EAST GARFIELD PARK: Growing a Healthy Community
We thank the more than 400 residents, community leaders, business owners and service providers of East Garfield Park, as well as our West Side neighbors in Austin, Humboldt Park, Near West, North Lawndale and West Garfield Park, and supporters from across the city who shared their stories and dreams and expertise with us and with each other. Their ideas, time and effort were invaluable in developing this plan, and this community will be much richer because of their contributions.

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This list was compiled from sign-in sheets at planning meetings and may not include all participants. Our apologies for any misspellings or omissions.
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Growing Neighborhood
Seeks Role in Development

Minutes away from downtown Chicago and well-served by transit lines and highways, our historic West Side neighborhood has caught the attention of developers and investors—and it is changing fast. This plan is our blueprint for managing and being a part of that change.

Named for the 185-acre park that serves as its western border, East Garfield Park is a 130-year-old community with big landmarks like the Golden Dome fieldhouse and Garfield Park Conservatory, and smaller ones like Edna’s Restaurant on Madison, beautiful greystone homes and a mosaic-clad elevated station on the CTA Green Line.

Built to house workers in nearby factory corridors, East Garfield Park grew to a crowded peak of 70,000 people in 1950. Today, with far fewer factory jobs nearby and thousands of housing units lost over the years, there are just 20,800 people here—and 1,750 vacant lots. This represents an opportunity because it means we can build a new community that serves existing residents, honors its past and welcomes newcomers.

East Garfield Park has a unique potential to become a “green” neighborhood where gardens, landscape businesses and environmental
land uses are commonplace. It can be a center of arts and culture as well, and a diverse community where people of many incomes and backgrounds become neighbors. With its strong transportation resources and a growing population–new housing is going up on many streets already–the neighborhood can also support vibrant retail clusters to serve both neighborhood residents and those passing through.

Achieving this vision will require a new framework for discussing development issues and making decisions about what is best for the community. That is the first strategy of this plan: to create a Garfield Park Community Development Council. Much more will also be needed, from ambitious land-use planning to academic improvements at local schools, stronger opportunities for our youth and healthier individuals and families.

This plan provides a vision for what is possible and lays out eight strategies for achieving our goals. We encourage continued participation of the more than 400 people who contributed to this plan, and welcome new participants to join us as we work to shape a healthy and strong East Garfield Park.
STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

STRATEGY 1 Create a framework for locally managed community development and enhance the capacity of residents and organizations to participate in that development.

1.1 Convene a Garfield Park Community Development Council.
1.2 Develop and publish a community resource guide.
1.3 Identify or establish community development, social service and organizing entities to capture the resources necessary to implement this quality-of-life plan.

STRATEGY 2 Establish a land-use framework to balance housing and commercial development, environmental uses and property ownership opportunities for residents.

2.1 Publicize the land-use framework developed for this plan and promote the framework as a guideline for development.
2.2 Develop strategies for re-use of the estimated 1,750 private and city-owned vacant lots in East Garfield Park.
2.3 Coordinate streetscape and landscape upgrades to establish a quality neighborhood image.
2.4 Increase and promote land and home ownership opportunities for community residents.
2.5 Preserve open/green spaces in the midst of land development.
2.6 Promote environmental stewardship and capitalize on the “green” resources and character of the community.

STRATEGY 3 Create and maintain affordable, quality housing options to accommodate needs of current residents and a socio-economically diverse population.

3.1 Manage growth and gentrification while addressing the need to rebuild positive relationships among neighbors.
3.2 Establish a housing resource center to address needs of homeowners and renters.
3.3 Promote development of high-quality in-fill housing to increase the local population, which in turn will attract new retail development.
3.4 Adopt design standards for new construction and promote the use of environmentally friendly technology.
3.5 Promote rehabilitation rather than demolition of all viable housing stock to preserve the quality and character of the community.
3.6 Create and promote housing options for the most vulnerable members of the community.
3.7 Promote local homeownership for residents and people who work in the area.

STRATEGY 4 Create revitalized and walkable business districts; strengthen and support local businesses; and develop opportunities for living-wage jobs.

4.1 Re-establish Madison Street as the community’s retail “Main Street.”
4.2 Develop Lake Street as a unique mixed-use “Green Corridor.”
4.3 Coordinate and expand city services, public transportation and infrastructure investment.
4.4 Ensure that local residents can benefit economically from community development.
4.5 Increase the prominence and visibility of the Garfield Market Place at the Conservatory Campus.
4.6 Revitalize and strengthen small-business owners, employers and entrepreneurs.
4.7 Develop a knowledgeable, competent workforce.
4.8 Improve relationships between local businesses and residents.

STRATEGY 5 Increase academic performance and expectation of excellence for students; develop and promote unique, quality educational options; and enhance adult learning opportunities.

5.1 Develop a Garfield Park “Educators Network.”
5.2 Re-establish a “Parents as Teachers First” program for area schools.
5.3 Develop a wider range of educational choices among elementary and high schools.
5.4 Develop anger management/conflict resolution programs geared toward students, parents and teachers.
5.5 Create one or more “community schools” that are open afternoons, evenings and weekends.
5.6 Establish community-based mentoring programs.
5.7 Create learning opportunities for adults.
5.8 Establish a neighborhood program that rewards academic achievements of young people and adults.

STRATEGY 6 Support community artists and build on local cultural assets to enhance the image of the community.

6.1 Develop a Garfield Park cultural arts coalition that promotes and expands the neighborhood’s arts offerings.
6.2 Emphasize art, culture and greening as core attributes of the neighborhood.
6.3 Develop a cultural arts “multiplex” facility to nurture the arts.
6.4 Utilize local artists to incorporate neighborhood culture and public art into community improvement projects.

STRATEGY 7 Support and promote the holistic health and well-being of the East Garfield Park community and its residents.

7.1 Use organizing to build community leadership and accountability.
7.2 Improve or expand services and programs that create healthy individuals and families.
7.3 Build on existing community plans to maximize assets and resources, minimize duplication and strengthen relationships.
7.4 Improve relationships between community residents and local police.
7.5 Create a safer environment on neighborhood streets and around schools and senior citizen buildings.
7.6 Promote the “power of green” by educating residents and others about the broad range of benefits that “greening” can bring.

STRATEGY 8 Engage youth in the life of the community and in every level of program planning and development.

8.1 Develop a forum to support positive interactions between youth and youth workers.
8.2 Create opportunities for leadership development and civic engagement.
8.3 Expand opportunities for recreation and creative expression.
8.4 Establish apprenticeships, internships, job-readiness programs, career counseling and job placement for youth.
8.5 Address health, safety and well-being issues of community youth.
8.6 Develop an annual youth leadership convention.
Figure 1 West Side location near downtown

East Garfield is bounded by three other NCP communities — Humboldt Park, West Haven and North Lawndale — as well as West Garfield Park.
As Growth Comes to West Side, a Plan for Action

Our neighborhood is officially called East Garfield Park, but for most of us a simpler name will do: the West Side. A few miles west of the Loop’s skyscrapers, our community is a 130-year-old patchwork of very distinct places, many of which are on the verge of dramatic change – or are changing already. As community residents take note of the many changes, some are excited and others anxious, but all wonder how these developments will affect them and their quality of life. This plan is our framework for guiding and managing the development that is coming.

We value living in an historic neighborhood, many elements of which are being restored to their former prominence and beauty, such as our much-traveled boulevards with their gracious homes; landmark Garfield Park with its iconic Golden Dome fieldhouse, gardens, Conservatory and Market Place; the 85-year-old Bethany Hospital and Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica.

We prize our location, accessible to Chicago’s richness via the Congress Blue Line and Lake Street Green Line “El” trains. We treasure our tenacious businesses, like Edna’s Restaurant, Kedzie-Madison Drugs, Wallace’s Catfish Corner and Al’s Hot Dogs, which have kept faith in the comeback possibilities of our main commercial arteries.

We value our schools as well, those struggling against the odds and those beacons like Providence St. Mel and Al Raby High School that have defied the odds to revive and redefine education. And most importantly, we esteem the resiliency of our senior citizens and other community residents who have weathered the tests of time.

130 years of history
East Garfield Park was mostly unbroken prairie in 1869 when annexed to the young City of Chicago. But the extension of the Madison Street streetcar in 1874 and Lake Street elevated train in the 1890s brought rapid residential and commercial development. In 1869 the Illinois legislature established the West Park Commission and the 185-acre Central Park, the sprawling green space that forms the western border of our neighborhood. The park was renamed to honor President James A. Garfield after his assassination in 1881.

Thousands came to the neighborhood for jobs in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor to the north and the 55-acre Sears Roebuck complex on the south, which opened in 1905. First were the Irish and Germans, who swelled the head count to 56,000 by 1920, and who witnessed (and
took part in) the 1928 construction of the Golden Dome in Garfield Park. In the 1930s, Italians and Russian Jews joined the melting pot, and after World War II African-Americans from nearby West Side neighborhoods as well as crowded areas on the South Side began migrating into the community.

Many found housing in modest two-flats and cottages, which are interspersed throughout East Garfield Park and especially prominent in the area north of Lake Street. But from its inception the neighborhood also had a variety of more elaborate homes. The boulevards of Jackson, Warren and Washington were lined with brick mansions, beautiful rowhouses with arched entryways and decorative Italianate structures. Hundreds survive today and represent one of our neighborhood’s priceless historic assets.

Many of those larger homes were subdivided into smaller kitchenettes during and after the Depression to provide low-cost housing. By 1950 the overcrowded neighborhood was reaching its historic population peak of 70,000, with only 16 percent of homes owner-occupied. This was also the era of suburban growth and new highways, including the Congress (later renamed Eisenhower) Expressway, whose construction through the middle of our neighborhood in 1956 caused displacement of hundreds of families. The east-west highway created a barrier that effectively cut off the south section of the neighborhood, including the Sears Roebuck complex, which is why that area today is commonly considered part of the North Lawndale neighborhood.

Another major change was construction of the 1,126-unit Rockwell Gardens public housing development in 1961, just east of the railroad viaduct at Talman Avenue. Though conceived as a step up for working-class residents, Rockwell followed the pattern of the Chicago Housing Authority’s other high-rise developments and became, over the decades, a poorly maintained and isolated complex that housed mostly very-low-income families. Today, as part of the Chicago Housing Authority’s Plan for Transformation, Rockwell is being redeveloped completely into a 780-unit mixed-income community that can play an important role in stabilizing the southeastern section of our neighborhood.
Committed neighbors

We have been a predominantly African-American community since the 1950s, when proud newcomers from the South Side and southern states declared that “the West Side is the best side.” For many years this was a great place to live, and a friendly neighborhood, too, where concerned neighbors looked out for one another’s needs.

But the neighborhood was already wearing out when the first waves of African Americans moved in, and the situation was made worse by neglectful landlords, overcrowded schools, poverty and a shrinking base of industrial jobs. Tensions were high by 1968 when Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, triggering riots and fires that spread along Madison Street and destroyed many businesses. In the 1970s, thousands of families that had come here for a better life moved again “out west” to the Austin community, the suburbs or the city’s South Side.

Today, Madison Street and slanting Fifth Avenue cut through large areas of vacant lots and empty buildings: evidence that the population has dropped by 45,000 since 1960, to the 20,881 counted in 2000. Fortunately, a number of hearty residents remained, sunk their roots into the community and raised their families. Some of these same residents have rolled up their sleeves to make our neighborhood a better place for themselves and for the generations to follow.

For decades the Midwest Community Council (MCC) played a leadership role in the community and beyond. Under the leadership of the late Nancy Jefferson, MCC helped Harold Washington become Chicago’s first African-American mayor. Other groups including the Garfield Area Partnership, East Garfield Coalition, churches, block clubs and arts groups provided avenues for residents to play a role in defining their neighborhood as a thriving, livable place.

In the 1990s, our neighbors and others throughout the West and South Sides fought for and won a $300 million rehabilitation of the Chicago Transit Authority’s Green Line elevated structure (and later the reconstruction of a historic station at Conservatory-Central Park). In 2000, Cook County proposed building a new domestic violence courthouse on 13 acres at Congress and Homan, which would have displaced local families. The Concerned Citizens of East Garfield and local aldermanic office protested that the plan was created without local input and would not benefit community residents. In response, an alternate site was found.

The 112-year-old “el” station at Conservatory-Central Park Drive was relocated from Homan Avenue and restored in 2001.
Signs of revival

For many years these struggles took place in a community that saw little private reinvestment. Today new residential and commercial projects are in various stages of completion in many parts of the neighborhood. The challenge is the same as before: to make sure that the revitalized community remains a solid place for the people already here, while also welcoming newcomers.

Much has happened in the last few years. In 2002, Dale Chihuly’s smash-hit exhibit *Garden of Glass* at the Conservatory attracted 600,000 visitors and raised awareness throughout the region of Garfield Park and the neighborhoods around it. The Chicago Park District has made major upgrades to the Conservatory campus, restoring the glass roof of the Palm House, developing the new City Garden and refurbishing the old stables to become the Garfield Market Place, where entrepreneurs sell artisans’ crafts, garden supplies, fresh produce and unique gifts.

Investment has increased, meanwhile, in the historic rowhouses along Warren and Washington Boulevards. Long-time residents and newcomers alike are restoring or buying the beautiful brick and stone buildings, some of which date to the late 19th Century. The market for new housing is also reviving, with the first construction in decades coming to the 2500 block of Warren in 2001 and, more recently, to blocks as far west as Kedzie.

Figure 2  Parts of the neighborhood

East Garfield Park has always had distinctive areas with differing land uses—and opportunities.

- Commercial nodes
- Mixed use nodes
- Green corridor
- Mixed use areas
Public investment has also played a role, with the Chicago Public Schools renovating the former Lucy Flower High School to become a campus for two small schools including the new Al Raby High School. The first 18 units of the Rockwell Gardens redevelopment were completed on Madison in 2004 and more are under construction. And the city has released Requests for Proposals for development of a mixed-use site at Madison and Kedzie and a collection of vacant residential lots north of Lake Street. The city also provided $1.4 million in grants and tax credits for the Switching Station Artist Lofts at 15 S. Homan, which provide live/work space for low- and moderate-income artists.

A unique component of our neighborhood’s redevelopment is the focus on creating a “green” community. Mayor Richard M. Daley’s vision for Lake Street is to create a green industrial corridor where environmentally oriented businesses can take root. Landscaping businesses are filling once-vacant lots with shrubs, trees, mulch, trucks and equipment—not to mention local jobs. Another resource is the Chicago Center for Green Technology, a demonstration center at Sacramento and Franklin that offers education and exhibits about environmentally sustainable practices and resources.

**Guiding the growth**

As always, Garfield Park itself remains one of the neighborhood’s biggest potential resources. The Chicago Park District and local planning participants have generated a Garfield Park Framework Plan to bring attention to the park’s assets and to identify components like the Music Bandshell (known locally as the Gazebo) that, when restored, can become a major community arts venue.

The Conservatory is in the midst of its own plan to continue building its programming and audience. It has organized successful showings of *Giants*, the African dinosaur fossils exhibit, and *Chapungu*, the Shona stone sculptures from Zimbabwe, exhibiting some of them outside of the building along Central Park Avenue. The Garfield Market Place continues to bring people, plants and culture together, and the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance has reached out to the community through regular “Community Nites” and Music in the Market, a showcase for local talent.

But much more needs doing to bring East Garfield Park to its full potential. The strategy sections in this plan describe a neighborhood where 35 percent of residents live below the poverty level, where high housing costs are a burden to many, where health problems are among the worst in the City of Chicago, and where hundreds of vacant lots need to be put back into productive use.

Our youth need more options for positive recreational programming, most of our public schools perform below state standards and we must address a high crime rate.

This plan provides a vision for what is possible and lays out strategies for achieving our goals. We recognize that some local residents, businesses, schools and groups have not been a part of this plan, but many will see themselves and their dreams in what participants in this planning process have shared. We encourage their input as this process continues. We also recognize that new partners and organizations with needed resources will be valuable, and welcome new participants to join us as we work together to shape a healthier community.
During the winter of 1994, hundreds of exotic plants at the Garfield Park Conservatory froze and died when inside temperatures plunged to 25 degrees, the result of deferred maintenance, vandalism and neglect. Some outside the community thought it best to close the nearly century-old facility, but community and environmental leaders registered strong opposition and the Chicago Park District ultimately invested $8 million for rehabilitation.

Out of the focus groups that rallied for the Conservatory’s life, the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance (GPCA) was founded to establish the Conservatory as a neighborhood anchor. The Alliance helped attract a $1.4 million grant from the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest fund to begin community and cultural programming and a subsequent $1.4 million from the federal Empowerment Zone program to create public spaces for programs and events. The Alliance has helped the Conservatory become a premier destination for schoolchildren, gardeners and others interested in plants, horticulture and the environment.

The Alliance's strategic mission is to “grow community through the unique combination of people, plants and place.” It has established community-linked programs and events, supported the Conservatory’s collections and facilities and encouraged a “green revolution” in the community. Partners include the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener plant information clinic and 13-week training program, GreenNet; a coalition of greening-oriented nonprofit and public agencies that work together to preserve and improve green space in Chicago; and Growing Power, which offers a farm-to-city market basket that provides fresh produce grown by local farmers. These groups were also partners as the Alliance established a city-lot-sized, volunteer-staffed demonstration garden for community gardeners.

The Alliance is working with the Chicago Park District on two major initiatives:

- **Garfield Market Place** Anchored by the CityEscape garden center, Growing Power farm stand, and African Arts and Objects specialty gift shop, the Market Place includes vendors and artists selling gifts, artwork, plants, gardening accessories and food. It has attracted more than 50,000 visitors, generated $175,000 in sales and hosted music events that showcase community talent.

- **New exhibit** The Alliance will design and help to install *Sugar from the Sun*, an interactive photosynthesis exhibit supported by the National Science Foundation. The exhibit will redefine how conservatories can be used to teach, inspire appreciation for plants and impact family learning.

The Alliance is committed to supporting an organic redevelopment of the neighborhood that transcends gentrification, enables longtime residents to stay and improves the quality of life throughout the community.
In 2003, the Alliance expanded its commitment to the East Garfield Park community by becoming a lead agency in the New Communities Program. The first step in the NCP approach to comprehensive community development is to organize a planning process. Organizing had always been part of the Alliance’s work, but the intensified NCP planning process created a regular forum for discussion around specific community issues.

The process began with a kick-off meeting on April 22, 2004 and continued for almost a year. More than 400 individuals participated, mostly neighborhood residents but also representatives from about 50 organizations, businesses and government agencies. They reviewed materials, hashed out issues, challenged one another’s positions, and built broad—though not total—consensus regarding the neighborhood’s priorities.

Gwen O’Connor-Griffin, who began the process as NCP organizer and was later promoted to NCP director, set the tone early by encouraging residents to get involved in the bottom-up process. “Something is going to happen here,” O’Connor-Griffin said. “Trust the process and let’s see what we can do.”

Something did happen: The community learned more about itself. Through discussions at monthly meetings, a bus tour in August and planning workshops in October and November, the participants identified challenges facing East Garfield and formulated the eight strategies and 48 projects in this plan.

At two meetings, participants placed play money, “Garfield greenbacks,” into buckets to rank their priorities. Education, housing, youth, arts and culture, and business and workforce development were among the top issue areas. With help from the urban planning firm Camiros, Ltd., ideas were mapped out to help participants envision where improvements might be made and to give an overall sense of the neighborhood’s land-use opportunities.

One of the most difficult challenges was determining how projects and programs would be prioritized and implemented—and who would provide leadership. Participants realized that they need some kind of structure to create a strong common voice and a place to air concerns, work for consensus and create solutions. From this realization came the first strategy of this plan: to create a standing planning group of diverse, committed stakeholders to address problems and ideas.

By the end of the planning process, many participants had left behind the skepticism voiced by one gentleman at the first meeting: that our efforts would not have a noticeable impact. Instead, we felt hopeful that the winds of change would bring not only new possibilities for our neighborhood, but opportunities for local people to shape and manage the change that is coming.
An Attractive, Family-Friendly and Vibrant Community

“Where there is no vision, the people perish . . . “

As a diverse community of stakeholders, we envision that East Garfield Park will become an attractive, vibrant, family-friendly community whose residents are empowered and fully engaged in its sustainability.

The neighborhood will provide for our physical needs and also enrich our lives through its cultural heritage and inherent beauty and charm.

Our community will be characterized by attractive historic parks and cultural assets; quality homes with well-tended greenways and gardens; safe streets; a thriving and pedestrian-friendly business and retail district; excellent schools and educational opportunities for children and adults; healthy and creative recreation for teens; dependable city services; and
convenient, accessible public transportation. Our neighborhood will be home to vibrant families, skilled professionals, hard-working citizens, active churches and many block clubs.

While we welcome community development, diversity and change, we also believe in respecting and protecting the rights of long-standing residents and businesses. They have weathered difficult times and should be full participants in the community’s economic and social revitalization.
Reconvene Garfield Park Community Development Council

Support arts and culture

Convene Garfield Park Community Development Council

Reuse vacant land

Maintain historic character

Preserve open space

Redevelop Rockwell Gardens

Create vibrant retail districts

Develop infill housing

Develop youth leadership, mentoring opportunities

Expand educational options

Retain businesses and create jobs

Maintain historic character

Support arts and culture
Eight Approaches to Building Community Strengths

To achieve its vision, the East Garfield Park community will pursue 48 projects grouped under eight strategies. These will encompass physical development issues like affordable housing, retail development and open space, as well as human capital needs including youth, education, workforce development, health and safety, and arts and culture. Tying these together will be a purposeful effort to create a stronger, more vibrant social and organizational infrastructure to undertake current and future projects and priorities.

Our strategies are:

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, environmental uses 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; and develop opportunities for living-wage jobs.

5. Increase academic performance and expectation of excellence for students; develop and promote unique, quality educational options; and 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.
STRATEGY 1

Create a framework for locally managed community development and enhance the capacity of residents and organizations to participate in that development.

Successful implementation of this quality-of-life plan depends on identifying or developing community leaders and organizations to implement improvement programs. The East Garfield Park task force drew representatives from more than 50 agencies, organizations and block groups, but further outreach and organization-building is crucial to address the work ahead. Whether to bring about drug-free playgrounds, dropout-free schools or development of housing for a mix of incomes, residents and organizations will be encouraged to become involved and take a stand for what they want to see happen in their community.

Arising out of the planning process will be an ongoing body, the Garfield Park Community Development Council, which will work broadly across issue areas to organize and channel input. This group will be comprised of both existing and new community residents, business owners, parents, educators, church members, artists, service providers, neighborhood agencies, activists and others. It will include committees or networks that focus on specific areas, as shown on page 19, and will have overall responsibility for guiding and monitoring implementation of this plan.

1.1 Convene a Garfield Park Community Development Council to “connect the dots” among community resources and to create new capacity to manage neighborhood change and guide development. The council will:

- Provide a forum to address issues of community economic development and sustainability.
- Build leadership and accountability by collaborating with community-based organizations and institutions, civic groups and faith-based initiatives.
- Create committees and work groups for major issue areas.
- Convene regular public meetings and educational forums to improve communication, coordination and collaboration.

1.2 Develop and publish a community resource guide.
Compile information about a wide range of local resources and organizations to improve access to community services, businesses, youth programs and other resources. Include maps of the neighborhood to show police beats, ward boundaries and aldermanic representation.

1.3 Identify or establish community development, social service and organizing entities to capture the resources necessary to implement the strategies of this quality-of-life plan.
Garfield Park Community Development Council

- **Land Use and Open Space Committee**
  - Convened by Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance.
  - Holds meetings to develop community agenda.
  - Facilitates creation of new teams, committees.
  - Maintains communication among stakeholders.
  - Hosts annual neighborhood congress.

- **Business and Workforce Development Committee**
  - Assists schools facing transformation or other challenges like high dropout rates.
  - Promotes and honors excellence in education for neighborhood youth.
  - Provides forum for area principals, teachers, parents and LSCs to share and develop information, ideas and resources.

- **Housing and Design Review Committee**
  - Ensures that new development contains sufficient open space.
  - Ensures that neighborhood parks are adequately developed and maintained.
  - Ensures that land ownership opportunities are preserved for local residents.
  - Ensures that emerging development and zoning changes respond to the land use framework.

- **Youth Empowerment Network**
  - Promotes leadership development, college and career advancement, and civic responsibility.
  - Expands opportunities for recreation and creative expression.
  - Promotes coordination and development of youth programs and activities.

- **Education Network**
  - Helps define and promote the neighborhood's identity.
  - Establishes festival and gallery venues, and creates performance space for local artists.
  - Establishes a West Side community arts coalition.

- **Cultural Arts Coalition**
  - Helps define and promote the neighborhood's identity.
  - Establishes festival and gallery venues, and creates performance space for local artists.
  - Establishes a West Side community arts coalition.

- **Community Health Coalition**
  - Promotes community engagement, social responsibility and collaboration.
  - Tackles public health challenges from asthma and obesity to violence prevention.
  - Addresses physical infrastructure and environmental issues.

- **Youth Empowerment Network**
  - Promotes leadership development, college and career advancement, and civic responsibility.
  - Expands opportunities for recreation and creative expression.
  - Promotes coordination and development of youth programs and activities.
Establish a land-use framework to balance housing and commercial development, environmental uses and property ownership opportunities for residents.

Task force members believe a comprehensive approach to greening, housing development, open space and environmental land use will positively influence everything from economic stability through property ownership to improved school test scores and increased revenues for businesses.

The comprehensive approach is especially important because many portions of our neighborhood today contain more open spaces than places. The damage done by the 1968 riots and subsequent housing and commercial abandonment have left many blocks more than 60 percent vacant. With our location close to downtown and the emerging strengths of the community beginning to attract development interests, now is the time to develop a land-use framework that balances new housing and commercial development with green space and property ownership opportunities for residents.

The framework can help the development community understand and build upon our neighborhood’s strengths and opportunities. It can foster mixed commercial and residential development around the CTA Green Line stops at California and Kedzie, encourage commercial reinvestment along Madison Street, with an emphasis on the nodes at Kedzie and California-Fifth Avenue, and encourage continued revitalization of Western Avenue north of Madison as a commercial/mixed use center.

Also important to the framework are the need to develop smaller parks to serve growing residential areas that are not now within walking distance of park facilities, and to create varied housing types that serve people of all income levels. Figure 4 provides an outline of the land-use vision, which can be further refined through the Garfield Park Community Development Council.

2.1 Publicize the land-use framework developed for this plan and promote the framework as a guideline for development.

- Create planning teams to discuss long-term development scenarios for each of the areas identified in Figure 4.
- Continue regular communication about development issues among elected officials, city planners, local organizations, property owners and other stakeholders.
2.2 Develop strategies for re-use of the estimated 1,750 private and city-owned vacant lots in East Garfield Park. Create recommendations for short- and long-term reuse of vacant land, including purchase by owners of adjacent lots, housing development and parks or open space.

2.3 Coordinate streetscape and landscape upgrades to establish a quality neighborhood image. Go beyond traditional streetscape designs to incorporate and showcase East Garfield Park’s emphasis on environmental design.

2.4 Increase and promote land and home ownership opportunities for community residents. Expand the assets and ownership of local residents through programs such as the city’s Adjacent Neighbors Land Acquisition Program, which gives homeowners the opportunity to purchase city-owned vacant lots next to their home, and the New Homes for Chicago program, which offers subsidies on the purchase price of single-family homes and two-flats.

Figure 4 Land-use strategies

This land-use “blueprint” for East Garfield Park will offer guidance for present and future growth in the community.

1. Green Corridor: Encourage mix of employment and commercial uses
2. Encourage transit-oriented mixed-uses near “el” stations
3. Encourage mixed employment and residential uses
4. Encourage multi-family housing in scale with Garfield Park
5. Madison Street: Encourage mixed uses with emphasis on commercial
6. Encourage townhouse and two-flat production-scale housing
7. Encourage mixed-density production-scale housing
8. Encourage multi-family housing development
9. Campus park for Marshall High School
10. Expanded Bethany Hospital
2.5 **Preserve open/green spaces in the midst of land development.**

Develop an open space plan in conjunction with residents, Openlands Project, Chicago Center for Green Technology, Chicago Department of Planning and Development and other community groups and city agencies. This plan should emphasize smaller neighborhood-scale parks, community gardens and other public green spaces, especially in underserved areas (*Figure 5*). An example is the proposed school campus park and community greenhouse planned for Beidler School in partnership with Growing Power.

2.6 **Promote environmental stewardship and capitalize on the “green” resources and character of the community.**

Support the development of the proposed Community Food Center at the Garfield Park Conservatory, which will promote healthy food choices, and the Chicago Home Composting Program, developed with the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, which teaches residents how to turn food scraps and garden waste into rich gardening material.

*Figure 5 Parks in the neighborhood*

Garfield Park is a wonderful recreational resource, but more smaller, neighborhood-scale parks would reduce the risk of overuse at Garfield Park and shorten walking distances for park users.
STRATEGY 3

Create and maintain affordable, quality housing options to accommodate needs of current residents and a socio-economically diverse population.

Gentrification has begun to make its presence felt in East Garfield Park, particularly on the eastern fringe and along Warren and Washington Boulevards. While an influx of new homeowners can bring needed resources and help attract retail businesses, many fear that longtime residents will be unable to remain or reap the benefits of a revitalized community—unless the process is managed in a way that balances everyone’s interests.

A 2003 profile of East Garfield Park by MetroEdge, an urban-market research firm, found single-family attached homes were selling for $168,600 – nearly doubling since 1998 and well beyond the range of affordability for the community’s median household income of $24,216. The Chicago Tribune’s web site showed that half of the 220 residential transactions in East Garfield Park in 2004 went for $200,000 or more, and 37 for $300,000 or more. Sale prices ranged from a four-bedroom on Warren Boulevard for $310,000 to a two-bedroom condominium on Lexington Avenue for $49,900.

Few longtime residents are homeowners; nearly three quarters of all housing units are rentals. And homeowners and renters alike find housing costs are high. Census figures show that more than one-third of homeowners and 45 percent of renters pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing, generally considered the standard of affordability, while 20 percent of owners and 25 percent of renters pay more than half of their household income for housing. Among the populations most affected are seniors, who represent 10 percent of the community, and the more than 500 grandparents in East Garfield Park who are living with and responsible for their grandchildren, according to 2000 Census data.

The community wants to work with developers who will build quality in-fill housing units at a range of prices for the community’s diverse residents. Residents would like to identify or develop a housing resource center where they can receive professional, non-biased advice and counsel about the maintenance, purchase or sale of homes and other real estate. Design standards also are needed to ensure that viable buildings are preserved and new construction maintains the visual integrity and character of this historic neighborhood.

3.1 Manage growth and gentrification while addressing the need to rebuild positive relationships among neighbors.

- Balance housing production to ensure that long-standing neighbors who wish to remain are not priced out of the community.
- Work with city officials to persuade developers to include affordable units in their condominium developments and new rental projects.
- Create opportunities to introduce newcomers to the culture and history of the community, such as through a “new neighbors” program.
- Join advocacy initiatives to address property tax issues.

3.1 Establish a housing resource center to address needs of homeowners and renters.

Offer a full range of services such as homebuyer and credit counseling, purchase-assistance programs, repair and rehab loan programs and crisis intervention to address foreclosures or tax issues.
3.3 Promote development of high-quality in-fill housing to increase the local population, which in turn will attract new retail development.

Work with city officials and developers to put together production-scale developments -- which involve 20 or more units — in areas of the community with large areas of vacant land, but without displacement of area residents or demolition of existing homes. Blocks most appropriate for production-scale infill are those with more than two-thirds of existing land currently vacant (the blocks shown in red in Figure 6). Also appropriate for in-fill are the blocks shown in orange, which are between one-third and two-thirds vacant.

3.4 Adopt design standards for new construction and promote the use of environmentally friendly technology.

Create a local entity that develops design standards and reviews plans by developers to assure that new housing is appropriate for its location in terms of scale, historical details and architectural elements. Because of the neighborhood’s interest in environmental issues, the entity might also recommend environmental design and building practices such as efficient use of energy, materials and water. The entity could be modeled after Conservation Community Councils or Tax Increment Financing Advisory Councils, which serve similar oversight roles in other communities. Figure 7 shows how new housing can enhance the character of an historic block.
3.5 Promote rehabilitation rather than demolition of all viable housing stock to preserve the quality and character of the community.
To help preserve and enhance the hundreds of historic structures on local streets, identify significant buildings, districts and sites that should be preserved and maintained.

3.6 Create and promote housing options for the most vulnerable members of the community.
Ensure permanent, affordable, quality housing for moderate-and low-income residents, seniors, grandparents caring for children and those with special needs.

3.7 Promote local homeownership for residents and people who work in the area.
Educate prospective buyers about city programs and services, such as the New Homes for Chicago program that provides purchase subsidies for moderate-income buyers, and inform businesses and institutions about employer-assisted housing programs, which provide loans or incentives to employees to buy housing near their place of employment.

Figure 7  Boulevards infill concept
Our community’s boulevards, like Washington Boulevard shown here, are our signature residential areas. We must emphasize our desire for appropriate building types and design on these streets.
STRATEGY 4

Create revitalized and walkable business districts; strengthen and support local businesses; and develop opportunities for living-wage jobs.

Longtime East Garfield Park residents can remember “the way it was,” when there were fewer automobiles, streetcars carried passengers up and down the mile-long shopping strips, and thriving businesses and jobs were “everywhere.”

That is far from today’s reality. Many of the factories that once provided jobs are gone or offer fewer jobs. Lake Street, once lined with industrial and commercial enterprises, now has large parcels of vacant land instead. Madison Street used to bustle with customers on their way to the Community department store, A&P grocery, car dealership, drug store, library, movie houses and skating rink. Today it hosts only a few isolated, mostly family-owned businesses interspersed among boarded-up storefronts, vacant lots and housing developments.

Changes in shopping patterns and automobile ownership mean that Madison will never return to its former pattern of uninterrupted storefronts with little or no parking. But task force members propose to revitalize the business economy, particularly along the Madison Street shopping district, Lake Street corridor, at major intersections and near CTA train and bus routes.

The City of Chicago has recently promoted the Lake Street corridor, with the CTA’s elevated train tracks overhead, as a location for landscaping companies. Three companies have established supply yards or other facilities along the street, and other related service businesses could be recruited.

The community already has the spending power to support more retail businesses, according to a 2003 market profile by MetroEdge. East Garfield Park residents spent $182 million per year on household expenses, but nearly half of that total “leaked” out to stores in other neighborhoods. Bringing in new businesses and stabilizing or expanding existing ones would make local money “turn over” several times within the community before leaving it, thus strengthening the local economy. Business growth could also help the unemployment picture, which was 22 percent in 2000, more than double the city average of 10 percent.

Task force members would also like to see that entrepreneurs from the neighborhood are given the opportunity—and technical assistance—to build more homegrown businesses. Improved access to job training is important as well, along with stronger links to technical support programs such as the Small Business Development Center at the Industrial Council of Near West Chicago (ICNC) and Chicago Community Ventures.

4.1 Re-establish Madison Street as the community’s retail “Main Street.”
Support growth and expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new retail stores to serve the growing population and revive pedestrian environments.

- Develop clusters of neighborhood-scale commercial, service and entertainment uses along Madison, particularly at the major intersections of California, Sacramento, Kedzie and Homan. Figures 8 and 9 show development scenarios for Fifth Avenue at Madison Street and Jackson Boulevard.

- Upgrade the streetscape (including signage, lighting, gateways and building façades) to support local businesses and improve the visual character of the street.

- Renovate commercial and mixed-use structures. Where possible, establish a unified visual theme and preserve the historic character of buildings.
Figure 8  Madison Street concept
This illustration shows how Madison Street, at its intersection with Fifth Avenue and California Avenue, can become an inviting location for work, living and entertainment.

4.2  Develop Lake Street as a unique mixed-use “Green Corridor.”
Because of the Green Line transit service to Oak Park and downtown, Lake Street has potential for transit-oriented mixed-use development alongside industrial and landscaping firms.

- Further develop the corridor’s emphasis on landscaping, urban agriculture and environmental businesses. Coordinate development projects and business-attraction efforts with the City of Chicago.
- Promote transit-oriented development near the Green Line stops at Kedzie and California. Uses closest to the stations might include neighborhood-oriented retail such as a dry cleaner, coffee shop, restaurant or other personal services, with retail on the first floor and apartments or condominiums above. Townhouses, two-flats and detached single-family homes with backyards could be constructed in a quarter-mile radius of each station. New construction near the California station should be integrated and compatible with that area’s late-19th Century structures.

4.3  Coordinate and expand city services, public transportation and infrastructure investment.
Work with elected officials to improve transportation access in the community, improve city services and invest in infrastructure such as sidewalks, streetscapes, bridges, sewers and lighting.
Figure 9  Fifth Avenue corridor concept

This illustration of Fifth Avenue between Kedzie and Central Park demonstrates how larger-scale development opportunities might be coordinated.

- Existing residential
- New infill residential
- Existing public/institutional
- New public/institutional
- New multi-family
- Grass
- Park/open space
- Sidewalk
- Street/parking/alley

Open space site that could share hospital and community use
Numerous residential infill opportunities
New campus park for Marshall High School
4.4 Ensure that local residents can benefit economically from community development.
Work with city officials and departments to create “community benefit agreements” with developers of new projects to:
- Develop jobs or contracts in construction, landscaping and maintenance.
- Create revolving loan funds to support local businesses.
- Implement community initiatives such as youth development or community greening projects.
- Utilize community youth to help landscape and maintain community businesses and institutions, in partnership with archi-treasures and Openlands Project.

4.5 Increase the prominence and visibility of the Garfield Market Place at the Conservatory Campus.
Improve marketing, community-focused programming and promotional opportunities to attract a wider and steadier clientele and to support the start-up businesses within the complex.

4.6 Revitalize and strengthen small-business owners, employers and entrepreneurs.
Develop or create linkages with micro-enterprise and other business-assistance programs that provide entrepreneurial training, technical and financial assistance, support services and low-cost space for new businesses.
- Resolve territorial/boundary issues with local chambers of commerce, and establish an East Garfield Park business network.

4.7 Develop a knowledgeable, competent workforce.
Identify and develop job-specific training and skills-building opportunities for youth and adults, such as programs developed by the Greater West Town Community Development Project and the Chicago Youth and Adult Training Center. Connect residents to employment training, living-wage job placement opportunities and “green” job opportunities and training, with a particular emphasis on matching employment needs in local industrial corridors.

4.8 Improve relationships between local businesses and residents.
In response to comments by residents and task force members that some businesses offer poor quality products or services, this project will establish a peer-to-peer business accountability program to educate business owners, safeguard residents and maintain quality control.
Improving educational options was among the task force’s highest priorities. A November 2004 Chicago Sun-Times article showed that all eight of East Garfield Park’s elementary schools ranked below the 50th percentile on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for both reading and math, while the two still-existing public high schools were both below the 25th percentile on the TAP reading test. Dropout rates average 25 per cent for the area’s public high schools.

However, those who organized the Al Raby School for Community and Environment, a new “small school” that opened in September 2004 in the former Lucy Flower High School building, are confident they will be part of the answer for school improvements. The school provides a smaller environment and a curriculum that emphasizes research and computer skills. It plans to accept 400 students at full capacity, mostly from the neighborhood.

Nearby, Providence St. Mel offers a kindergarten through 12th grade program with a strong track record and passion for excellence. One hundred percent of its graduates were accepted at four-year colleges and universities and more than half admitted to top-tier or Ivy League schools. The school offers such programs as SOAL (summer of a lifetime), where students have the opportunity to attend classes at Choate and Exeter, two of the nation’s premier prep schools.

This level of excellence and academic achievement can and should be communicated and duplicated in the community’s other high schools, elementary schools and other centers of learning. With the support of students, parents, Local School Councils, teachers and administrators, the community can work toward the common goal of developing well-educated, well-rounded, responsible and productive citizens.

5.1 Develop a Garfield Park “Educators Network.”
Bring together principals, teachers, parents and Local School Council members to collaboratively seek out resources, share information and ideas, and establish an identity of excellence for neighborhood schools.

5.2 Re-establish a “Parents as Teachers First” program for area schools.
Create some version of this program, formerly used in some Chicago schools, to nurture positive relations among parents, students and teachers; encourage greater parent and family investment in academic performance; and assist in setting and achieving academic goals for students.

East Garfield Park should offer many different learning opportunities for children and adults, such as hands-on science.
5.3 Develop a wider range of educational choices among elementary and high schools.
Shape unique programs to create a variety of curricula and approaches to meet different student needs, including college prep programs, a “green” or environmental education track, an arts focus and vocational training. An example is the planned construction of a new Westinghouse High School that will house two distinct schools, one for college prep, the other for vocational education.

5.4 Develop anger management/conflict resolution programs geared toward students, parents and teachers. Educators and parents say a major factor in low academic performance is the reduced instructional time caused by students who disrupt class and demand attention from teachers and administrators. Also of concern are inappropriate interactions and conflicts between parents, teachers and students. A program that addresses these issues should be made available at all area schools.

5.5 Create one or more “community schools” that are open afternoons, evenings and weekends.
Develop programs to turn local schools into academic and social centers for students and community members, with programming that includes recreation, technology instruction and continuing education.

5.6 Establish community-based mentoring programs.
Develop programs with adult mentors to increase the percentage of area youth who successfully complete high school and go on to higher education or successful careers.

5.7 Create learning opportunities for adults.
Develop or link to workshops, seminars and classes that support career and economic advancement, including educational and financial literacy, life skills enhancement and continuing education. Seek partnerships with community schools, institutions of higher learning and community-based organizations.

5.8 Establish a neighborhood program that rewards academic achievements of young people and adults.
Recruit local businesses and media outlets to publicize accomplishments and serve as sponsors.
The task force believes the arts should allow community members to express their creativity, reflect the culture of the community and draw visitors into the neighborhood. Identifying East Garfield Park as an “artistic community” can enhance the neighborhood’s value in the eyes of residents, community stakeholders, tourists and investors.

The Conservatory, which annually attracts about 130,000 visitors and drew nearly 600,000 people for the Chihuly exhibit, will continue to be the largest cultural draw in the community. With indoor and outdoor gardens full of flowers, plants and small- to mid-sized trees native to different climates, the Conservatory provides the experience of moving from tropical rainforest to desert to backyard garden, and extends that experience to community gardens. The Elizabeth Morse Genius Children’s Garden allows moms and tots, parents, teachers and students to literally get their hands dirty, and it draws plenty of school groups for field trips.

But community members would like to broaden the neighborhood’s base of cultural assets, and develop and promote opportunities for local artists to create, perform and display their work. Local artists are already contributing to the community’s economic and cultural base. One group of studios and lofts is north of Lake Street at Albany and Carroll avenues; another is at the Switching Station Artist Lofts at Madison Street and Homan Avenue, which includes 24 loft-style apartments that double as working studios for low- to middle-income artists. The live-work spaces were created out of what was the Roentgen middle school and, before that, a telephone switching station.

6.1 **Develop a Garfield Park cultural arts coalition that promotes and expands the neighborhood’s arts offerings.**

Organize local artists and arts organizations to coordinate and support existing resources while attracting new ones. The coalition could:

- Establish a series of community festivals and events to showcase local talent, and provide opportunities for adult and youth artists to perform and display their work. Highlight artists and performers of the Switching Station Artist Lofts, the Westside Cultural Art Council, area schools and others.
- Create linkages with established programs to benefit neighborhood audiences, working with groups such as Goodman Theater, Lyric Opera, eta Creative Arts Foundation, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Old Town School of Folk Music and Congo Square.
6.2 Emphasize art, culture and greening as core attributes of the neighborhood.

Spur economic development and build community pride and cohesion by supporting a wide range of activities and institutions.

- Promote Garfield Park, with its historic gardens, buildings and structures, as an amenity to be enjoyed by youth, adults and families of the community as well as tourists and visitors from other neighborhoods.

- Expand awareness of the environmental education programs at the Center for Green Technology, covering energy efficiency, solar power, water conservation and green-building practices.

- Provide exciting and inclusive programs and activities such as the L.E.A.F. CultureFest and those provided by the Chicago Park District and Martin Luther King, Jr., Boys and Girls Club, so that the community’s parks and other assets contribute to the economic viability of the community.

- Develop a calendar of West Side community arts events and promote artist awareness month in October.

6.3 Develop a cultural arts “multiplex” facility to nurture the arts.

This facility would provide performance and gallery space for residents and visiting organizations and become a community cultural center. In the shorter term and to build support and an audience for such a facility, establish active gallery and performance venues by partnering with neighborhood schools, businesses and other exhibition spaces, with an emphasis on showcasing local adult and youth talent.

6.4 Utilize local artists to incorporate neighborhood culture and public art into community improvement projects.

As new development projects are proposed, promote inclusion of public art. Examples of locally produced public art are the tile mosaics that decorate the Conservatory-Central Park Green Line Station. They were designed and installed by local teenagers working with artist Carolyn Elaine and the Chicago Public Art Group.
STRATEGY 7

Support and promote the holistic health and well-being of the East Garfield Park community and its residents.

East Garfield Park faces an array of health needs, with citywide rankings on a range of issues that no community would want. Among the most pressing are health problems related to children, including low birth weight (sixth highest of Chicago's 77 community areas), teen births (fourth) and elevated lead levels (fifth), according to 2002 figures from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH).

The neighborhood also has the second-highest overall mortality rate and high rates for homicide, cancer, diabetes and sexually transmitted diseases. A major factor in many of these health issues is lack of ability to pay for health care. Thirty-four percent of households earned less than $15,000 per year in 2000 and another 26 percent earned between $15,000 and $35,000. More than one-third of residents lived below the poverty level in 2000, though the rate was down sharply from 47.5 percent in 1990.

Another challenge is the need to reintegrate large numbers of formerly incarcerated people back into the community. East Garfield Park is among the six community areas in Chicago with the highest concentrations of returning ex-prisoners (Figure 10). Re-entry is difficult because of a lack of housing options (ex-offenders are prohibited from returning to their family households if those families reside in public housing); limited access to jobs (few employers are willing to provide opportunities for employment); and scarcity of support services such as health care, addiction services, anger management and counseling.

Similar challenges are faced by war veterans, the elderly, single parents and parent-less teens. All are at risk for homelessness, violence, crime and further difficulties if supportive services are not available or made known to those who need them.

The health of a community also can be measured by the safety of its streets, the vitality of its economy, the condition of its infrastructure and the ability of its neighbors to move out of isolation and connect with others to work together for the common good. A healthy community recognizes that each stakeholder has a role to play, and each is affected by and must take responsibility for the conditions and sustainability of the community.

Several previous efforts have recognized the importance of planning to address the overall health of the neighborhood, including the park district's Garfield Park Framework Plan; the Vision 20/20 plan for a youth recreational center developed by Garfield Area Partnership; the 2010 housing development plan developed by the East Garfield Park Coalition, and the 2005 and 2010 supportive housing network plan being developed by Walls Memorial Church and Veterans Strike Force-1.

The projects below will seek out existing community assets and resources—and develop new ones when needed—to build on these plans and enhance the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social and economic health of the community.

7.1 Use organizing to build community leadership and accountability.

Provide opportunities to community residents and stakeholders to connect with each other and engage in the planning, development and implementation of local initiatives.

- Strengthen block clubs, churches and civic organizations, and increase accountability of residents, businesses, organizations, churches, city agencies and elected officials to ensure community health and sustainability.

- Promote the Community Health Report Card being initiated by the National Block Club University with support from the New Westside Federation, which surveys and measures quality-of-life issues within the community.
7.2 Improve or expand services and programs that create healthy individuals and families.

- Develop job placement and wrap-around services for area veterans in conjunction with the Veteran’s Strike Force, Walls Memorial Church and the Veterans Administration.

- Improve knowledge of health issues and access to quality health care. Launch an educational campaign to increase awareness of public health including mortality rates, asthma, HIV and domestic violence. Help residents connect with existing services at Bethany Hospital, Stroger Hospital and other local health providers, and promote government insurance programs such as KidCare to provide coverage for those in need.

- Support the Greenlight Project, sponsored by the Church of the Harvest, Bethany Hospital, CAPS and the Safer Foundation, which helps previously incarcerated individuals establish job readiness and provides wrap-around services to those residents.

- Promote the Farm-City Market Basket program at the Garfield Market Place (which allows residents to purchase produce direct from farmers) to support healthy nutrition and to combat obesity.

- Support Bethany Brethren Community Center’s proposed inter-generational Gardening Together project, which engages senior citizens with children and youth.

7.3 Build on existing community plans to maximize assets and resources, minimize duplication and strengthen relationships.

Encourage collaboration of community-based organizations to improve communication about and coordination of existing community plans.

7.4 Improve relationships between community residents and local police.

Develop new collaborations and use the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meeting structure to address and resolve issues around safety, security, violence prevention and police accountability. Work with faith-based institutions, block clubs, Chicago Police and programs such as the Community Policing Leadership Development Institute.

7.5 Create a safer environment on neighborhood streets and around schools and senior citizen buildings.

Work with block clubs, churches and community organizations to develop Safe Passage parent safety patrols around area schools to prevent violence and gang activity. Create Circle of Care programs with community organizations and faith-based institutions to productively engage and monitor the well-being of senior citizens.

7.6 Promote the “power of green” by educating residents and others about the broad range of benefits that “greening” can bring.

- Highlight physical and mental health benefits of working with plants such as art therapy, horticulture therapy and physical exercise.

- Collect and disseminate information on improved health and safety, better academic performance and stronger commercial and residential development that greening projects can support.

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**Figure 10 Returning from prison**

The East Garfield Park area has one of the city’s highest concentrations of ex-offenders returning to the neighborhood.

**SOURCE:** City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development
STRATEGY 8

Engage youth in the life of the community and in every level of program planning and development.

East Garfield Park cannot thrive without a well-educated, well-rounded and civicly engaged corps of youth. More than one third of the community’s 20,000 residents were children under age 18, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The existing recreational, artistic and cultural outlets are hard-pressed to meet the demand for quality programming to actively engage the community’s youth.

Task force members felt the success of this quality-of-life plan would be jeopardized as long as large numbers of young people remain engaged in destructive and non-productive activities like drug sales or violence and crime. They believed that if the community’s youth could be actively engaged in positive, community-minded activities, their chances for success would be much greater.

These issues can best be addressed by involving the youth themselves as stakeholders in the community and in the programs that serve youth needs.

8.1 Develop a forum to support positive interactions between youth and youth workers.
Establish a network of young people and youth leaders from schools, churches, parks, community groups and organizations, with a mission to provide healthy development opportunities for youth.

8.2 Create opportunities for leadership development and civic engagement.
Develop civic engagement models such as the Teen Town initiative, proposed by the Garfield Area Partnership, the GIS (geographic information system) mapping project at Al Raby High School and voter registration campaigns among young people.
8.3 **Expand opportunities for recreation and creative expression.**
Create positive alternatives for youth by establishing new programming or creating links to existing programs in music, dance, sports, literary and cultural arts, greening and community service projects, including the Garfield Panthers hockey team, CWMC music program, Sansei martial arts and Flower House Kids Club.

8.4 **Establish apprenticeships, internships, job-readiness programs, career counseling and job placement for youth.**
- Empower high school students and out-of-school youth and young adults by connecting them to life-skills development opportunities.
- Connect community youth to the business community to help design, landscape and maintain community businesses and institutions through archi-treasure’s Institute for Community and Youth (ICY), which utilizes apprenticeships, internships and entrepreneurship to engage youth in community building at the grassroots level.

8.5 **Address health, safety and well-being issues of community youth.**
- Develop or identify violence prevention, anger management and conflict resolution programs that can be offered at youth recreational facilities and area churches.
- Develop an HIV-AIDS awareness and prevention project for young adults with Taproots, Inc. and faith-based organizations.
- Promote the Teen Town Youth Leadership Task Force, which combats the pervasive influence of gang culture and engages youth in community service efforts like “Action Fridays.”

8.6 **Develop an annual youth leadership convention.**
Create ongoing opportunities that allow young people to network with other community youth and adult workers from recreational facilities, community-based organizations, churches and block clubs, including the Bethany Brethren Community Center, Youth In Power, Martin Luther King, Jr., Boys and Girls Club and Marillac House.

Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance trains teens as docents for special events and exhibits.
Organizations in the neighborhood and committees formed during the NCP planning process have agreed to serve as convener or lead organization for the projects in this plan. Other organizations have been approached to be partners on implementation. Conveners and partners include (but are not limited to):

Advocates for Urban Agriculture AUA
Aldermanic Offices, Wards 2, 24 27, 28 archi-treasures
Beidler School Local School Council Beidler LSC
Bethany Brethren Community Center BBCC
Bethany Hospital BH
Bethel New Life, Inc. BNL
Bobbie Wright Mental Health Center BWMHC
Boy Scouts of America BSA
Breakthrough Ministries BTM
Campaign for Better Transit CBT
CeaseFire
Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy CAPS
Chicago Center for Green Technology CCGT
Chicago Community Ventures CCV
Chicago Department of Planning and Development DPD
Chicago Department of Environment DE
Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation DSS
Chicago Food Policy Group CFGP
Chicago Park District Chicago Parks
Chicago Police Department Chicago Police
Chicago Public Art Group CPAG
Chicago Public Schools CPS
Chicago Transit Authority CTA
Chicago West Community Music Center CWC
Concerned Citizens of East Garfield Park CCEGP
Flower Transitional Advisory Council FTAC
Garfield Area Partnership GAP
Garfield Park Advisory Council GPA
Garfield Park Community Development Council GPCDC
Land Use and Open Space Committee LUOSC
Business and Workforce Development Network BWDN
Housing and Design Review Committee HDRC
Education Network EN
Cultural Arts Coalition CAC
Community Health Coalition CHC
Youth Empowerment Network YEN
Garfield Park Conservatory GPC
Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance GPA
Greater Garfield Chamber of Commerce GGCC
GreenNet GN
Growing Power GP
Homeownership Preservation Foundation HPF
Industrial Council of Northwestern Chicago ICNC
Institute for Community Youth I CY
Inter-Faith Organizing Project IOP
Landmark M.B. Church LMBC
Martin Luther King Boys and Girls Club MLKBGC
Madison-Western Chamber of Commerce MWCC
Mayor’s Office of Special Events MOSE
Midwest Community Council MCC
National Block Club University NBCU
Neighborhood Capital Budget Group NCBC
New Westside Federation NWF
North Albany Artists Compound NAAC
North Lawndale Greening Committee NLGC
Openlands Project OP
Pathfinders PF
Peoples Church of the Harvest PCH
Police Explorers PPE
Presentation Church PC
Providence St. Mel School PSMS
Al Raby School
Safer Foundation SF
Switching Station Artist Lofts SSAL
Taproots, Inc. TRI
Teen Town TT
University of Illinois Extension U. of I. Extension
Veterans Strike Force-1 VSF-1
Walls Memorial Church WMC
West Cluster Collaborative WCC
Westside Cultural Arts Council WCAC
### WORK PROGRAM

#### Schedule and Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR LOCALLY MANAGED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF RESIDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THAT DEVELOPMENT.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Convene a Garfield Park Community Development Council.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GPCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop and publish a community resource guide.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GPCA, BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, GPCDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Identify or establish community development, social service and organizing entities to capture the resources necessary to implement this quality-of-life plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GPCA, BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, GPCDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. ESTABLISH A LAND-USE FRAMEWORK TO BALANCE HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL USES AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Publicize the land-use framework developed for this plan and promote the framework as a guideline for development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>LUOSC, DPD, DE, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Develop strategies for re-use of the estimated 1,750 private and city-owned vacant lots in East Garfield Park.</td>
<td></td>
<td>LUOSC, DPD, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Coordinate streetscape and landscape upgrades to establish a quality neighborhood image.</td>
<td></td>
<td>LUOSC, DPD, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Increase and promote land and home ownership opportunities for community residents.</td>
<td></td>
<td>LUOSC, HDRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Preserve open/green spaces in the midst of land development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>OP, LUOSC, GP, NLC, DPD, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28, GP, Beidler LSC, CPS, GPCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Promote environmental stewardship and capitalize on the “green” resources and character of the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>CCGT, LUOSC, City of Chicago, GPCA, DSS, GP, CFPG, AUA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. CREATE AND MAINTAIN AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE NEEDS OF CURRENT RESIDENTS AND A SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DIVERSE POPULATION.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Manage growth and gentrification while addressing the need to rebuild positive relationships among neighbors.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Establish a housing resource center to address needs of homeowners and renters.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC, BWDN, HPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Promote development of high-quality in-fill housing to increase the local population, which in turn will attract new retail development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Adopt design standards for new construction and promote the use of environmentally friendly technology.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Promote rehabilitation rather than demolition of all viable housing stock to preserve the quality and character of the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Create and promote housing options for the most vulnerable members of the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC, GAP, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Promote local homeownership for residents and people who work in the area.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HDRC, MWCC, GGCC, EGC</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. CREATE REVITALIZED AND WALKABLE BUSINESS DISTRICTS; STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES; AND DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIVING-WAGE JOBS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Re-establish Madison Street as the community’s retail “Main Street.”</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Develop Lake Street as a unique mixed-use “Green Corridor.”</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, City of Chicago, ICNC, Wards 2, 24, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Coordinate and expand city services, public transportation and infrastructure investment.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CHC, GGCC, MWCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Ensure that local residents can benefit economically from community development.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>GPCDC, BWDN, NCBG, GGCC, MWCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Increase the prominence and visibility of the Garfield Market Place at the Conservatory Campus.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>GPCA, Chicago Parks, BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, City of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Revitalize and strengthen small-business owners, employers and entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BWDN, GGCC, MWCC, ICNC, CCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Develop a knowledgeable, competent workforce.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BWDN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Improve relationships between local businesses and residents.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BWDN, GGCC, MWCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. INCREASE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATION OF EXCELLENCE FOR STUDENTS; DEVELOP AND PROMOTE UNIQUE, QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS; AND ENHANCE ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Develop a Garfield Park “Educators Network.”</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>GPCDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Re-establish a “Parents as Teachers First” program for area schools.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Develop a wider range of educational choices among elementary and high schools.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, CPS, GPCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Develop anger management/conflict resolution programs geared toward students, parents and teachers.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, CHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Create one or more “community schools” that are open afternoons, evenings and weekends.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, CPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Establish community-based mentoring programs.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, CHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Create learning opportunities for adults.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, BWDN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Establish a neighborhood program that rewards academic achievements of young people and adults.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>EN, YEN, GPCDC, BWDN, local media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SUPPORT COMMUNITY ARTISTS AND BUILD ON LOCAL CULTURAL ASSETS TO ENHANCE THE IMAGE OF THE COMMUNITY.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Develop a Garfield Park community arts coalition that promotes and expand the neighborhood’s cultural offerings.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CAC, SSAL, WCAC, NAAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Emphasize art, culture and greening as core attributes of the neighborhood.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CAC, GPCDC, MOSE, Chicago Parks, GPCA, CCCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Develop a cultural arts “multiplex” facility to nurture the arts.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Utilize local artists to incorporate neighborhood culture and public art into community improvement projects.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CAC, CPAG, CTA, BWDN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STRATEGY

#### 7. SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE EAST GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY AND ITS RESIDENTS.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>7.1 Use organizing to build community leadership and accountability.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>GPCDC, CHC, IOP, CBT, WMA, NCBG, GPCDC, BWDN, NBCU, NWF, MCC, PCH, CAPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Improve or expand services and programs that create healthy individuals and families.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>BBH, CHC, CeaseFire, BWMH, VSF-1, WMC, VA, PCH, BH, CAPS, PC, SF, GP, GPCA, GGC, GPC, MWCC, BBCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Build on existing community plans to maximize assets and resources, minimize duplication and strengthen relationships.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>GPCDC, GAP, EGC, CCEGP, Chicago Parks, WMC</td>
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<td>7.4 Improve relationships between community residents and local police.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CAPS, CHC, NBCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Create a safer environment on neighborhood streets and around schools and senior citizen buildings.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>CHC, CAPS</td>
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<td>7.6 Promote the “power of green” by educating residents and others about the broad range of benefits that “greening” can bring.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>GPCDC, GBPC, Chicago Parks, OP, GN, U. of I. Extension, GP, archi-treasures, CCGT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 8. PRODUCTIVELY ENGAGE YOUTH IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY, AND IN EVERY LEVEL OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

<table>
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<th>STRATEGY</th>
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<td>8.1 Develop a forum to support positive interactions between youth and youth workers.</td>
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<td>YEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Create opportunities for leadership development and civic engagement.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>YEN, BTM, PE, PF, GPCDC, TT, NBCU, NCBG, Raby School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Expand opportunities for recreation and creative expression.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>YEN, GPC, CVCMD, SSAL, BBCC, BSA, PE, MLKBC, BTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Establish apprenticeships, internships, job-readiness programs, career counseling and job placement for youth.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>YEN, BWDN, archi-treasures, OP, ICY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Address health, safety and well-being issues of community youth.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>YEN, CHC, TRI, CeaseFire, BWMH, TT, faith-based organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Develop an annual youth leadership convention.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>YEN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Communities Program

NCP 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, broader 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.

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Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, cover (middle right), pages 29, 30, 33, 37
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www.lisc-chicago.org
www.newcommunities.org