to partner with Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. to redevelop a block, or blocks, in the Armitage Avenue corridor east of Ames Middle School. Envisioned for Phase One are 70 units of affordable family rental housing above stores and restaurants, including smaller, locally-owned businesses.

### Stronger block clubs

Strong block clubs can increase the safety and trustfulness of a neighborhood or even a single apartment building. And they could promote healthier lifestyles with help from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living by Design (*Ayuda Mutua*) program in which LSNA participates. Block clubs will also work with the 14th and 25th Police District's CAPS programs on initiatives such as "Safe Passage" in which residents and business owners watch out for children on their way to and from school.

### For more information

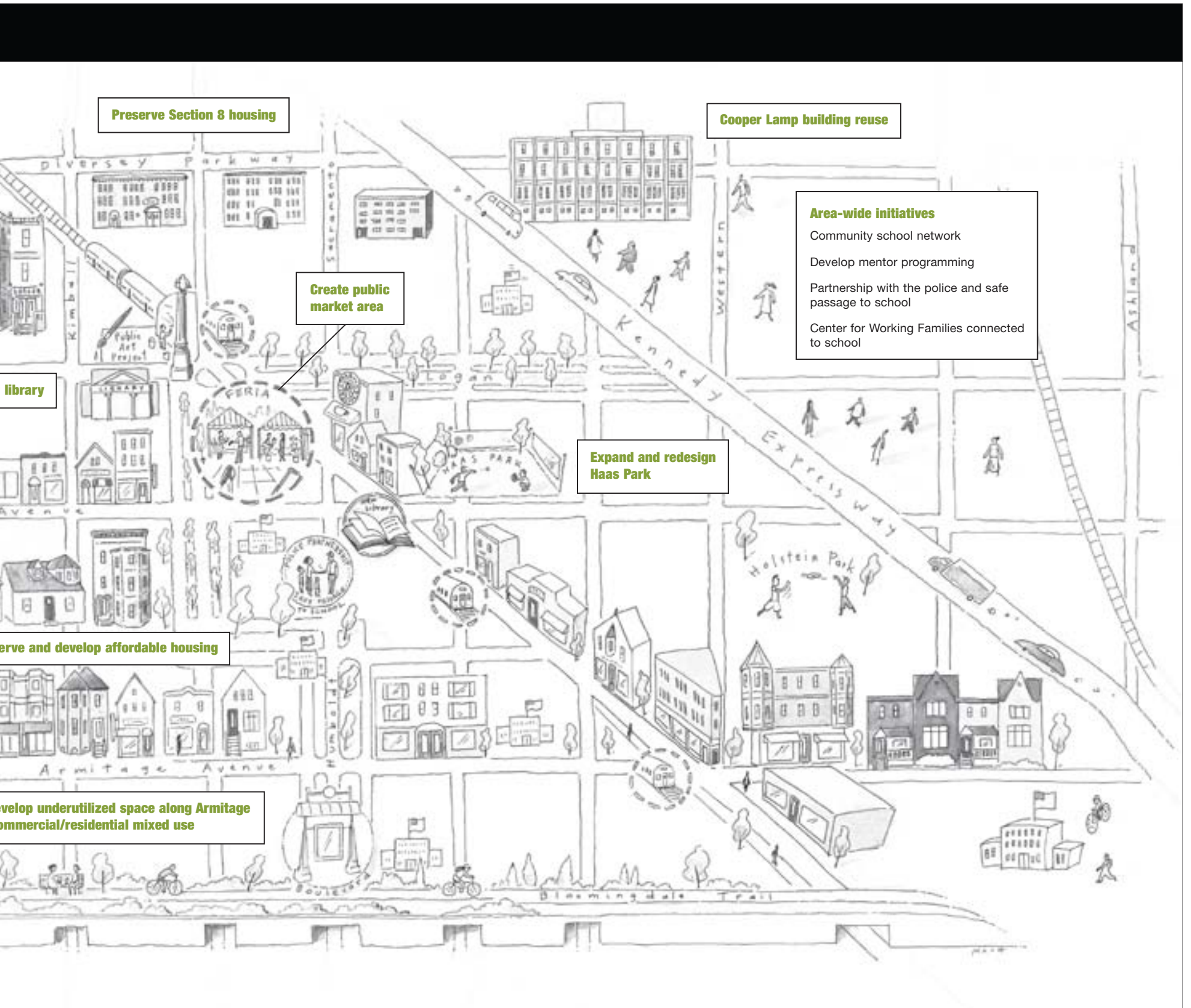
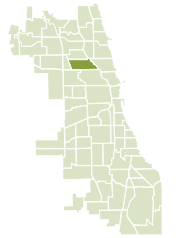
Logan Square Neighborhood Association  
2840 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60618  
773-384-4370  
www.lsna.net

### KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. **Preserve and expand affordable housing.**
2. **Expand and improve parks and recreational programs, and create new community spaces.**
3. **Improve and expand model community school programs, and foster educational opportunities for residents of all ages.**
4. **Revitalize key commercial corridors by working with elected officials, businesses and property owners.**
5. **Support industrial retention and business development, and provide coordinated job training, job placement and financial education to community residents.**
6. **Improve the health, safety and well being of Logan Square residents and families.**
7. **Support local arts organizations, promote art activities and expand arts programming and cultural events.**
8. **Build community leadership and enable all residents, young and old, citizen and non-citizen, to participate effectively in decisions affecting their lives.**



# NORTH LAWDALE

## Faith Rewarded

### Lead agency

Lawndale Christian Development Corporation

North Lawndale is rising again. In a neighborhood that lost thousands of units of housing, more than 30 years of hard work by community-based organizations are showing results. There is a resurgence of development across the community, including a shopping center on Roosevelt Road and new investment on Ogden Avenue. More than 1,200 units of for-sale or rental housing are planned or under construction.

Still the neighborhood faces serious challenges. A relatively low population density—down to 41,768 in 2000 from 125,000 in 1960—and high poverty and unemployment make it difficult to attract retail businesses. Underperforming schools and negative perceptions of safety remain obstacles to attracting working- and middle-class families. And a recent city analysis found that, in 2003 alone, more than 500 former prison inmates returned to the 60623 ZIP code that includes North Lawndale.

Founded in 1987 by the Lawndale Community Church, the Lawndale Christian Development Corp. has led the neighborhood's comeback by building and rehabbing housing, helping start a health clinic and operating a computer technology center. Over the past 18 months, LCDC asked a task force of 46 members and more than 300 other participants to envision and plan a better future. They formulated 10 strategies and 43 projects.

### Ogden Avenue makeover

The task force recommends reconfiguring and beautifying Ogden Avenue to support retail and pedestrian activity. Ogden is one of the widest roads in Chicago, with four to six moving lanes plus frontage roads and parking on each side, and it is almost completely devoid of trees and other landscaping. The addition of greenery, public art and diagonal parking can transform Ogden into a pleasant and economically viable "main street" for North Lawndale.

### Family entertainment center

LCDC is pursuing development of a bowling/skating/game-playing community center to provide safe and healthy recreation for local youth and adults. The former CTA bus barn at Ogden and Cermak would be an ideal location, drawing residents from nearby Little Village.

### Careers in law enforcement

With the Chicago Police Department, LCDC has launched a nine-month "Careers in Law Enforcement" exposure series to acquaint young men and women with job possibilities in public safety. Instruction includes what they'll need to do and to know before taking—and hopefully, passing—the Chicago Police Academy entrance exam. The program is also raising levels of understanding and respect between the community and police.

### Ex-offender programming

To equip and encourage men and women striving to re-enter society after prison, North Lawndale is pushing forward on a number of fronts. New and expanded programs include supportive housing for female ex-offenders who are on parole, the "U-Turn Permitted" job training program and an updated Resource Guide spearheaded by the North Lawndale Employment Network, and addiction treatment programs led by Lawndale Community Church and others.

### For more information

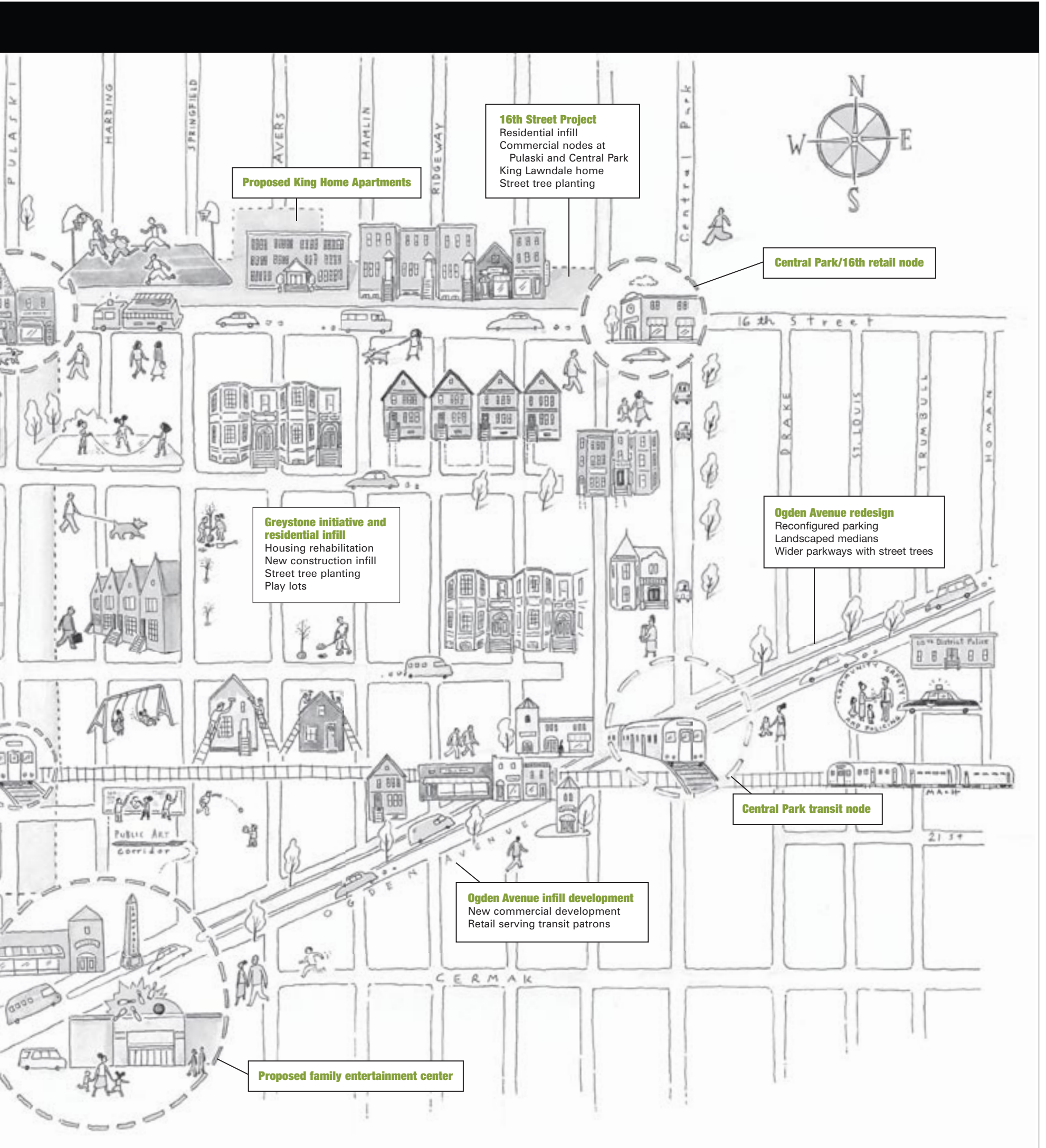
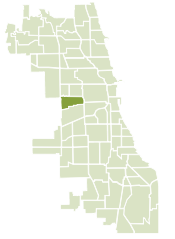
Lawndale Christian Development Corporation  
3843 W. Ogden Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60623  
773-762-8889  
www.lcdc.net

## KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. Strengthen Ogden Avenue as Lawndale's main commercial street while seeking a mix of uses along Pulaski Road and W. 16th Street.
2. Develop a comprehensive housing program that serves homeowners and renters.
3. Provide amenities and improve community image with new neighborhood infrastructure.
4. Support existing businesses, nurture new commercial development and promote job creation.
5. Increase employment options for North Lawndale residents.
6. Advocate for and support comprehensive solutions for men and women re-entering the community and job market from the prison system.
7. Create a safer neighborhood.
8. Support student achievement and opportunity, strong families and individual health.
9. Generate opportunities for teens and young adults to learn positive life skills in a mentoring environment.
10. Initiate a major greening and urban agriculture campaign.



# QUAD COMMUNITIES

## Connecting the Past, Present and Future

### Lead agency

Quad Communities Development Corporation

Chicago's historic Mid-South Side is again on the threshold of greatness. Once a hotbed of commerce and culture—the “Black Metropolis” that spawned the jazz of Louis Armstrong and the moral clarity of Ida B. Wells—this area is in the midst of widespread redevelopment including the “transformation” of three Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) developments. The Quad Communities service area corresponds to Chicago's 4th Ward in the community areas of Kenwood, Oakland, Douglas and Grand Boulevard.

More than 3,600 new mixed-income housing units will be built as part of the redevelopment of CHA properties. Virtually all the neighborhood's schools are being overhauled, and private developers are snapping up the area's many vacant lots and shrinking supply of sturdy greystones and brick walk-ups. With building activity on many blocks, the question is not *whether* the south lakefront will be redeveloped, but for whom?

The Quad Communities Development Corp. was created in 2003 expressly to bring NCP resources to this part of the city. Convened initially by 4th Ward Ald. Toni Preckwinkle and a founding board of directors, the effort grew to include some 88 planning task force members and 400 participants who helped fashion nine strategies and 46 projects.

### Improved schools for local residents

Quad Communities residents are fed up with under-performance, overcrowded classrooms, poorly maintained buildings and equipment, and most recently, charter and magnet schools that are unavailable to neighborhood children. One response was for all local schools to be open to residents living within the attendance areas. Another was summer and fall institutes for school principals and staff as a first step toward bridging the schools/community gap and negotiating for stronger academic programs.

### Retail revamp for Cottage Grove

Though a residential comeback is in full swing, Quad Communities is so “under-stored” that its residents spend \$450 million annually outside the area. The city's Cottage Grove Plan would restore the avenue as a major commercial strip. Still needed is a master plan with commercial design standards and a unified vision for the key intersections at 43rd and 47th streets. A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Council is being formed for the 43rd and Cottage Grove district to review and influence how city funds are used.

### Center for Working Families

QCDC is working with the Abraham Lincoln Centre to launch a community resource center that will reflect the needs of a growing mixed-income community by providing job placement, financial education, homebuyer counseling, tax preparation and other services aimed at helping all families achieve self-sufficiency and long-term financial security.

### Mixed-income housing

One of the neighborhood's biggest challenges is the need to create a healthy and sustainable mix of low-income, affordable and market-rate housing. The plan calls for an Affordable Housing Resource Center to organize, educate and mobilize around housing concerns, such as pending expiration of federal subsidy contracts. Other efforts will ensure that economic and social supports are available to public housing tenants at new mixed-income developments such as Jazz on the Boulevard, Oakwood Shores and Lake Park Crescent.

### For more information

Quad Communities Development Corporation  
4646 S. Drexel Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60653  
773-268-7232  
[www.qcdc.org](http://www.qcdc.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



Foster interaction among diverse residents

Create network of "community schools"



Support retail growth on Cottage Grove

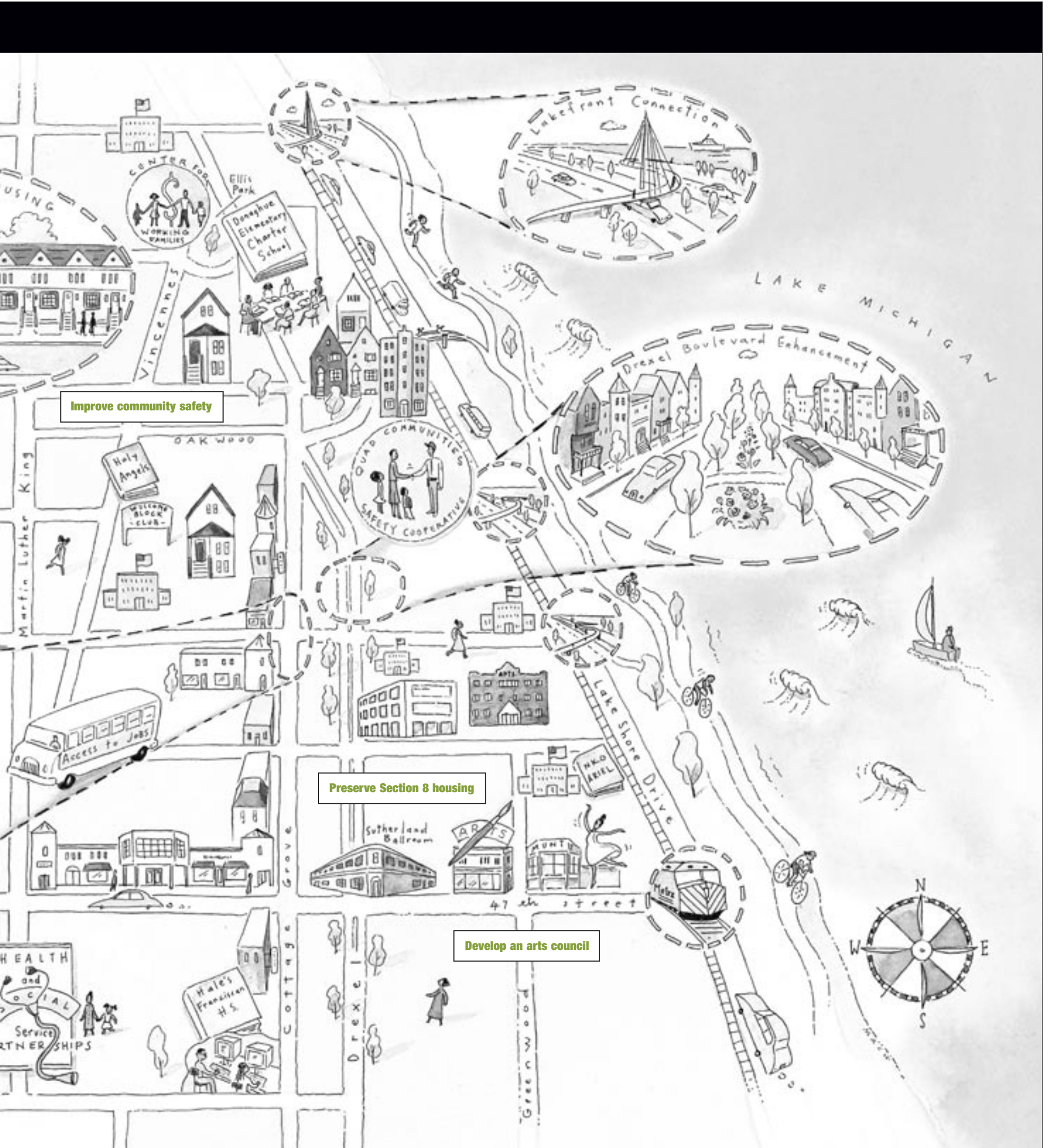
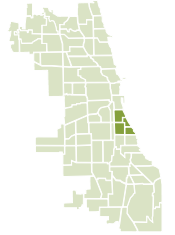
Help residents develop healthy lifestyles

50th street



**Strategies**

1. Improve the quality of all local schools, and ensure they are open to all residents.
2. Provide employment and financial education services through new programs and better coordination of established ones.
3. Create recreational, social and employment opportunities for youth.
4. Support a mix of low-income, affordable and market-rate housing, and foster interaction among diverse residents.
5. Improve safety through partnerships with residents, the Chicago Police Department and the University of Chicago Police Department.
6. Promote and coordinate health care and social services, and help residents develop healthy lifestyles.
7. Develop unique retail and commercial districts, and foster locally owned businesses.
8. Improve community infrastructure, including transportation and information systems.
9. Integrate arts, culture and history into the everyday life of the community.



# WOODLAWN

## Rebuilding the Village

### Lead agency

Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation

Born of the 1893 World's Fair and shaped by generations of community activists, Woodlawn has been down... yet now it is on the way up. The population of this mostly African-American community has stabilized at around 27,000 and new construction is beginning to fill in the community's more than 1,700 vacant lots.

The turnaround grew from nearly four decades of community organizing and pioneering development work by The Woodlawn Organization (T.W.O.), churches and block clubs. Non-profits and for-profits have built new homes along 63rd Street and many sides streets, with some values topping \$300,000. Woodlawn schools are improving with innovations such as the International Baccalaureate Program at the Andrew Carnegie School, while the Chicago Park District has taken over and renewed the Harris Recreation Center.

Launched in 1987, the Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corp. teamed up with T.W.O. and the University of Chicago to organize the quality-of-life planning process. A core task force of 38 worked through committees and all-community meetings to engage 300 participants in the creation of eight strategies and 47 projects.

### Housing, retail on 63rd Street

The plan calls for beautification of the section of 63rd Street that runs under the "el" tracks, from Cottage Grove to King Drive, with a new streetscape, decorative hanging baskets and welcoming banners to support revival of retail and housing development. East of Cottage Grove, more housing is planned in the second phase of the Columbia Pointe development.

### U. of C. South Campus plan

The University is launching an ambitious redevelopment of the north side of 61st Street, to include an 800- to 900-bed student residence at Ellis Avenue; a 20,000-square-foot retail plaza at Woodlawn Avenue; and conversion of the vacant Illinois Bell switching station at Kenwood Avenue into office space. The retail component can provide convenient shopping for households in the apartment buildings and condominiums between 61st and 63rd streets.

### New charter schools

To expand local educational options, T.W.O. plans a math-and-science school for grades 7-12 at 1445 E. 65th Street. The University, which operates a charter school in the Kenwood neighborhood, is exploring creation of another in Woodlawn to serve children K-12. The U. of C. charter would be designed as a hub of training and leadership development for teachers and principals throughout Woodlawn and other neighborhoods.

### Recreation and youth development

The community seeks broader recreation opportunities for people of all ages, including new programs at the Bessie Coleman Library and development of the Harris Recreation Center into a cultural and recreational hub. A special emphasis on expanded youth programming will be informed by a youth-oriented planning process and surveys.

### For more information

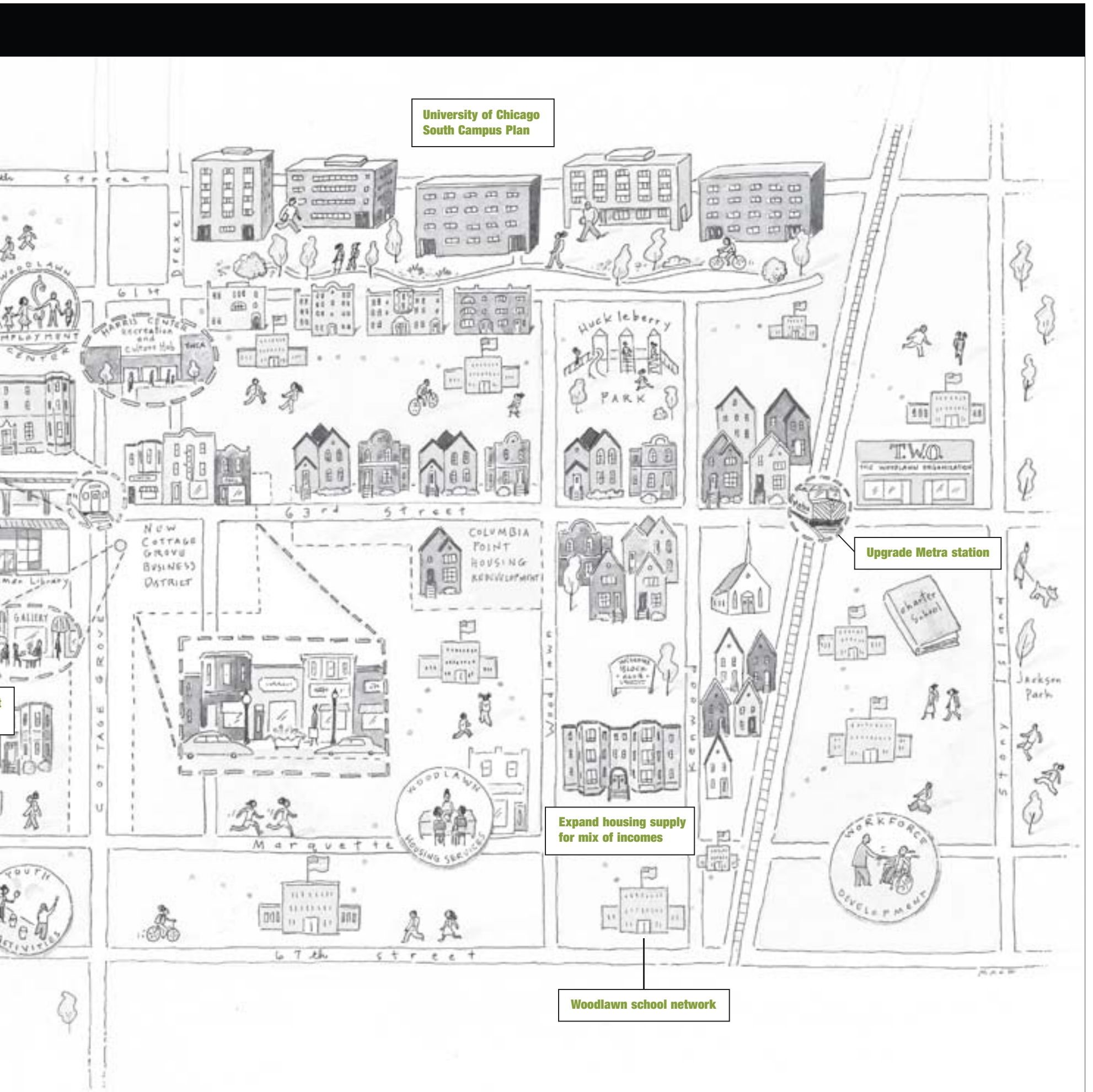
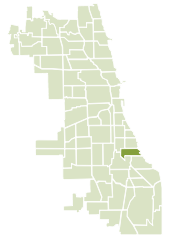
Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation  
822 E. 63rd St.  
Chicago, IL 60637  
773-363-4300  
[www.picwoodlawn.org](http://www.picwoodlawn.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. Expand the supply of new housing for a mix of incomes, and support improvement of existing housing stock.
2. Develop a vibrant retail and business environment and a central shopping district along Cottage Grove south of 63rd Street.
3. Promote economic opportunity, workforce development and improved connections to the job market.
4. Organize people and resources to make all Woodlawn schools excellent.
5. Improve communication and coordination among organizations, residents and institutions.
6. Plan and implement activities and programs for youth.
7. Expand recreational activities for all ages, and develop new programs around arts and culture.
8. Provide professional development resources and other support to health and social services agencies.



# PILSEN

## Creating a Healthier Community

### Lead agency

The Resurrection Project

A gateway Mexican-American community (89 percent Latino, 37 percent non-citizens) Pilsen's close-in location has begun to draw higher-income Latino and Anglo newcomers. Some think it overcrowded, poor and dangerous. In reality, Pilsen has begun to emerge as Chicago's ethnic community of choice—home to thriving churches, community organizations and local businesses.

Founded by six Catholic parishes in 1990, The Resurrection Project has typified the neighborhood's church-centered brand of activism and involvement. TRP has catalyzed more than \$120 million in new neighborhood investment, become the city's largest producer of New Homes for Chicago, and closed 361 mortgages with less than 1 percent defaulted.

Little wonder that in 1998 the organization was invited by LISC/Chicago to participate in its pilot New Communities Initiative, or that its 2000 quality-of-life plan became a model for several of the NCP plans summarized earlier in this volume. Many of that plan's eight strategies and 25 projects either have been achieved or are in progress.

### Boosting the housing stock

TRP built 22 affordable homes through the Boulevard Joint Venture Project and disbursed \$130,000 yearly in home repair grants; arranged homeownership counseling and workshops for more than 2,000 prospective homeowners; and developed the \$16 million Casa Puebla rental housing project with five buildings and 80 affordable units. *Next:* The *Viviendas Economicas Ahora* (Affordable Housing Now) campaign seeks to produce 1,000 affordable housing opportunities and leverage \$87 million in community investment over the next five years.

### Business development and employment

A \$300,000 revolving capital fund was established for minority contractors, producing 100 loans worth more than \$1 million and creating 200 construction jobs. TRP helped organize the United Merchants of Pilsen and restarted the Mexican Independence Day parade on 18th Street. New streetscape improvements along 18th Street and Blue Island have also enhanced this key business district. It has partnered with Instituto del Progreso Latino on a revitalized employment center. *Next:* The *El Zocalo* (Village Center) project will create a Mexican-style commercial plaza near 18th and Paulina Streets. It will leverage \$5 million in private investment and badly-needed affordable retail space in Pilsen. TRP already controls three of four needed corners.

### Family and youth support

A parenting program, *Esperanza Familiar* (Family Hope), later merged with the Parents Helping Parents program at Holy Cross parish and now serves more than 100 families from several parishes. To bring different groups of youth together in a safe environment, TRP organized the Resurrection Basketball League.

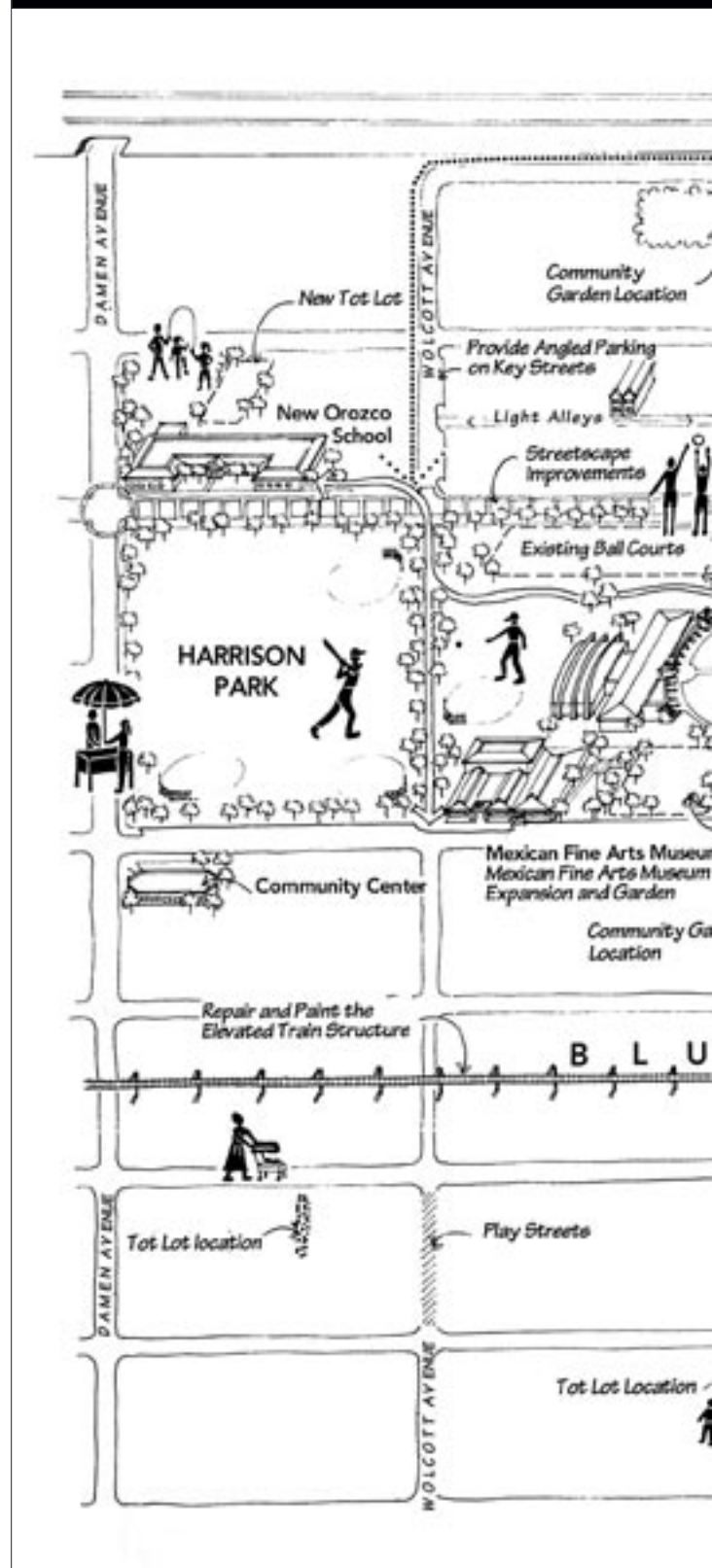
### Education organizing

One of the organization's key organizing efforts has been education. TRP has worked in partnership with local high schools, area universities and other advocacy groups to address education challenges in the community. Among these, only 40% of the population has a high school diploma and a scant 4% has a bachelor's degree. Their "Pathways to College" initiative has mobilized students and parents to learn about the college admissions process, and community leaders have advocated at the state level to win the right for undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates. *Next:* A \$3.4 million state grant has been secured to convert a former convent into a college dorm, to be called *La Casa*, for students commuting to local universities.

### For more information

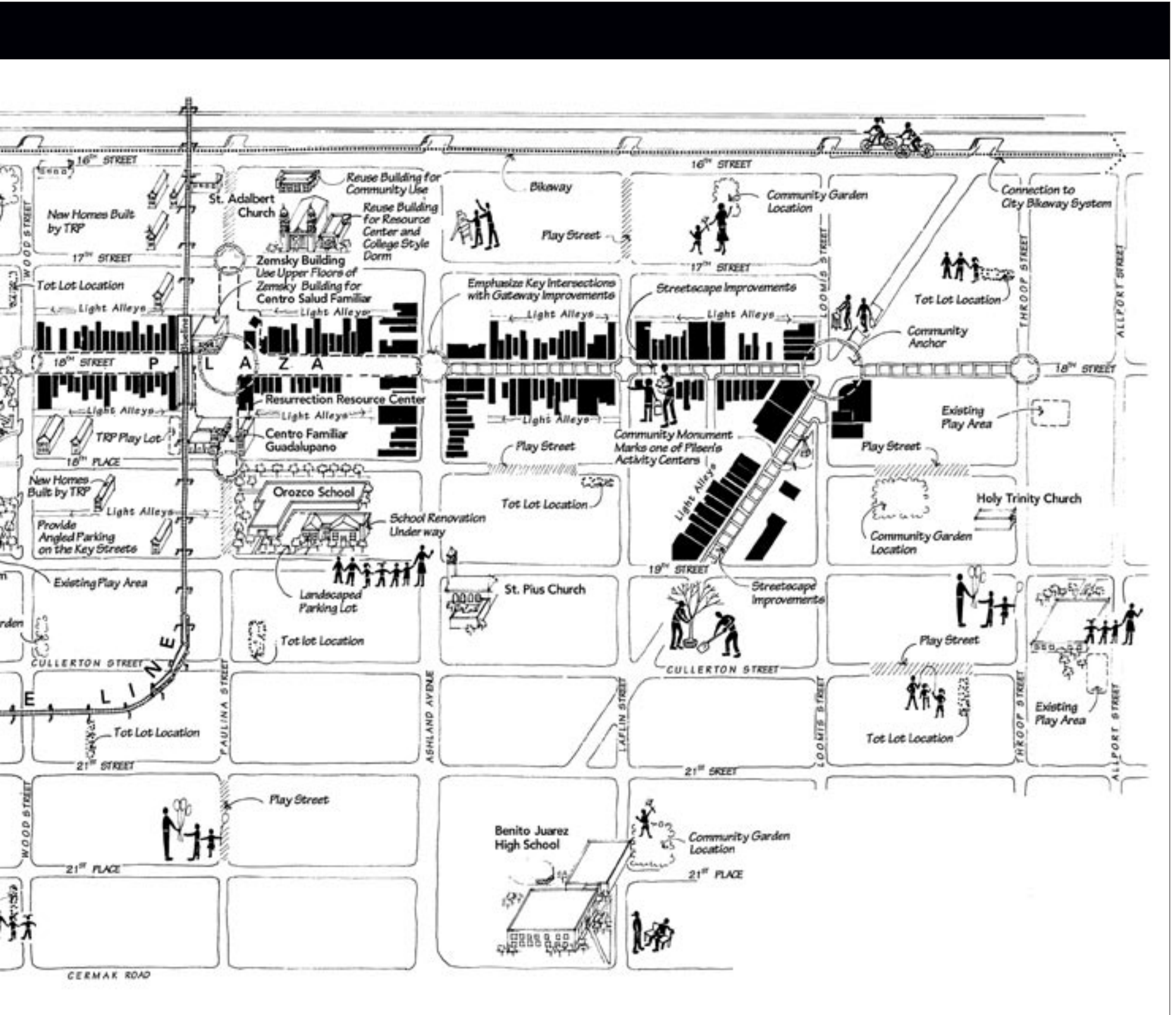
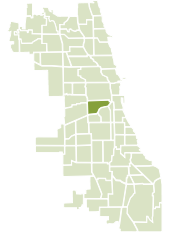
The Resurrection Project  
1818 S. Paulina St.  
Chicago, IL 60608  
312-666-1323  
[www.resurrectionproject.org](http://www.resurrectionproject.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



## Strategies

1. Build village center.
2. Strengthen Pilsen's economy.
3. Preserve and expand affordable housing.
4. Improve our health.
5. Create a safer neighborhood.
6. Create a cleaner and greener neighborhood.
7. Invest in youth through education and recreation.
8. Support strong families and strong leadership.



# SOUTH CHICAGO

## Beyond Steel

### Lead agency

Southeast Chicago Development Commission

Still recovering from the loss of its steel makers and metal benders, South Chicago saw its population (69 percent African-American, 27 percent Latino) ebb by another five percent during the '90s, to 38,596. Fewer union jobs mean incomes are relatively low, with 45 percent of households earning less than half the area median, but rates of homeownership, and of crime, closely track citywide averages.

Circumstances may change dramatically when developers convert the old USX South Works steel site, with its 537 acres of prime lakefront property, into a mix of uses including new homes, retail, industrial areas and a lakefront park. Investment of this magnitude will mean challenges, as well as opportunities, for the neighborhood's working-class families.

Founded in 1981, the Southeast Chicago Development Commission (SCDCom) was invited by LISC in 1998 to participate in the pilot New Communities Initiative, a forerunner of NCP. Its quality-of-life plan, published in 2000, identified six strategies and 27 projects aimed at making South Chicago "a diverse, vibrant, safe, activity-filled neighborhood with healthy, educated and civically engaged residents."

Many of the plan's projects have been completed, along with others that go beyond the plan's goals. South Chicago's successes served to inspire a new class of NCP neighborhoods about the power of both planning and "getting it done."

### Jobs and economic development

SCDCom established a Job Resource Center that placed 400 workers at the Ford supplier center and serves 1,000 visitors per month. A free income-tax preparation program, launched in 2005 with the Center for Economic Progress, helped 200 residents file their 1040 forms and, if eligible, claim the Earned Income Credit. *Next:* SCDCom is working with planning consultants TPAP to recruit tenants for a grocery-anchored shopping center at 92nd and Burley Ave.

### Bush neighborhood improvement

Seeking to revive the housing market in an enclave next to the shuttered USX site, SCDCom helped establish the Bush Homeowners and Tenants Assn. and, with Nationwide Insurance, a home improvement and repair grant program. Improvements at Russell Square Park included a community garden, fitness center and playground. *Next:* A live/work development is being explored with Claretian Associates to accommodate, among others, artists and craftsmen displaced from gentrifying neighborhoods.

### School and family support

A Community School Partnership with Sullivan Elementary School and Metropolitan Family Services opened the doors on evenings and

weekends. Activities include the SUCCESS technology lab and family programming from English classes to puppetry. Another project helped El Valor expand a home-daycare network. *Next:* A LISC grant is funding a feasibility study for a city-run South Chicago Senior Center.

### Communication and leadership

SCDCom launched the The Southeast Chicago Observer newspaper with neighborhood news, features, listings and advertisements. It also recruited 36 individuals for "Lead! South Chicago," a leadership training program that includes classroom seminars and a community service internship.

### Looking ahead

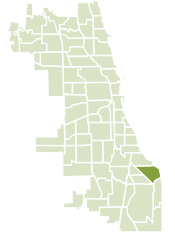
The NCP team in South Chicago will assemble a new task force to update its plan and create a fresh list of projects. Its purpose will remain the same: "To serve as a blueprint for action and investment in both people and places."

### For more information

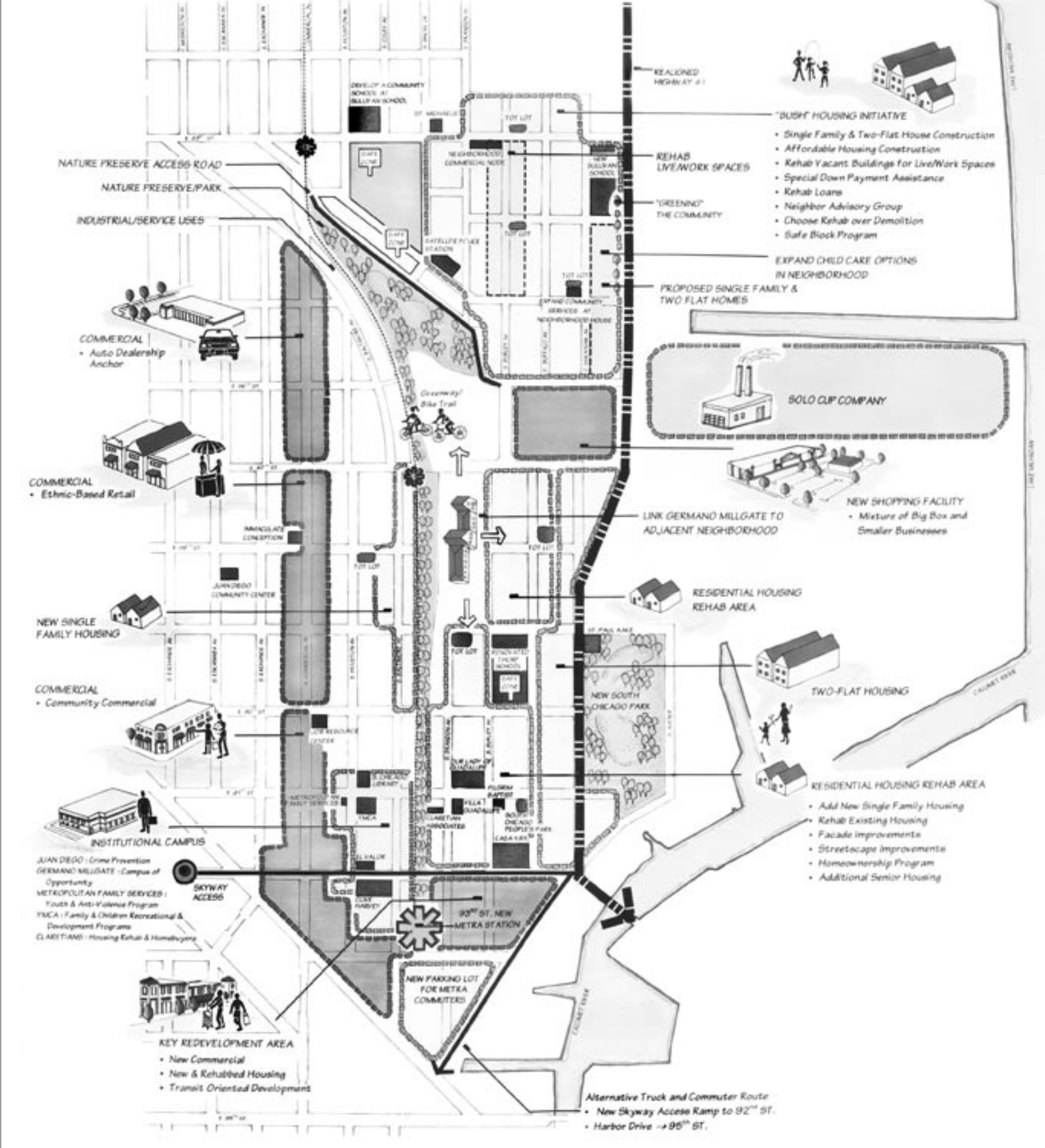
Southeast Chicago Development Commission  
9204 S. Commercial Ave. #212  
Chicago, IL 60617  
773-731-8755  
[www.southeastchicago.org](http://www.southeastchicago.org)

**Strategies**

- 1. Promote economic development and opportunity.**
- 2. Preserve, expand and improve affordable housing.**
- 3. Work to achieve safer neighborhoods.**
- 4. Beautify neighborhoods with both new and improved open space.**
- 5. Support and advance healthy activities for youth and family.**
- 6. Coordinate public and private improvement activities.**



**KEY PROJECTS**



# WASHINGTON PARK

## Rebuilding the Neighborhood

### Lead agency

St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corporation

Just across the park from the University of Chicago and Hyde Park is a neighborhood where 14,146 mostly African-American residents are eager to see better days. They may not need to wait long. Both north and south of the university, in North Kenwood and in Woodlawn, the "Hyde Park effect" is radiating new investment and redevelopment. Why not west, across the park?

The ingredients for renewal are present. Washington Park itself, designed in 1870 by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, is an under-appreciated jewel on the city's Emerald Necklace. The Dan Ryan Expressway and Chicago Skyway are nearby. So is Jackson Park and Lake Michigan. And there's plenty of land for developing: 1,411 vacant lots as of 2000.

St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corp. (SERC) has laid a foundation for renewal via rehabilitation of eight local housing developments. Founded in 1990, SERC now owns and/or manages over 500 residential units including a formerly troubled 230-unit high-rise at 63rd and Michigan, a 61-unit senior citizens facility and several walk-up apartment buildings near 61st and Michigan.

Though not considered a comprehensive quality-of-life plan, SERC, with the help of planners at Camiros Ltd., has authored an ambitious plan for physical renewal of the neighborhood, where low household incomes, underperforming schools and street crime are among the challenges. Their shared vision: "A diverse and inclusionary neighborhood of mixed-income housing, reborn through the strength of its people and institutions." SERC will revisit and expand the current plan's strategies and projects through a community process in 2005.

### New employment center

St. Edmund's is working in partnership with Mainstream Living, a citywide social service agency, and Project Match to develop a new employment center in the community with a special focus on helping ex-offenders. The hope is to have the center later add the financial services and access to public benefits found in other Centers for Working Families.

### St. Edmund's Meadows

This rehab of a vacant, 56-unit low-rise complex purchased from the Chicago Housing Authority is the first-ever sale by the CHA to a not-for-profit. A quarter of the rehabbed units will be leased back to public housing residents. Another 31 will be leased at subsidized rents to moderate-income tenants and 11 will be marketed to middle-class families. Another SERC project, St. Edmund's Commons, features 33 rental town homes and apartments. Both projects will be marketed to employees of the University of Chicago.

### Welcoming committee

SERC is setting up an old-fashioned neighborhood welcoming program that will provide new residents with a community directory, newsletter and some necessities, such as smoke detectors. Newcomers who show an interest will be recruited into a Neighborhood Leadership Program, where they will learn how to help guide the community's future.

### Looking ahead

New to NCP, but not new to planning, SERC will be engaging residents in a new planning process to revisit their neighborhood plan, with an eye on addressing social, economic and community building issues for Washington Park.

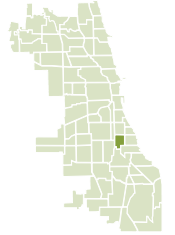
### For more information

St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corporation  
6105 S. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60637  
773-752-8893  
[www.sercchicago.org](http://www.sercchicago.org)

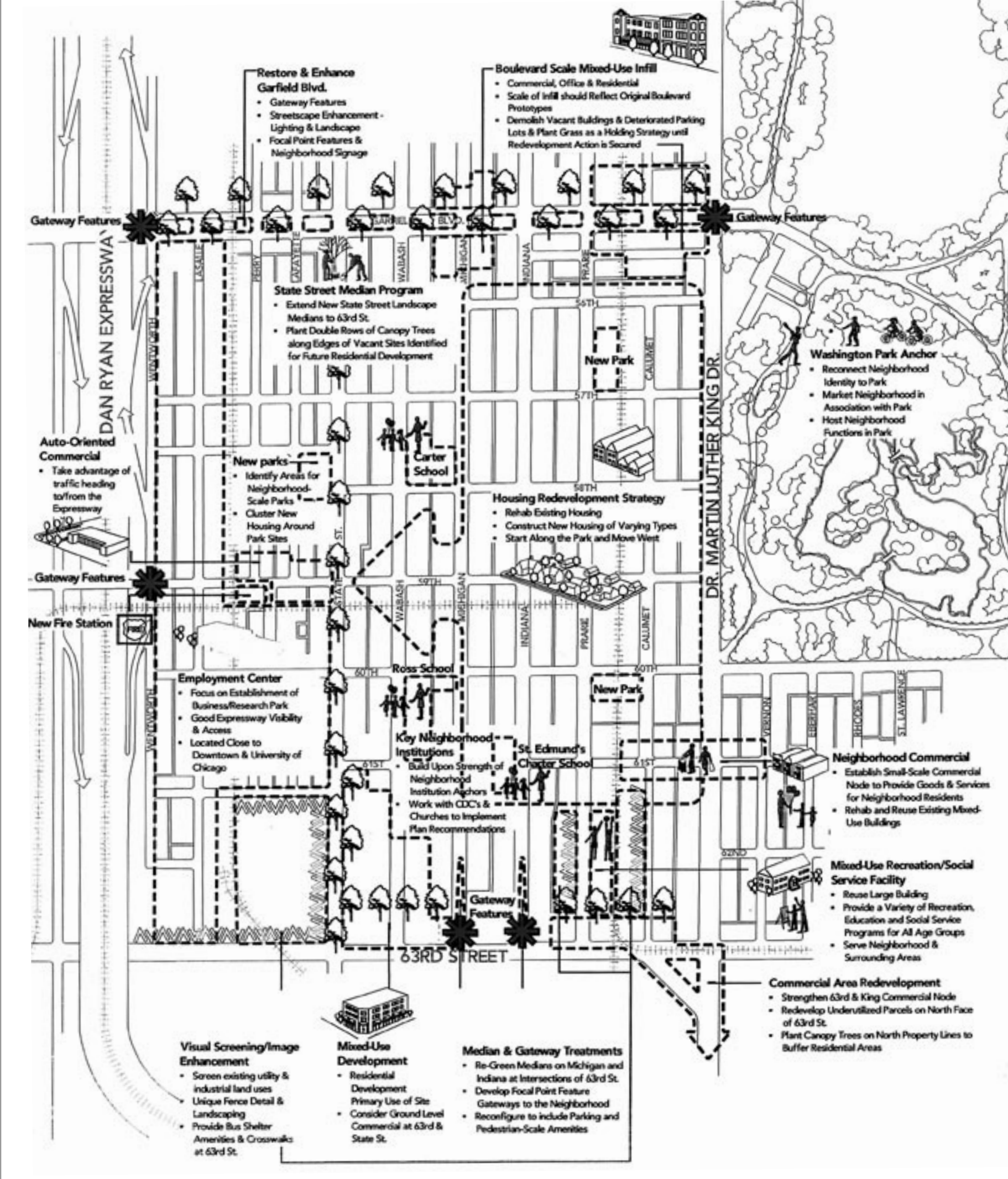


**Strategies**

1. Create a market for mixed-income development and attract private sector housing reinvestment, moving from King Drive westward through the neighborhood.
2. Encourage non-profit development entities to pioneer new development areas of the community, and to lead redevelopment of multi-family buildings.
3. Create economic development projects that enhance the overall viability and livability of the area.
4. Improve the physical appearance and function of the neighborhood.
5. Increase the sense of community within the neighborhood.
6. Market the neighborhood as a desirable place to live.



**KEY PROJECTS**



# WEST HAVEN

## More than Bricks and Mortar

### Lead agency

Near West Side Community Development Corporation

Located in the morning shadow of downtown skyscrapers, West Haven is experiencing a rapid influx of investment and redevelopment. The groundwork was laid in the 1990s through local organizing and public and private investments, including construction of the United Center stadium, new housing and a branch library.

Now the second phase of mixed-income redevelopment is underway at the Chicago Housing Authority's Henry Horner Homes, and the private housing market is taking hold on Madison, Adams and side streets all the way to Western Avenue. Still, more than a third of West Haven residents lived below the poverty level as of the 2000 Census, and this largely African-American section of the Near West Side faces serious challenges of underperforming schools and a changing social and economic environment.

The Near West Side Community Development Corp. was formed in 1988 by activists who had won concessions in return for community acceptance of the new United Center, and who were determined to monitor and support the rollout of Horner replacement housing. A major focus has been development of a healthy mixed-income community.

The organization joined the New Communities Initiative (NCI) in 2000 and completed the West Haven quality-of-life plan in 2002. Its 10 strategies and 50 projects show how community plans, well conceived and aggressively pursued, can become community realities.

### Madison Street shopping center

The first new retail development in 40 years, the small center at Western Avenue boasts a new Walgreens and a dental office. Community residents gained employment at the store in partnership with Project Match. *Next:* NWSCDC is working with the city and a developer to bring a grocery store and smaller retail shops to the intersection's southeast corner.

### Park improvements

Efforts to improve open space focused for several years on Touhy-Herbert Park, which is adjacent to two schools and the James Jordan Boys and Girls Club and Family Center. Accomplishments include new playground equipment, landscaping, a community garden and a large wall mural.

### Home Visitors Program

To assist residents of Horner Homes and other residents as they make their transition to new, mixed-income housing, NWSCDC established a program to provide case management, resident support and employment services. *Next:* Near West is launching a Center for Working Families in partnership with LISC, the Center for Economic Progress, RealBenefits and Mid America Bank, to bring financial education, counseling and other income supports to local families.

### West Haven schools network

NCP efforts brought principals together to discuss common problems, such as truancy. In addition, with the nearby University of Illinois at Chicago as a partner, the group set up a student-teacher training program.

### Support for ex-offenders

This new center built by St. Leonard's Ministries will provide housing and support services for ex-offenders and, potentially, a new job center to help residents gain employment experience.

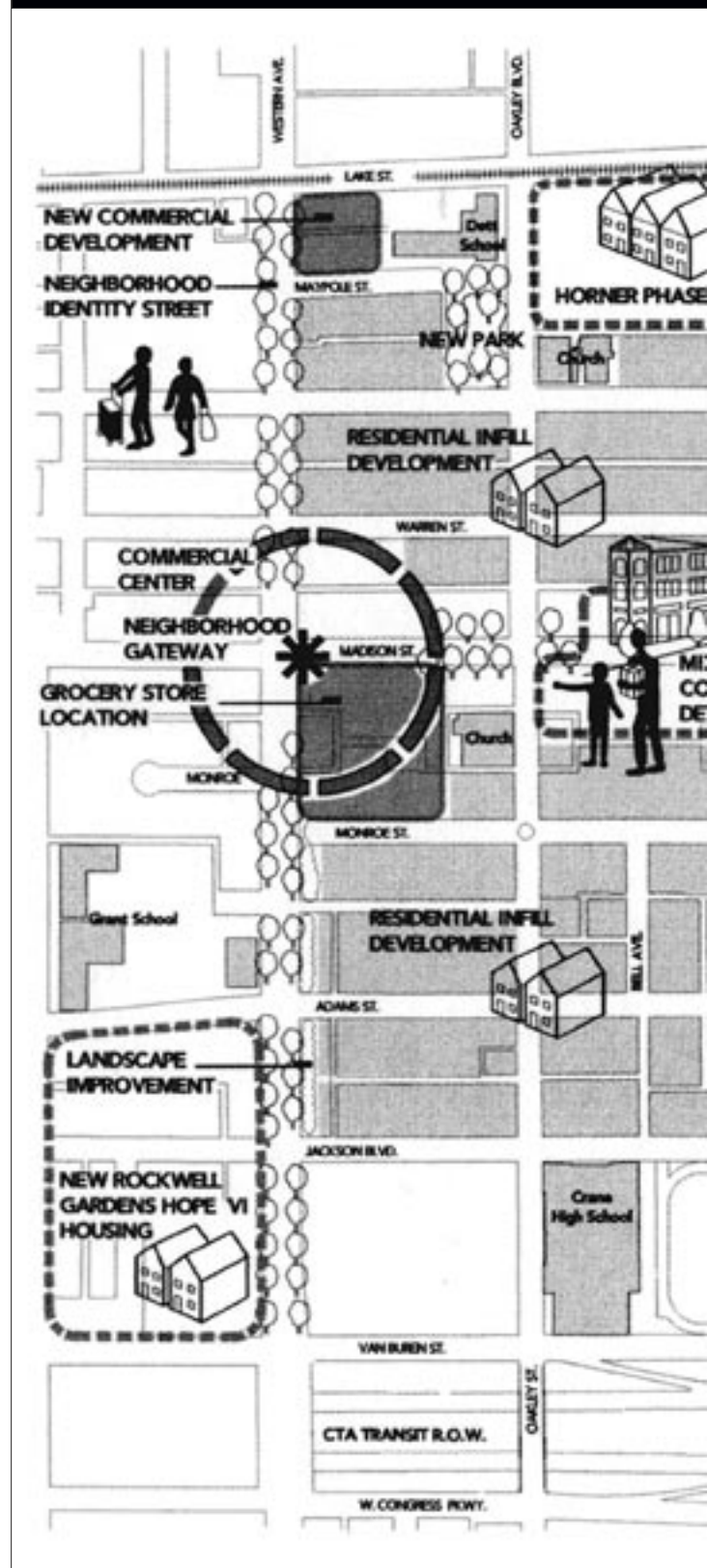
### Looking ahead

Given the dynamic changes taking place on the Near West Side, the West Haven NCP effort will begin a new planning process in 2005 to address such issues as gentrification and how to serve the needs of its diverse populations.

### For more information

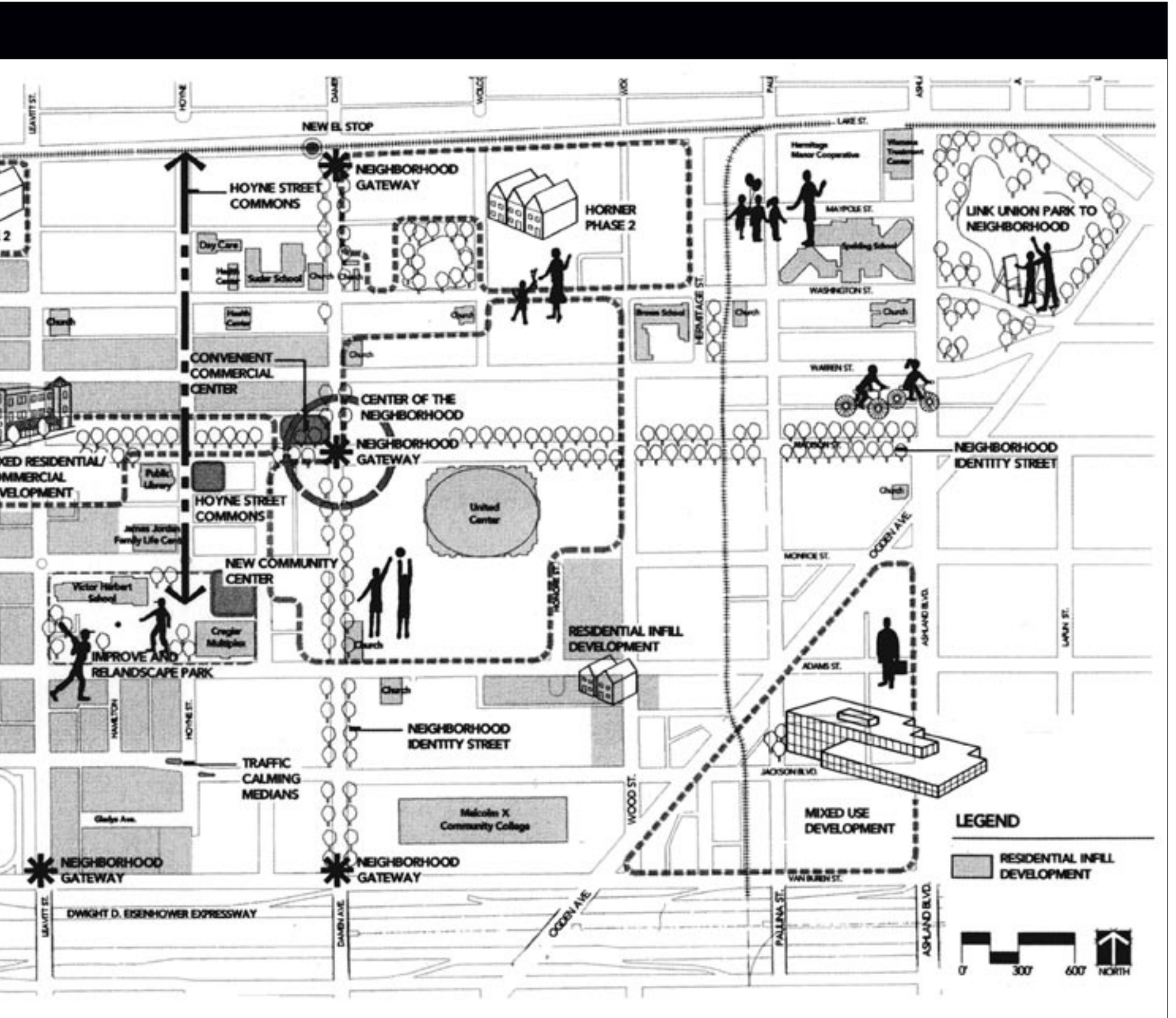
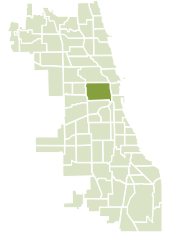
Near West Side Community Development Corporation  
216 S. Hoyne Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612  
312-738-2280  
[www.nearwestsidecdc.org](http://www.nearwestsidecdc.org)

## KEY PROJECTS



**Strategies**

1. Create a balanced, mixed-income community.
2. Develop a thriving commercial center.
3. Expand employment linkage and training opportunities.
4. Improve parks programming and extend open space.
5. Improve local schools and build connections to them.
6. Enhance community life for youth and adults.
7. Improve safety and security.
8. Enhance the community's center at Madison and Hoyne.
9. Increase neighborhood communication.
10. Improve the community's image.



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**Valerie Denney** Valerie Denney Communications

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**archi-treasures**  
**BankOne**  
**CeaseFire**  
**Center for Economic Progress**  
**Chicago Jobs Council**  
**Chicago Park District**  
**Chicago Police Department/CAPS**  
**Chicago Public Art Group**  
**Chicago Public Schools**  
**Chicago Rehab Network**  
**City of Chicago**  
Department of Children and Youth Services  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Department of General Services  
Department of Housing  
Department of Planning and Development  
Department of Public Health  
Department of Streets and Sanitation  
**Columbia College**  
**Community Catalyst/Real Benefits**  
**Community Economic Development Law Project**  
**Community Media Workshop**  
**Gateway Foundation**  
**Historic Chicago Bungalow Association**  
**Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights**  
**Illinois Facilities Fund**  
**Illinois Housing Development Authority**  
**Joyce Foundation**  
**Living Cities**  
**Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Re-Entry**  
**Mayor's Office of Workforce Development**  
**MetroEdge**  
**Metropolitan Tenants Organization**  
**Neighborhood Housing Services**  
**NeighborSpace**

**North Side Federal Credit Union**  
**One Economy**  
**Partnership for New Communities**  
**Polk Bros. Foundation**  
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**Safer Foundation**  
**Shanti Foundation**  
**Shorebank Advisory Services**  
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**University of Chicago**  
**Y.M.C.A.**

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To download full plans, go online to:  
[www.newcommunities.org](http://www.newcommunities.org)

