NORTH LAWNDALE: Faith Rewarded
Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC) gratefully acknowledges the more than 350 people who contributed to the discussions and meetings about this quality-of-life plan. Their ideas, time and effort were invaluable in developing this plan. All participants—and others who have not yet been involved—are invited to help implement the projects conceived during this process.

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This plan is dedicated to Sam Flowers

Chief Executive Officer of the HICA (Harrison, Independence, Central Park and Arthington) organization—1966-2004.
Honorary life-long resident of North Lawndale by way of Utica, Mississippi. Life-long fighter of the good fight.
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North Lawndale
Is Rising Again

More than 30 years of hard work are showing results in North Lawndale in the form of new housing, public investment and renewed community life. Our neighborhood is on the upswing after decades of industrial job loss, disinvestment and population decline, and we are planning for its future.

Less than five miles from downtown Chicago and blessed with beautiful greystone homes, wide boulevards and strong community organizations, North Lawndale has seen a resurgence of development across the community, including a shopping center on Roosevelt Road and major improvements on Ogden Avenue. More than 1,200 units of for-sale or rental housing are planned or under construction.

Human development is occurring, as well. Youth agencies supplement students’ formal education with academic, athletic, artistic, entrepreneurial, technological and spiritual growth opportunities. Healthcare and social service agencies continue to expand their offerings. Adult employment training opportunities are increasing. And local residents and organizations continue to form coalitions to multiply their impact.
Even with all of these successes, we face serious challenges. Our relatively low population density and high poverty and unemployment rates make it difficult to attract new retail businesses. Underperforming schools and negative perceptions of community safety remain obstacles to attracting a variety of family types to North Lawndale. And a recent analysis found that in 2003 alone, more than 500 former prison inmates returned to the 60623 ZIP Code, which includes our community.

Though these issues could undermine our neighborhood’s revival, the trend in neighboring communities suggests that new investment will continue. Perhaps our greatest challenge is ensuring that our priorities—those of people who weathered the decades of decline and invested their time and resources—will guide the development process. To this end, we have created this quality-of-life plan, with 10 key strategies.

“If you say your community is bad, what are you doing to improve it?”

Ethereal Watts, 11th grade, Manley Career Academy
STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

**STRATEGY 1** Strengthen Ogden Avenue as Lawndale’s main commercial street, while seeking a mix of uses along Pulaski Road and W. 16th Street.

1.1 Reconfigure and beautify Ogden Avenue to support retail and pedestrian activity.
1.2 Develop commercial and recreational uses at the “Five Corners” intersection of Ogden/Cermak/Pulaski.
1.3 Seek residential infill projects along 16th Street and Pulaski Road between improved commercial nodes.
1.4 Concentrate new housing and commercial development around the Pulaski and Central Park CTA train stations.
1.5 Honor the organizing efforts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with new affordable apartments.

**STRATEGY 2** Develop a comprehensive housing program that serves homeowners and renters.

2.1 Support current homeowners and maintain North Lawndale’s historic housing stock through the North Lawndale Greystone Initiative.
2.2 Increase quality affordable homeownership opportunities.
2.3 Increase quality affordable rental opportunities.
2.4 Fill in vacant lots with a mix of new housing types.

**STRATEGY 3** Provide amenities and improve community image with new neighborhood infrastructure.

3.1 Create gateway features and community icons along Ogden Avenue.
3.2 Construct a National Football League football field and track.
3.3 Improve street paving and sidewalks and add bicycle lanes.
3.4 Construct a playground and athletic facilities on currently vacant land.
3.5 Facilitate development of a family entertainment center at Ogden, Cermak and Springfield.

**STRATEGY 4** Support existing businesses, nurture new commercial development and promote job creation.

4.1 Create the North Lawndale Community Resource Guide.
4.2 Develop a North Lawndale business-oriented web site.
4.3 Organize a North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce.
4.4 Promote job and business creation through the Armory Redevelopment Project.

**STRATEGY 5** Increase employment options for North Lawndale residents.

5.1 Improve job skills and earning power of local residents through skills training, employment networking and entrepreneurship training.
5.2 Develop Chicago Police Department Career Exposure workshops.
STRATEGY 6 Advocate for and support comprehensive solutions for men and women re-entering the community and job market from the prison system.

6.1 Support and expand the range of employment programs that provide training and placement services to ex-offenders.
6.2 Provide housing options that include supportive services for men, women and families.
6.3 Develop partnerships, referral networks and new programs to link ex-offenders with transitional services such as substance abuse counseling, mental health services and legal assistance.
6.4 Expand the Reentry Services and Transitional Guide.

STRATEGY 7 Create a safer neighborhood.

7.1 Implement multiple crime reduction strategies to create a more secure community.
7.2 Identify and support more community corrections programs, adult transition centers and resources for people on parole and probation.
7.3 Support and expand block clubs.

STRATEGY 8 Support student achievement and opportunity, strong families and individual health.

8.1 Establish active, influential partnerships with local schools.
8.2 Improve academic performance and college attainment through supplemental programming.
8.3 Create a North Lawndale technology consortium.
8.4 Promote the revitalization of Douglass Library.
8.5 Expand access to mental health and substance abuse counseling.
8.6 Provide new opportunities for fitness and nutrition classes.
8.7 Reduce exposure to lead contamination.

STRATEGY 9 Generate opportunities for teens and young adults to learn positive life skills in a mentoring environment.

9.1 Support the Community Pride Campaign of the Young Adult Coalition.
9.2 Support the Fire House Community Arts Center.
9.3 Create the North Lawndale Public Art Corridor.
9.4 Support teen entrepreneurs through a Youth Investment Club.
9.5 Bring job opportunities to Lawndale youth.

STRATEGY 10 Initiate a major greening and urban agriculture campaign.

10.1 Undertake a community tree-planting effort, especially along main roadways.
10.2 Support the Neighborhood Youth Garden Corps and larger scale greening efforts.
10.3 Establish intensive urban agricultural projects to grow produce for restaurants, organizations and farmers’ markets.
10.4 Work with homeowners and block clubs to promote landscaping and yard maintenance.
North Lawndale, just south of the Eisenhower Expressway, is close to downtown Chicago and other major employment centers.

Figure 1  Context map
Decades of Work
Produce Results

Passing through North Lawndale, one is surrounded by visual clues to our community's history. Beautiful greystone residences, wide boulevards, long industrial blocks and the ever-visible Chicago skyline speak to the neighborhood's history as a thriving manufacturing and residential center less than five miles from downtown.

Clues to another chapter in our history are also apparent: run-down infrastructure, vacant lots and boarded buildings. Dig deeper and a familiar American story unfolds. Between 1950 and 1960, as the African-American population grew, nearly 80,000 white residents moved out. “White flight” was followed by decades of governmental, corporate and individual disinvestment, resulting in high unemployment, few retail conveniences, decaying housing stock, underperforming schools and inadequate law enforcement.

Recognizing the systemic injustices that fueled this decline, Martin Luther King, Jr., established his Chicago operations in 1966 in a North Lawndale apartment, hoping to call attention to slum conditions. The riots that followed his assassination in 1968 destroyed many storefronts on 16th Street, and in coming years legendary employers, including Sears Roebuck and Western Electric, cut tens of thousands of jobs. North Lawndale's population fell from a high of 125,000 in 1960 to 42,000 in 2000.

Figure 2 (below) Proud history
Community development efforts have been shaping North Lawndale for more than 30 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Pyramidwest Development Corp. jump-starts community development, building affordable housing, creating black-owned Community Bank of Lawndale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Steans Family Foundation founded; commits to focus on North Lawndale in 1995.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>North Lawndale selected for New Communities Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Westside Association for Community Action (WACA) unites neighbors and organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Lawndale Plaza shopping center opens at Roosevelt and Kedzie.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reversing the downward spiral

The neighborhood’s cycle of growth and decline began more than 100 years ago, fueled by Chicago’s enormous manufacturing sector. North Lawndale was built to house thousands of families attracted to Chicago’s West Side factories. By 1919, Mount Sinai Hospital had opened a 60-bed facility at Ogden and California to serve a growing Eastern European population. As the population grew to 112,000 in 1930, Roosevelt Road became Chicago’s most popular Jewish destination. During the 1940s, African-Americans migrating north for jobs made North Lawndale a port of entry. The black population grew to 13 percent, and 16th Street became a well-known African-American retail center.

Growth continued into the 1960s, but as the manufacturing economy restructured, North Lawndale entered a period of sustained decline. With as many as 40 percent of its households living below the poverty level, our neighborhood was often characterized as representative of the nation’s urban dysfunction.

But that was only part of our story. The renewal of North Lawndale that is visible on our streets today had its start in the 1970s and ’80s as community-based efforts began to rebuild our physical and social infrastructure.

Residents organized block clubs to address safety concerns and beautify streets. Pyramidwest Development Corporation constructed affordable housing and founded a black-owned bank. Lawndale Community Church and its ministries—Lawndale Christian Health Center and Lawndale Christian Development Corporation—began rebuilding the western end of Ogden Avenue. Social service providers, including Marcy Newberry Association, Westside Association for Community Action (WACA), Better Boys Foundation and North Lawndale Family Focus, helped families meet their physical and social needs, while numerous churches served their spiritual needs.

These efforts paved the way for change during the 1990s. Streets and curbs were rebuilt through the city’s Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP). Investment in housing changed many blocks. The former Sears Roebuck headquarters was transformed into Homan Square, a mixed-income 300-unit residential development.

Before: Derelict apartment buildings were common on street corners in Lawndale.

After: Local control has brought renovation to the solid housing stock in our planning area.
Figure 3 Current projects

Recent development and planned projects show an increase in public and private investment in North Lawndale.

**On-going residential infill project areas**
1. Home Start
2. New Homes for Chicago

**Recent development**
3. Strip shopping center
4. YMCA Community Center
5. Village West homes
6. AIDS Care Campus
7. Chicago Fire Station Engine Co. 38
8. Canaan Homes (LCDC)
9. Gas service station
10. Tenth District Chicago Police Headquarters
11. Townhomes
12. Pulaski and Central Park CTA stations
13. Health clinic expansion (LCHC)

**Proposed projects**
14. Center for Business Innovation and Training
15. Better Boys Foundation building
16. Lawndale Gateway Initiative (Steans Foundation)
Lawndale Plaza was developed, with a Dominick’s grocery and multi-screen cinema. The CTA spent $482 million to rehabilitate the Blue Line, while construction began on a new fire station and police headquarters.

Human development is occurring, as well. Youth agencies supplement students’ formal education with academic, artistic, technological and spiritual growth opportunities. Adult employment training opportunities are increasing. Churches are supporting and initiating real estate development, and local residents and organizations are forming coalitions to multiply their impact.

More proof that our community has turned the corner is provided by the many new housing developments planned throughout the neighborhood. More than 800 for-sale homes are planned or under construction, along with an additional 400 affordable rental units (see Projects 2.2 and 2.3).

**Stating our priorities**

Even with all of these successes, we face serious challenges. In recent years the local economy has improved, the population stabilized and the homeownership rate reached an all-time high of 26 percent. But our relatively low population density and high poverty and unemployment rates (40 percent and 27 percent, respectively) make it difficult to attract new retail businesses. Underperforming schools and negative perceptions of community safety remain obstacles to attracting working- and middle-class families. A recent analysis by the city of Chicago found that in 2003 alone, more than 500 former prison inmates returned to the 60623 ZIP Code, which includes North and South Lawndale.

While these are serious issues that could undermine the neighborhood’s revival, the trend in neighboring communities suggests that new investment will continue

“Life is to be lived, not controlled, and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat.”

- Ralph Ellison, writer, 1929-1968
coming to Lawndale. Perhaps our greatest challenge is ensuring that our priorities—those of folks who weathered the decades of decline and invested time and resources when others considered it unprofitable—will guide the development process.

We cannot allow the story of decline to be followed by displacement of longtime residents. We welcome the contributions of those newly interested in North Lawndale, but assert our right to determine our future. To this end, in partnership with the New Communities Program (NCP), we have created this quality-of-life plan. While the plan will evolve over time, we view it as the document that articulates goals for our community that have been formulated by a consensus of our community.

**A tight geographic focus**

The impact of revitalization is most visible when a small area is targeted by a variety of strategies. We have therefore focused our plan on the primary service area of the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC), lead agency for the New Communities Program (NCP). Bounded by Pulaski, Central Park, Cermak and 16th Street, the area is home to many of the residents that participated in our planning process, and encompasses key locations including Ogden Avenue, Pulaski Road, 16th Street and many schools, churches, organizations and new developments. The target area also borders Little Village, the predominantly Latino neighborhood to the south, offering opportunities to join resources across ethnic lines. Several projects in this plan extend beyond the target area; with a range of strong projects working toward the renewal of North Lawndale, we chose to err on the side of inclusion.
Lawndale Christian
Development Corporation

Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC), a ministry of Lawndale Community Church, was selected as North Lawndale’s lead agency for its track record in community revitalization, community organizing and collaboration. Its sister agency, Lawndale Christian Health Center, serves 90,000 unduplicated patients annually, nearly half of whom do not have health insurance.

LCDC was established in 1987 to “bring holistic revitalization to the lives and environments of Lawndale residents through economic empowerment, housing improvements, educational enrichments and community advocacy.” LCDC accomplishes this mission through three primary activities:

Affordable real estate development
Current work for LCDC includes $16.4 million worth of rental and single-family rehabilitation and new construction. LCDC has restored or constructed 58 single-family homes and condominiums for low- and moderate-income purchasers and has developed or manages 129 rental apartments for low- and very-low-income residents.

In partnership with the Carole Robertson Center for Learning and Illinois Facilities Fund, LCDC developed the $3.4 million Jubilee Family Resource Center, creating 50 jobs and providing subsidized care for 217 children. It spearheaded $9 million in infrastructure improvements through the city’s Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP). In total, LCDC has worked to bring more than $48.8 million in investment to North Lawndale.

Youth education
More than 350 youth participate each year in four programs:

- Lawndale College Opportunity Program, an after-school college prep program for students in North Lawndale and Little Village; 85 percent of LCOP graduates have matriculated to four-year colleges.
- Lawndale Legacies Community Technology Center, a 39-station computer center that last year helped 300 students compete academically and learn new technology skills.
- Youth Internship Program, which provides summer job training and work experiences to high school students.
- Young Legacies, an after-school enrichment program serving 50 elementary school-age children.
Community organizing

LCDC has organized residents through block clubs, churches, school organizations and other institutions to obtain major infrastructure and safety improvements. Recent organizing has focused on improving public transportation and engaging community members in the development of a new charter high school. LCDC is a founding member of United Power for Action and Justice, a coalition of more than 300 churches, mosques, synagogues, labor unions, hospitals, businesses and civic groups. LCDC has been a leader in United Power’s Ezra Community Homes initiative, which is building 100 homes in North Lawndale.

LCDC views its mission and programs as fulfilling the call of the Christian gospel, which instructs God’s people to meet the needs of the poor and to pursue justice. LCDC seeks to build God’s kingdom as described in Isaiah 58:9-12:

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

“God has great plans for North Lawndale,” says Stanley Merriwether, LCDC’s New Communities Program Director, “and we are privileged to participate.”

The brilliant architecture of Jubilee Family Resource Center creates a welcoming presence for families seeking daycare.
Built on Resident Leadership, New Partnerships

In 2003, LCDC began laying the groundwork to deepen its community relationships and seek out new partnerships. The NCP planning process was an excellent vehicle for realizing these goals while creating a much-needed local development plan. The group believed that to achieve a broad-based vision that moved beyond the community-based organizations and social service agencies that typically participate in community-wide initiatives, the lead agency would need to take a back seat to residents and other stakeholders. This would help ensure that North Lawndale residents would have the dominant voice in the plan’s development.

The planning process officially began in November 2003 with a neighborhood-wide meeting that introduced the program and invited residents to envision the community’s future. “If we don’t have a plan for our community, someone else will,” said Richard Townsell, LCDC’s executive director. More than 400 people participated in two preliminary visioning sessions, and a smaller task force continued to meet for the next eight months, developing strategies in six areas:

- Education, Employment and Training
- Family, Health and Safety
- Commercial Redevelopment and Entrepreneurship
- Quality Affordable Housing
- Beautification, Culture and Recreation
- Youth Leadership Development

The planning process wasn’t easy. It forced us to relearn about one another, compromise and ultimately grow stronger in our capacity to improve our neighborhood. Community-based development—slow and laborious—is at odds with the quick decision-making expected in modern society. For us, inclusion, debate and representation were valued over convenience.

In the end, we not only gained an invaluable tool—this quality-of-life plan—but we also strengthened our ability to engage in a democratic process. That strength will be critical as we implement our strategies and become a self-determining community of choice.

We invite others to join us in writing the next chapter of our history.
A Neighborly Community Filled with Resources

By 2010, North Lawndale will have a growing and diverse population with a mix of incomes, generations and cultures. It will be a place where people choose to live, invest, raise their families and work.

The North Lawndale we envision is:

- A community with low unemployment and high-quality schools and training programs that honor the needs and interests of residents of all ages and backgrounds. Youth take advantage of a school system that prepares them to be competitive in higher education. Adults attain living-wage jobs and take advantage of resources that include technical skills training, academic alternatives to traditional education, tutoring, mentoring, counseling and intergenerational support. Programs are offered for new workers, as well as residents trying to reenter the job force or increase earnings. Special attention is paid to creating relationships among educators, parents, families and other community members.

- A community that supports healthy and stable families by providing access to counseling services and health and fitness centers, while combating threats such as drugs and insufficient education.

- A community with thriving small businesses on prosperous commercial streets. Community members enjoy convenient access to shopping, entertainment and employment opportunities, while businesses, some of them locally owned, employ and sell to local residents.

- A community of diverse housing types accessible to all income levels. Longtime residents with low incomes have access to quality housing and are not priced out of the neighborhood. Architectural assets are preserved through rehab and upkeep, while infill housing at a range of prices eliminates all vacant lots.

- A community with well-maintained residential yards and streets, tree-lined commercial areas that display community icons, and cultural facilities that serve the entire neighborhood. Homes and schools are located close to a connected system of parks and boulevards.
Five Corners project
Large site redevelopment with retail/entertainment focus
Gateway feature
Pedestrian safety improvements
Local open air market

Gateway project
Large site redevelopment with retail/entertainment focus
Gateway feature
Pedestrian safety improvements
Local open air market

Greystone initiative and residential infill
Housing rehabilitation
New construction infill
Street tree planting
Play lots

Central Park/16th retail node
Central Park transit node

Ogden Avenue redesign
Reconfigured parking
Landscaped medians
Wider parkways with street trees

Ogden Avenue infill development
New commercial development
Retail serving transit patrons

Proposed King Home Apartments

Proposed family entertainment center
Ten Strategies for a Healthier Community

We designed this quality-of-life plan to guide development in our target area for the next five years. The 10 strategies—and 41 accompanying projects—are essential to realizing our vision for North Lawndale. These strategies, resulting from many hours of research, discussion and debate, will require even greater commitment to implement.

Our strategies:

1. **Strengthen** Ogden Avenue as Lawndale’s main commercial street, while seeking a mix of uses along Pulaski Road and West 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.
STRATEGY 1

Strengthen Ogden Avenue as Lawndale’s main commercial street, while seeking a mix of uses along Pulaski Road and West 16th Street.

North Lawndale displays two faces to residents and visitors. The vacant lots and abandoned buildings along the former commercial corridors of Ogden Avenue and Pulaski Road obscure solid residential blocks lined with well-maintained historic greystones. Restoring stability to these commercial streets is a priority.

New investment along Ogden is of particular importance because this multi-lane highway—part of the historic Route 66—is the main entrance to North Lawndale from the east and west. Once lined with retail and service businesses, many blocks now appear abandoned. Yet a revival has begun, most notably between Springfield and Lawndale. Recent construction includes the architecturally striking Jubilee Family Resource Center, a façade improvement and addition to Lawndale Christian Health Center, a new CTA Blue Line station at Central Park and a new 10th District police headquarters. There’s room for much more. The corridor’s high traffic levels provide excellent visibility and market potential for new commercial development.

Pulaski Road and 16th Street merit a different approach. Their lower traffic levels and shallow lots are better suited to residential uses. Commercial development should be clustered around transit stations and major intersections.

Figure 5 Ogden Avenue redesign

A redesigned Ogden Avenue could have landscaped medians, street tree plantings and the potential for shared streetcar and drive lanes.

1.1 Reconfigure and beautify Ogden Avenue to support retail and pedestrian activity.

One of the widest roads in Chicago, Ogden is also one of the starkest. With four to six lanes, plus frontage roads and two lanes of parking on each side, the corridor is almost completely devoid of trees and other landscaping.

Ogden can be transformed into a pleasant and economically viable main street through a reconfiguration of its lanes and addition of greenery, as shown in Figure 5. The suggested design uses diagonal parking along the curb, allowing for wider sidewalks and more street trees. New trees are also recommended for reconstructed side medians.

Partners for this initiative should include the Chicago Department of Transportation, which has planted trees and medians on many thoroughfares, and the Steans Family Foundation, which is spearheading the Gateway Initiative to bring retail and residential development to Ogden between Kedzie and Homan. The reconfiguration should be compatible with the proposed Ogden streetcar line, which would connect our neighborhood to North Riverside Mall, Illinois Medical District and Navy Pier.
1.2 Develop commercial and recreational uses at the Five Corners intersection of Ogden/Cermak/Pulaski.

The intersection of Ogden, Cermak and Pulaski has two large sites and the potential to become an attractive gateway. The former CTA bus barn site at Ogden, Cermak and Springfield could accommodate a large commercial structure, smaller retail buildings and parking. With its central location and excellent transportation, the site could house the family entertainment center that North Lawndale residents have called for over the past several years and throughout the planning process (see Project 3.5).

**Figure 6** shows how a bowling alley and skating rink could be configured here. Three additional buildings on Ogden could be spaced apart to provide visibility for the existing shopping center and future entertainment center.

A second site with potential is the block fronting Ogden from Pulaski to Harding. It is shown in **Figure 6** with a new building in the west corner and a parking lot to the east, which would work well for uses such as a drug store, grocery or bookstore.

The Five Corners area could also help define the neighborhood. In Project 3.1, we recommend a gateway icon at that intersection.

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**Figure 6 Five Corners area plan**

Redevelopment and infill concepts for the intersection of Pulaski, Cermak and Ogden. New infill development near the Pulaski CTA station is also shown.
1.3 Seek residential infill projects along 16th Street and Pulaski Road between improved commercial nodes. Commercial streets in North Lawndale and throughout the city were built in the days of streetcars, pedestrian shopping and higher population densities. Today many neighborhoods have a surplus of commercial frontage, resulting in vacant lots and empty storefronts. Sixteenth Street is no longer suited to the intensive commercial development of the past, because it is not a main traffic artery and most parcels are not deep enough for commercial space. With only a sprinkling of widely spaced stores, the street suffers from loitering and criminal activity.

We recommend that 16th Street become primarily residential. Figure 7 shows how new single-family homes can be built to face the side streets instead of 16th Street. The project should include tree planting and greening. Some lots are too narrow even for a single-family home and could be landscaped or combined with adjacent lots.

1.4 Concentrate new housing and commercial development around the Pulaski and Central Park CTA train stations. The $483 million reconstruction of the CTA Blue Line’s Douglas Branch represents a new beginning for North Lawndale. With nine new stations and rebuilt tracks to downtown and the western suburbs, the once-decrepit transit line can be a catalyst for new development.

Commercial and residential development should be pursued near the two stations in the planning area, at Central Park and Pulaski. Each station attracted nearly 500 riders per day before reconstruction, offering a steady market for retail as riders shop on their way to or from the station. Higher density residential buildings should be developed near both stations to provide quick access to transit and to support the retail clusters. Figure 8 (page 21) suggests how the two buildings on the west side of Pulaski could be restored, and a new building added to fill an empty lot. These uses would complement the new fire station on the southeast corner.

With its heavier traffic and new Blue Line CTA station, Pulaski should be redeveloped with both commercial and residential uses. The mostly vacant block between 18th and 19th streets could be developed with an inner courtyard apartment building. The commercial node at Pulaski and 16th, where older buildings retain their architectural detail, should be preserved. Figure 8 (page 21) suggests how the two buildings on the west side of Pulaski could be restored, and a new building added to fill an empty lot. These uses would complement the new fire station on the southeast corner.

Figure 7 16th St. | Pulaski Rd. Plan
New multi-family housing fills a vacant block on Pulaski Road, while the focus for 16th Street is on residential infill and greening. A new athletic field is shown on a vacated Avers Street next to the Marcy Center.

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1.5 Honor the organizing efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr., with new affordable apartments.

In 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., lived at the now-vacant corner of 16th and Hamlin during his Chicago Campaign, which called attention to the housing crisis facing African Americans here and in other cities. To honor the civil rights leader and kick off the 16th Street residential redevelopment, LCDC plans to construct affordable rental housing on the site. An architectural competition is planned to generate community investment in the development.

Figure 8 Commercial node improvements  The intersection of 16th and Pulaski, with renovated corner buildings and a new storefront café to fill an empty lot.

Figure 9 Ogden and Central Park CTA Station Area Plan

Infill commercial and residential development should be built next to the Central Park CTA station.
Figure 10  Housing developments

More than 1,200 units of housing are under construction or planned. An additional 1,200 units are proposed for the Homan Square area to the north, at the former Sears headquarters.

Current homeownership
1. Roosevelt & Spaulding (10 units)
2. Galilee Tower (24)
3. Liberty Homes (86)
4. Canaan Homes (25)
5. Independence Manor (12)
6. Village West (58)
7. 3500 W. Polk (9)
8. Ezra Community Homes (100)

Proposed homeownership
9. 3600 W. Arthington & Fillmore (335)
10. Lawndale Gateway (40)
11. Resurrection Homes (20)
12. Collaborative (130, scattered)

Current rental
13. Liberty Square (66)
14. Fountain View (45)
15. Praise Apartments (32)

Proposed rental
16. Martin Luther King, Jr., Apartments (90)
17. Lawndale Gateway (170)
North Lawndale lost 10,700 housing units between 1970 and 2000, leaving approximately 3,500 vacant lots. Of the housing that remains, 15 percent is vacant, nearly twice the city average. With much of the stock almost 100 years old, many of Lawndale’s historic greystone and yellow- and red-brick homes are in disrepair.

Homeownership initiatives can stabilize entire blocks by eliminating vacant land, preserving deteriorated property and increasing the number of homeowners concerned with protecting their investment. Increased homeownership also lays the foundation for commercial development.

Affordable homeownership remains our priority. Approximately one-third of current residents earn enough to purchase through the typical subsidized development. Our homeownership rate has risen 3 percent since 1990 (to 26 percent), and recent real estate activity suggests that property values will increase steadily in coming years.

In addition to opening doors for residents to become homeowners, we want to attract new homebuyers. A 2003 report compared regional home prices to average salary data and found homeownership to be out of reach for Chicago’s elementary school teachers, police officers, licensed practical nurses, retail salespeople and janitors. North Lawndale has a unique opportunity to accommodate these individuals and families.

Affordable rental housing is also a priority, because 47 percent of North Lawndale residents spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Nearly one-third spend more than half of their income on rent. Some of the affordable rental stock is so poorly managed that several of our most beautiful multi-family buildings are at risk of being condemned as public nuisances.

2.1 Support current homeowners and maintain North Lawndale’s historic housing stock through a North Lawndale Greystone Initiative. Modeled after the city’s successful bungalow preservation program, the greystone initiative proposed by Lawndale Heritage involves the documentation and evaluation of greystones in North Lawndale, a public education and community outreach campaign and an effort to create rehabilitation loans and other financial incentives for greystone owners. The initiative could be replicated elsewhere in the city.

2.2 Increase quality affordable homeownership opportunities.

Many forms of homeownership are needed to meet the needs of current and future residents, including condominiums, single-family houses, two-flats and three-flats, rehab and new construction. The Task Force supports current efforts to create 324 new for-sale homes.

We encourage more homeownership development and education programs to prepare new buyers and to maintain the demand for housing, especially to create demand and responsible owners for the 525 additional units in the planning stages.

2.3 Increase quality affordable rental opportunities.

Many forms of rental housing are needed, including family, senior and single-room-occupancy housing, rehab and new construction. We support current rental developments that will bring 117 new units to the area. We also encourage new affordable rental development, and referral networks to ensure that residents are aware of quality rental opportunities. We support planned developments that would create an additional 260 units.

2.4 Fill in vacant lots with a mix of new housing types.

New housing development should emphasize the elimination of vacant land. Within the NCP planning area, there are more than 430 vacant lots. Current infill projects will eliminate approximately 200 of them. We endorse efforts of community-based organizations to acquire remaining lots and fill them with diverse housing and mixed uses.
Figure 11  A built-up community

This illustrative plan shows new housing and commercial development filling the North Lawndale planning area.

- Existing residential
- New infill residential
- New multi-family residential
- Existing commercial
- New commercial
- Public/institutional
STRATEGY 3

Provide amenities and improve community image with new neighborhood infrastructure.

North Lawndale is a mix of people and place. For our people to thrive, our place must support their growth and well-being. Yet for many years, city facilities, private property, neighborhood streets and public places were neglected. We are proud to say that this downward trend of disinvestment has stopped. Over the last five years the city of Chicago has made multi-million-dollar investments, including two new CTA stations, a new fire station and a police district headquarters. Private investment has also increased.

To build on this foundation, we seek continued investment in street paving, lighting and other infrastructure, along with new neighborhood features that highlight and enhance the flavor of our community.

3.1 Create gateway features and community icons along Ogden Avenue.

An idea generated early in the visioning process was to design and construct community icons along Ogden Avenue. Concepts included a “walk of fame” showing historic persons from Lawndale, and banners celebrating African American history or the neighborhood (“North Lawndale: A Community of Choice”).

The Five Corners area described in Strategy 1 is a natural opportunity for a gateway. Figure 12 (page 26) shows how the island triangle could be turned into an open plaza with a vertical sculpture reflecting community values, such as the Egyptian obelisk shown. Removal of the triangle’s existing building would open views across the intersection and improve safety for turning cars and pedestrians.

3.2 Construct a National Football League football field and track.

The need for recreational spaces and programming was cited repeatedly throughout the planning process. We are currently identifying a site to construct a football field and track facility with seed and operational funding from the NFL and Chicago Bears. The Chicago Park District should be a key partner in this effort through organization of sports leagues and activities for youth and adults.

3.3 Improve street paving and sidewalks and add bicycle lanes.

Many roadways in North Lawndale show signs of neglect or deferred maintenance. The Task Force urges the Chicago Department of Transportation to accelerate surface repaving and other roadway improvements, including new curbs and gutters. We also support the Lawndale Neighborhood Organization in organizing block clubs around a coordinated speed bumps plan. In addition, we would like to see the addition of bicycle routes and lanes along Pulaski, Ogden and 16th Street.

A new station for the Chicago Fire Department’s Engine Co. 38, at 16th and Pulaski, is one of many public investments in the neighborhood.
3.4 Construct playground and athletic facilities on currently vacant land.

Children need play space that is within an easy walking distance, so parents can keep track of them. While North Lawndale has one large park in Douglas Park, only Franklin Park is near our planning area, leaving much of the neighborhood underserved. Small play lots can be created on vacant land, with three potential locations shown in Figure 11 (page 24). Undeveloped land next to the Marcy Center at 16th and Avers could be combined with vacant lots on Avers to create about 2.5 acres of new open space. This could be developed as an athletic field and include a playground serving Penn School, as shown in Figure 7 (page 7).

3.5 Facilitate development of a family entertainment center at Ogden, Cermak and Springfield.

Community stakeholders have long advocated development of a skating rink or bowling alley as an entertainment venue for North Lawndale families. The preferred location is the former CTA bus barn site at Ogden and Cermak, and should be part of the redesign of that intersection (see Project 1.2). The plan is a unanimous community favorite for several reasons:

- The critical need for safe, healthy recreation opportunities for youth and teens, to counter their susceptibility to negative activity, particularly gang recruitment.
- The need for more exercise opportunities to improve residents’ physical health.
- The opportunity for new employment and commercial activity.
- The need for affordable family-centered entertainment, accessible to a wide range of incomes.
- The site’s strategic location between North Lawndale and Little Village, two communities of potential patrons.
- Mayor Daley’s public commitment to creating more facilities of this type.

The Task Force supports creation of a public/private partnership to develop and manage such a facility, using as a model the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Family Entertainment Center, 1212 W. 77th Street, which includes a roller rink, bowling alley, concessions space and party room.

Figure 12 Five Corners community gateway

The triangle at Pulaski, Cermak and Ogden could become an open plaza featuring a large sculptural element.
Rebuilding our job base and connecting residents to employment are critical to the community’s future. North Lawndale was once home to more than 125,000 residents, but two-thirds of that population was lost as tens of thousands of nearby manufacturing jobs disappeared. Retail and service businesses have also declined because of the smaller population, high insurance rates and negative perceptions of community safety.

Still, the community retains nearly 900 businesses employing 17,000 people. More than 6,000 jobs and about 85 businesses are concentrated in the Western/Ogden Industrial Corridor, home to metal supplier Ryerson Tull, and, in the new Roosevelt-California Business Park, the armored-car firm Brinks. The Roosevelt-Cicero Industrial Corridor supports 2,000 more jobs.

Mount Sinai Hospital, at Lawndale’s eastern gateway, employs 2,500, and the nearby Illinois Medical District employs 40,000. That district is experiencing major development along Roosevelt Road, including a Federal Bureau of Investigation regional headquarters and a Disaster Operations Center for the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago.

Smaller businesses include professional services, health and medical services, beauty/barber shops, childcare, restaurants and auto services.

The revival of North Lawndale’s retail base began in 1997 with the development of Lawndale Plaza, which includes a Dominick’s grocery, theater complex and smaller retail stores. Other retailers, service providers and restaurants have since set up shop or reinvested. Nearby industrial areas also have seen investment because of their proximity to transportation, labor and downtown.

But there is room for growth. Of the estimated $353 million that local residents spend annually, about 64 percent is spent outside the neighborhood. Many local families have considerable spending power: 2,260 households earned between $50,000 and $150,000 in 2000, and that number is likely to grow.
4.1 **Create the North Lawndale Community Resource Guide.**
A long-time goal of several organizations, this directory will promote local businesses and provide information resources for the community.

4.2 **Develop a North Lawndale business-oriented web site.**
The resource directory team (Project 4.1) will shepherd development of a North Lawndale web site that will market the community as a whole, advertise individual companies and provide a listing of all local establishments including in-home businesses such as childcare providers. We will pursue technical assistance from the Center for Neighborhood Technology.

4.3 **Organize a North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce.**
Spearheaded by local entrepreneurs and the Lawndale Business and Local Development Corporation (LBLDC), the North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce was chartered in 2004. The for-profit chamber will provide business-focused information as well as organize community-wide marketing campaigns and other activities to support businesses.

4.4 **Promote job and business creation through the Armory Redevelopment Project.**
LBLDC is converting the former armory at Cermak and Kilbourn into a community resource and business innovation center. Located on a high-traffic site between North Lawndale and Little Village, adjacent to the new Kostner CTA station, the building will house offices and training spaces for LBLDC, the North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) and the New Westside Federation/Minority Contractors Project; incubator space for small businesses; a community technology center; and community meeting space. A focus of the center will be the Cooperative Kitchen, a commercial kitchen and manufacturing facility to train participants for the estimated 800 food-processing jobs that open yearly in Chicago.
The 2000 Census reports an unemployment rate of 26 percent—fourth highest among Chicago’s 77 community areas—and a median household income of $18,342. While the area had plenty of jobs in the first half of the last century, companies such as International Harvester, which once employed 14,000, and Sears Roebuck, which employed 7,000, closed down in the 1960s and 70s, leaving gaping holes in the local economy. To once again achieve a fully functioning economy in North Lawndale, our residents must be prepared to compete in the evolving regional job market.

5.1 Improve job skills and earning power of local residents.

As in many neighborhoods subjected to inferior public school education, residents in North Lawndale often face an educational gap. Only 6 percent of adults from North Lawndale hold bachelor’s degrees, and 40 percent did not graduate from high school. Employment training and networking are critical to address this need, as are efforts to create and maintain the social ties that are often needed to secure quality jobs.

Three primary emphases are recommended: job skills development, entrepreneurship training and employment networking for the general population. Partners include:

- Chicago Community Ventures, which provides growth capital and business services to inner-city entrepreneurs.
- Illinois Institute for Entrepreneurship Education (IIEE), which creates linkages between educational groups and business and seeks to connect high school students and entrepreneurs.
- Breaking Ground, which is expanding its Teaching Factory into a Manufacturing Credentialing Center that offers unemployed residents access to National Institute for Metalworking Standards (NIMS)-based training on modern machinery. This training leads to nationally recognized credentials that manufacturers have accepted as relevant for skilled positions. The new program has broad support among community-based organizations, manufacturers, the Chicago Workforce Board and foundations.

- Building Beyond! is the North Lawndale Employment Network’s 11-week job readiness program. It prepares out-of-school young adults between 17 and 24 to enter the workforce. Participants learn life skills, basic computer use and communication and customer service skills.

- Center for Working Families helps participants secure stable workforce attachment and advancement opportunities, offers financial workshops and encourages use of mainstream financial products such as checking accounts. Located at the North Lawndale Employment Network, the center is based on a model developed by Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and includes local partnerships with the Center for Economic Progress and Shorebank.

5.2 Develop Chicago Police Department Career Exposure workshops.

This project seeks to improve job prospects for local residents while creating a racially and ethnically diverse pool of people who sit for and pass the Chicago Police Academy exam. LCDC will work with the Chicago Police Department to develop a nine-month series of workshops for residents of North Lawndale and other neighborhoods. Monthly meetings at the new 10th District police facility on Ogden will highlight a range of career opportunities, from beat cop to emergency services, crime lab, youth programs and civilian jobs. One session will provide test-preparation training and exposure to word-processing and spreadsheet software.
According to the 2000 Census, there were 25,819 persons in the North Lawndale community 18 years of age and older. This statistic does not include those who were incarcerated at the time of the survey. The Center for Impact Research estimated in October 2002 that when incarcerated adults are factored into the equation, the adult population of North Lawndale increased by 13,000 to 38,819 in 2000.

Many of these incarcerated thousands return to the community after their release from prison. The issues surrounding ex-offenders and those working to recover from addiction are some of the most pervasive that we face in North Lawndale. Roughly 70 percent of the male population between 18 and 24 has criminal records, and more than half of those convictions are drug related. Among Chicago community areas, North Lawndale has had the second highest number of ex-offenders returning in recent years. We must be aggressive in the implementation of multiple strategies to support community members seeking to make better choices.

To equip and encourage men and women striving to re-enter society after prison and recover from substance abuse, we recommend a focus in three areas: employment (jobs and policy), housing and transition services.

6.1 **Support and expand the range of employment programs that provide training and placement services to ex-offenders.**

A number of programs are in place and should be supported, expanded and replicated:

- North Lawndale Employment Network has three programs serving ex-offenders: U-Turn Permitted, which provides employment services and case management, including needs assessments, job readiness training, a referral network, peer groups and mentor support; Sweet Beginnings, an urban farming and honey production business established with funding from the Illinois Department of Corrections and the city of Chicago, where formerly incarcerated individuals work 30 paid hours a week and receive training and mentoring in landscaping, beekeeping, food processing and sales and distribution; and participation in partnerships to expand employment opportunities for ex-offenders, such as the Mayor’s Policy Caucus on Prisoner Re-entry, the State Workforce Investment Board Ex-offender Employability Task Force and Congressman Danny Davis’ Ex-offender Task Force.

- The Safer Foundation’s Ready4Work initiative is a faith-based coalition that mentors ex-offenders and provides job skills training. Through partnerships with Public Private Ventures, St. Sabina, People’s Church of the Harvest and Greater Rock Baptist Church, the initiative will serve more than 100 men and women each year.

- Hope Businesses—including Hope Landscaping, Hope Sheds, Hope Fencing and Hope Painting—are ventures that meet a local service need while creating paid employment for graduates of Hope House (see Project 6.2) and others.

- Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria is another place where Hope House residents rebuild their work histories. Full- and part-time opportunities exist at several Chicago-area Malnati’s locations.

- Lawndale Jobs Partnership is a coalition of churches that train the unemployed and underemployed in marketable skills and connect them to a network of employers.
6.2 **Provide housing options that include supportive services for men, women and families.**
Re-entry into the community cannot be successful without a safe and reliable place to live. Programs to support and use as models for additional housing include:

- Lawndale Community Church’s Hope House, a home for men who have just been released from the Department of Corrections or who are struggling with issues related to substance abuse. After three months of housing and participation in training and support programs, residents can seek a job. After nine months, residents are eligible to enter the church’s transitional housing, where monthly rent is $100. Men can live there for up to 12 months. Participants also attend Bible studies, become re-acclimated to society within a structured environment, reconnect with their families and, if needed, enroll in substance abuse recovery programs.

- Leslie’s Place provides supportive services and housing for female ex-offenders who are on parole. This partnership between the Department of Corrections and Support Advocate for Women (SAW) is located outside the planning area but open to women from North Lawndale. Arrangements must be made before the participant is paroled.

- I.A.M.A.B.L.E. Center for Family Development provides housing and services for families that are headed primarily by women who are recovering from addiction and have been released from the prison system.

6.3 **Develop partnerships, referral networks and new programs to link ex-offenders with transitional services such as substance abuse counseling, mental health services and legal assistance.**
The third key element of successful reentry is access to programs that help with addictions and other health or legal issues. A staff member at North Lawndale Employment Network notes: “at least 90 percent of the criminal cases we see, drugs or alcohol are involved.” A number of programs should be promoted and expanded:

- Alcohol and drug treatment: Gateway Foundation provides programs such as detoxification, residential inpatient treatment, halfway houses, day treatment, and counseling; Lawndale Community Church offers Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholic Anonymous meetings to men in Hope House and to the larger community.

- Mental health services: Lawndale Christian Health Clinic offers counseling to patients with depression and non-clinical mental health issues; Mount Sinai Hospital offers treatment of clinical mental disorders; Chicago Department of Health clinics, including the center at 1201 S. Campbell, provide free treatment charge to anyone needing services; I.A.M.A.B.L.E Center for Family Development offers family systems therapy and psychotherapy.

- Legal assistance: Organizations such as Westside Association for Community Action (WACA) and NLEN help clients navigate the paperwork of expungement; WACA also assists youth through court advocacy, Cook County pre-trial supervision services and a home visit reporting program.

6.4 **Expand the Reentry Services and Transitional Guide.**
An updated edition of the Reentry Services and Transitional Guide for formerly incarcerated individuals will be developed, containing citywide information on employment, public assistance and food stamps, voting, public housing, driver’s licenses, student loans and how to reestablish family ties. The last edition was published in 2002 by the North Lawndale Employment Network, with a primary focus on resources in North Lawndale and Garfield Park. The goal is to create a citywide resource.
Community safety has ranked high on the list of North Lawndale residents’ concerns for many years. Throughout the planning process, participants cited increased safety as central to improving the quality of life for current residents and attracting new households. While crime rates decreased during the 1990s, in 2001 we ranked sixth of 77 Chicago neighborhoods in per capita homicides and tenth in per capita aggravated assaults and batteries.

Drug use and sales, major causes of violent crime, persist at alarming rates. Narcotics-based charges—the most frequently occurring in North Lawndale—accounted for 31 percent of arrests in 1999 and 27 percent in 2000. We must work together to hold ourselves, police and other public servants accountable for eliminating these threats.

Reduction of public violence is a primary strategy for the Chicago Police Department, and we wholeheartedly support its implementation.

Public safety is affected by the high number of people re-entering the community from prison. The Center for Impact Research reports that in 2001, 2,487 local adults were on parole and 3,458 were on probation. Meeting the needs of these returning residents, as outlined in Strategy 6 and Project 7.3, can help reduce the crime rate.

7.1 Implement multiple crime reduction strategies to create a more secure community.

Through the cumulative safety organizing experiences of several Task Force members, we concluded that programs are only tools to build relationships, not an end in themselves. We realize that respectful relationships with the Chicago Police Department are fundamental to accomplishing our goals in this area.

Based on several meetings with police representatives, including the superintendent, commanders, beat cops and CAPS officers and personnel, we support the following programs and approaches:

**Outreach, recruitment and community relations**
- Police Explorers, Police and Fire Academy, CAPS.
- Careers in Law Enforcement Exposure Series (see Project 5.2).
- Community use of the meeting space in the new 10th District headquarters; increased youth and young adult programming.

**Prevention**
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.); Gangs Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.); Operation Disruption (placement of cameras in areas with high drug traffic); Cadet Program (provides employment opportunities at the police station to young adults 17 to 20 years old to encourage careers in law enforcement).

**Intervention**
- Youth: Police programs such as peer juries, victim/offender conferencing, community service and alternatives to prosecution, as well as programs run by the Westside Association for Community Action (WACA) and other community organizations.
- Adults: Tactical Response Unit, targeted assistance to Chicago Housing Authority residents relocating to North Lawndale, programs targeting drug buyers and traffickers, and expansion of Operation
7.2 Identify and support more community corrections programs, adult transition centers and resources for people on parole and probation.
The Task Force supports North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) in its efforts to:
- Increase awareness among government and community agencies of the need for pre- and post-release services
- Advocate for basic reforms within the Illinois Department of Corrections to improve employment opportunities for ex-offenders
- Advocate for an increase in transitional services for the post-incarcerated
- Advocate for community-based employment services for ex-offenders

7.3 Support and expand block clubs.
Block clubs represent one of the richest strains in North Lawndale’s organizing history. Since the 1970s, residents have organized themselves into citizens’ networks to build a sense of community and combat issues such as litter and crime. About 10 block clubs are now active within the planning area, offering the capacity to quickly disseminate information and mobilize participation. The Task Force advocates expansion of the number and use of block clubs, with an initial focus on involving them in the quality-of-life plan’s public safety and beautification efforts.

Block clubs bring residents of North Lawndale together street by street to address common issues and strengthen neighborhood ties.
Education and health care were the aspects of individual well-being most frequently stressed by stakeholders during the planning process. Only 18.6 percent of students in North Lawndale high schools perform at or above state academic standards, and their graduation rate averages 26.2 percent. In our elementary schools, only 31 percent of students meet or exceed state standards for reading; 22 percent meet or exceed math standards. In addition to improving opportunities for youth currently living in North Lawndale, the Task Force recognizes that strengthening local schools and academic enrichment programs is key to attracting new families to our community.

Improving health is also critical. A primary factor in the creation of Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC) in the 1980s was our startling infant mortality rate of 25.5 per 100,000 births. By 1999, through the efforts of key health providers—LCHC, Access Health Care, Mount Sinai Hospital, St. Anthony’s Hospital and Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital—this figure had dropped to 12.7. Sinai Community Institute is another major resource offering a range of services, including health programs, employment services, parent education, youth and teen programs and prenatal services.

While many health indicators have improved, North Lawndale remains relatively unhealthy. Of Chicago’s 77 community areas, we rank third in the number of infants born to mothers with no prenatal care; fifth in mothers under 20 years old; eleventh in deaths due to homicide and fourteenth in heart disease mortality.

Stakeholders also are concerned about family health, viewing the breakdown of families as a factor in many other social ills. The 2000 Census found that single females head 68 percent of North Lawndale households with children. Grandparents live with their grandchildren in 40 percent of households with children; 60 percent of these grandparents have primary responsibility for the household’s children. In 2001, our rate of abused or neglected children was 25 per 1,000, more than double the city average. In domestic violence against women, North Lawndale ranked 24th among the city’s 77 community areas.

8.1 Establish active, influential partnerships with local schools.

Organizations seeking to improve local educational opportunities should concentrate their resources on individual schools. As lead NCP agency, LCDC participates in decision-making bodies at existing schools such as North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School (NLCP) and developing schools such as Legacy Charter Elementary School, UMOJA Student Development Charter High School and the new Little Village High School Campus, including its four small schools: World Language; Infinity Math, Science and Technology; Greater Lawndale School of Social Justice; and Multicultural Arts School. The Steans Family Foundation should be supported in its investment in Manley, Collins, and NLCP high schools. Steans has developed a principals network which involves two high school and 11 elementary school administrators. Steans has made financial commitments as well, such as a three-year commitment to fund Webster Community School.
8.2 Improve academic performance and college attainment through supplemental programming.
The Task Force supports school-based summer programming such as North Lawndale College Prep’s Rising Phoenix Program, which provides leadership development, academic enrichment and occupational internship experiences between each year of high school. We also encourage after-school tutoring, standardized test prep and college/career exposure programs such as LCDC’s Lawndale College Opportunity Program, Young Legacies and Lawndale Legacies Community Technology Center. The Steans Family Foundation has committed $850,000 for education programs during 2005.

8.3 Create a North Lawndale technology consortium.
In partnership with the Illinois Technology Resource Center (ITRC), pilot a three-school program that will integrate technology into curriculum, develop a tech training institute for teachers and facilitate continual placement of updated software and hardware in the consortium schools.

8.4 Promote the revitalization of Douglass Library.
Leveraging NCP resources, the Task Force attracted funds to improve the physical appeal of Douglass Library. With Friends of the Douglass Library and the Chicago Public Art Group, we supported restoration of the library’s outdoor mural and storybook garden. Our goal is to encourage more North Lawndale residents to use the library.

8.5 Expand access to mental health and substance abuse counseling.
Planning participants recognized the need for increased mental health and substance abuse counseling. A recent report by the Sinai Urban Health Institute found that 14 percent of North Lawndale adults have been diagnosed as depressed. While this figure is close to the national average, with 40 percent of North Lawndale adults uninsured and 24 percent holding public insurance, many cannot afford professional help.

Drug and alcohol abuse compounds the problem. In 2001, drug- or alcohol-related mental disorders were one of the leading causes of hospitalization. Our rate of such incidents was 82.4 (out of 10,000) compared to the city’s rate of 59.2.

In view of the serious lack of programming for women, the Task Force supports Jakolbi House, a new transitional housing and mental health program for women. We encourage their partnership with family rebuilding organizations such as I.A.M.A.B.L.E. to help women reestablish healthy family relationships while addressing mental health and substance abuse issues.

8.6 Provide new opportunities for fitness and nutrition classes.
Poor physical fitness and eating habits are primary contributors to North Lawndale’s health disorders. The Sinai report uncovered sobering obesity statistics: 41 percent of North Lawndale adults are obese, and 66 percent of our children are overweight or obese. Twenty percent of these adults consider themselves to be the right weight or underweight, and 86 percent of the youngsters caretakers view them as the right weight or underweight. The report also found that 33 percent of adults self-rate their health as fair or poor (compared to 14 percent nationwide), a characteristic shown to be predictive of premature death and disability.

Increased opportunities for fitness and nutrition classes are needed. In 2002, the Homan Square Community Center opened new fitness facilities and began offering exercise classes such as Joy to Be Fit Gospel Aerobics. Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC) offers fitness programming as well as nutrition counseling for diabetics. We support the expansion of LCHC’s gymnasium, which will include a 3,000-square-foot fitness center that provides aerobic and weight-training equipment and exercise space.

8.7 Reduce exposure to lead contamination.
The Task Force supports Lawndale Christian Health Center’s Lead Case Management Program. It focuses on primary prevention (education and referral of pregnant women), secondary prevention and intervention (education and referral of children with mildly elevated lead levels), and outreach (increased awareness of and testing for lead poisoning). We urge the Chicago Department of Health to accelerate processing of lead cases reported by LCHC, inspecting homes with lead hazards and providing public abatement funds.
Planning participants recognized that developing healthy young people involves more than academics. Youth and adults alike stressed the need for training in job skills, financial literacy, the arts, community service and leadership. Such opportunities not only provide alternatives to destructive behavior, but also strengthen students’ sense of identity, develop their imagination and encourage them to set and achieve goals.

Also important is programming that provides team-building and leadership opportunities, such as the North Lawndale Youth Baseball League and programs at the Better Boys Foundation. Relationships of trust with adult mentors should be expanded, as mentors can encourage students and hold them accountable for their actions.

Youth participation was highly valued throughout our planning process, resulting in the formation of the Young Adult Coalition (YAC), a committee of teens and adults working to create diverse enrichment programs.

Lawndale youth brought their energy and ideas to our NCP planning process.

9.1 Support the Community Pride Campaign of the Young Adult Coalition.

As Young Adult Coalition members reflected on their sense of community pride, a desire to wage war on litter grew into a campaign to clean up North Lawndale. Having already developed a logo and slogan—“Pick that up! We live here!”—the students are ready to begin a campaign using billboards and other public advertising venues. Once the campaign is running, YAC plans to partner with block clubs, our alderman’s office and other youth groups to organize clean-up strategies. YAC recognizes that a clean community is key to establishing a positive identity for the neighborhood in the minds of residents, the broader community and potential investors.
9.2 **Support the Fire House Community Arts Center.**
Local public schools offer little or no arts education and extra-curricular programming. Planning to locate in a former fire station, the Fire House Community Arts Center will foster relationships between adults and youth while offering opportunities to develop creative skills after school and on weekends.
- Culinary art training will be offered in an industrial kitchen. Students will also learn marketing, mass production and distribution.
- Dance classes will be offered, including hip-hop and break dancing.
- Entrepreneurial skills training will be incorporated throughout Fire House programming.
- Local adults and high school students will be hired to provide group and individual music lessons. The center will be equipped with a state-of-the-art recording studio, where youth will receive training in music composition, production, marketing and sales.

9.3 **Create the North Lawndale Public Art Corridor.**
Another initiative of the Young Adult Coalition, the Public Art Corridor will begin with three outdoor murals and four indoor and outdoor bricolage mosaics. Chicago-based artists Damon Lamar Reed and Moses X. Ball will lead youth in the creation of these works, exposing them to the field of professional art and highlighting artists of color as role models.

9.4 **Support teen entrepreneurs through a Youth Investment Club.**
The Young Adult Coalition also aims to create a Youth Investment Club that channels resources to budding entrepreneurs. Participating students will work with the North Lawndale Entrepreneurship Collaborative to pool their own dollars and attract external funds to execute their business concepts. Adult business owners and consultants will assess their ideas and operations. The coalition plans to learn from teen entrepreneurial programs such as the Young Men’s Employment Network’s embroidery company, Stitch-N-Style.

9.5 **Bring job opportunities to Lawndale youth.**
If local youth are to gain a foothold in the job market, they will need work experience. The Task Force supports the Fire House Community Arts Center described in Project 9.2, as well as LCDC’s summer youth internship programs, which offer work experience in web and graphic design, youth development, office administration and property management. We encourage the Steans Family Foundation and the city of Chicago’s After School Matters agency to continue funding these and other internships.
North Lawndale residents have a long and proud history of community gardens and beautification. Residents Lorean and Gerald Earles were pioneers among Chicago community gardeners in the 1980s, cleaning up and planting vacant lots that became known as “slumbusters.” In recent years, the North Lawndale Greening Committee expanded the concept to more lots, selling surplus produce at a Saturday market in Humboldt Park. Today, our neighborhood boasts an estimated 30 gardens on formerly vacant lots.

Hundreds of lots remain vacant and underutilized, and our main thoroughfares lack the beautifying trees and planters that have become a standard feature of many Chicago neighborhoods. The vacant land represents a major opportunity to strengthen North Lawndale’s gardening tradition.

10.1 **Undertake a community tree planting effort, especially along main roadways.**

New plantings would soften the look of local streets, filter the air, cut down on noise and increase property values. The Task Force recommends a comprehensive approach to tree planting on all major thoroughfares, in partnership with the Chicago Department of Transportation and Mayor Richard M. Daley’s tree-planting programs. Along Ogden, tree planting should be a primary component of the redesign recommended in Project 1.1.

10.2 **Support the Neighborhood Youth Garden Corps and larger scale greening efforts.**

Through the Neighborhood Youth Garden Corps, the Openlands Project and North Lawndale Greening will work with students and adults to collect and germinate tree and shrub seeds, care for and protect young saplings and nurture mature, hardy plants for transplanting. Saplings and shrubs will first be offered to the families of those who tended the plants. Other trees may be offered for planting through the city of Chicago. The Task Force recommends creation of a tree nursery on selected vacant lots, in partnership with local schools, neighborhood residents and the urban horticulture program at the University of Illinois at Chicago Extension.

10.3 **Establish intensive urban agricultural projects to grow produce for restaurants, organizations and farmers’ markets.**

Even as new development fills some vacant lots, many parcels are likely to remain empty for the foreseeable future. This represents an opportunity to create intensive urban “farms” that sell produce and herbs to consumers and restaurants. Several such operations already exist in Chicago, and North Lawndale gardeners have the experience and land to contribute to this cottage industry. Over the longer term, North Lawndale growers could participate in a local farmers’ market at the Five Corners area or another high-traffic location.
Expansion of gardens will complement the North Lawndale Employment Network’s Sweet Beginnings project, which trains ex-offenders to maintain beehives and collect and sell the resulting honey.

Partners in these programs should include LCDC, North Lawndale Greening, Steans Family Foundation, North Lawndale Employment Network, North Lawndale Small Grants Initiative, Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and the Lawndale Local Business and Development Corporation.

10.4 Work with homeowners and block clubs to promote landscaping and yard maintenance.
Many Lawndale residents take great pride in their homes and enjoy maintaining flower gardens, lawns and trees. A walk down Central Park or Millard shows how flowers and shade trees soften and complement the area’s greystone façades. To promote and enhance the neighborhood’s culture of beautification:

- Create model landscaping plans that use inexpensive and cold-hardy species for front yards and around building foundations, as illustrated in Figure 14.
- Promote landscaping services such as those offered by Hope Landscaping to homeowners who do not want to maintain gardens themselves.
- Sponsor workshops on landscaping through partnerships with local greening groups, the Openlands Project and the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance.

![Figure 14 Model home landscaping plans](image)

Landscaping plans are shown for yards surrounding typical North Lawndale greystones.
Many organizations have pledged to implement the projects in our quality-of-life plan. They include (but are not limited to):  

- After School Matters (ASM)  
- Art Thou Blessed  
- Blue Line Transit Task Force BLTTF  
- Breaking Ground  
- Center for Working Families CWF  
- Chicago Bears  
- Chicago Community Ventures CCV  
- Chicago Department of Planning and Development CDPD  
- Chicago Department of Transportation CDOT  
- Chicago Park District  
- Chicago Police Department  
- Douglass Branch, Chicago Public Library  
- Focus Youth  
- Friends of Douglass Library  
- The House  
- Illinois Department of Transportation IDOT  
- Illinois Institute for Entrepreneurship Education IIEE  
- Imagine Consulting, Inc.  
- Investment in Aptitude Management Action Building Lasting Enterprise  
- Center for Family Development, Inc. I.A.M.A.B.L.E.  
- Jakolbi’s House  
- Lawndale Business and Local Development Corporation LBLDC  
- Lawndale Christian Development Corporation LCDC  
- Lawndale Christian Health Center LCHC  
- Lawndale Community Church  
- Lawndale Heritage  
- Legacy Charter School  
- Little Village Community Development Corporation LVCDC  
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago LISC  
- Metropolitan Planning Council MPC  
- Neighborhood Housing Services NHS  
- North Lawndale Employment Network NLEN  
- North Lawndale Greening Committee NL Greening  
- Openlands Project  
- Safer Foundation  
- Steans Family Foundation Steans  
- Young Adult Coalition YAC
## Schedule and Priorities

### Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>LEAD ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. STRENGTHEN OGDEN AVE. AS LAWNDALE’S MAIN COMMERCIAL STREET, WHILE SEEKING A MIX OF USES ALONG PULASKI RD. AND W. 16TH ST.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Reconfigure and beautify Ogden Avenue to support retail and pedestrian activity.</td>
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<td>CDOT, IDOT, CDPD, Steans</td>
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<td>1.2 Develop commercial and recreational uses at the Five Corners intersection of Ogden/Cermak/Pulaski.</td>
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<td>LCDC, CDPD, Chicago Park District, MPC</td>
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<td>1.3 Seek residential infill projects along 16th Street and Pulaski Road between improved commercial nodes.</td>
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<td>BLITF</td>
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<td>1.4 Concentrate new housing and commercial development around the Pulaski and Central Park CTA train stations.</td>
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<td>LCDC</td>
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<td>1.5 Honor the organizing efforts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with new affordable apartments.</td>
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<td>LCDC</td>
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<td>2. DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PROGRAM THAT SERVES HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Support current homeowners and maintain North Lawndale’s historic housing stock through a North Lawndale Greystone Initiative.</td>
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<td>Lavndale Heritage</td>
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<td>2.2 Increase quality affordable homeownership opportunities.</td>
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<td>NHS, LCDC, Breaking Ground</td>
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<td>2.3 Increase quality affordable rental opportunities.</td>
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<td>LCDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 Fill in vacant lots with a mix of new housing types.</td>
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<td>Various organizations</td>
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<td>3. PROVIDE AMENITIES AND IMPROVE COMMUNITY IMAGE WITH NEW NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Create gateway features and community icons along Ogden Avenue.</td>
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<td>To be determined</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Construct a National Football League football field and track.</td>
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<td>LISC, Chicago Bears, LCDC</td>
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<td>3.3 Improve street paving and sidewalks and add bicycle lanes.</td>
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<td>CDOT, Alderman’s Office</td>
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<td>3.4 Construct a school-based playground on 16th and Hamlin in partnership with Penn School.</td>
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<td>3.5 Facilitate development of a family entertainment center at Ogden, Cermak and Springfield.</td>
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<td>LCDC</td>
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<td>4. SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES, NURTURE NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTE JOB CREATION.</td>
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<td>4.1 Create the North Lawndale Community Resource Guide.</td>
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<td>LBLDC, IIIE, Imagine Consulting, Inc.</td>
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<td>4.2 Develop a North Lawndale business-oriented web site.</td>
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<td>LBLDC, IIIE, Imagine Consulting, Inc.</td>
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<td>4.3 Organize a North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce.</td>
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<td>LBLDC, IIIE, Imagine Consulting, Inc.</td>
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<td>4.4 Promote job and business creation through the Armory Redevelopment Project.</td>
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<td>LBLDC</td>
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<td>5. INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR NORTH LAWNDALE RESIDENTS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Improve job skills and earning power of local residents through skills training, employment networking and entrepreneurship training.</td>
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<td>CCV, IIIE, Breaking Ground, CWF, NLEN</td>
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<td>5.2 Develop Chicago Police Department Career Exposure workshops.</td>
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<td>CAPS, CPD, LCDC</td>
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<td>6. ADVOCATE FOR AND SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE COMMUNITY AND JOB MARKET FROM THE PRISON SYSTEM.</td>
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<td>6.1 Support and expand the range of employment programs that provide training and placement services to ex-offenders.</td>
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<td>6.2 Provide housing options that include supportive services for men, women and families.</td>
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<td>6.3 Develop partnerships, referral networks and new programs to link ex-offenders with transitional services such as substance abuse counseling, mental health services and legal assistance.</td>
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<td>6.4 Update the Reentry Services and Transitional Guide.</td>
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<td>7. CREATE A SAFER NEIGHBORHOOD.</td>
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<td>7.1 Implement and support multiple crime reduction strategies to create a more secure community.</td>
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<td>7.2 Identify and support more community corrections programs, adult transition centers and resources for people on parole and probation.</td>
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<td>7.3 Support and expand block clubs.</td>
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<td>8. SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY, STRONG FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUAL HEALTH.</td>
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<td>8.1 Establish active, influential partnerships with local schools.</td>
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<td><strong>9. GENERATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS TO LEARN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>POSITIVE LIFE SKILLS IN A MENTORING ENVIRONMENT.</strong></td>
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<td>IIEE, Focus Youth</td>
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<td>9.5 Bring job opportunities to Lawndale youth.</td>
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<td>IIEE, ASM, Chicago Police Department, Focus Youth</td>
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<td>10.1 Undertake a community tree-planting effort, especially along main</td>
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<td>roadways.</td>
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<td>10.2 Support the Neighborhood Youth Garden Corps and larger scale</td>
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<td>NL Greeening, Openlands</td>
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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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www.lisc-chicago.org
www.newcommunities.org