

# NORTH LAWDALE: Faith Rewarded

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NORTH LAWDALE

**North Lawndale**



# Lawndale Christian Development Corporation

## Planning Task Force

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.

**Sonia Adams**  
**Pastor Joseph Atkins**  
**Angelique Beasley**  
**Anthony Bell**  
**Shawn Boler**  
**Wilbert Cook**  
**Ruth Covin**  
**Cdr. Beatrice Cuello**  
*10th District Police*  
**Safiya Felters**  
**Sergeant Gabriel Flores**  
**Sam Flowers**  
**Robert Gage**  
**Renee Gates**  
**Sandra Glenn**  
**Jerome Goldsmith**  
**Millie Goldsmith**  
**Pastor Wayne "Coach" Gordon**  
**Eddie Hollins**  
**Cdr. James Jackson**  
*11th District Police*  
**Phil Jackson, Jr.**  
**William James II**  
**Antuan Johnson**

**Velma Johnson**  
**Shirley Jones**  
**Christopher Kelly**  
**Janis Kelly**  
**Karmen Koehn**  
**Patricia Lard**  
**Constance Lay**  
**Charles Leeks**  
**Theodis Leonard**  
**Valerie Leonard**  
**Eric Lindsay**  
**Rodney Love**  
**Marisa Novara**  
**Wanda Perry**  
**Kim Radoy**  
**Carolyn Roberts**  
**Derrick Rollerson**  
**Beatrice Smith**  
**Jamika Stokes**  
**Jekitta Stokes**  
**Blanche Suggs**  
**Eric Strickland**  
**Floyd Towner**  
**Ethereal Watts**

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
- Youth education
- Community organizing

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."

## A Neighborly Community Filled with Resources

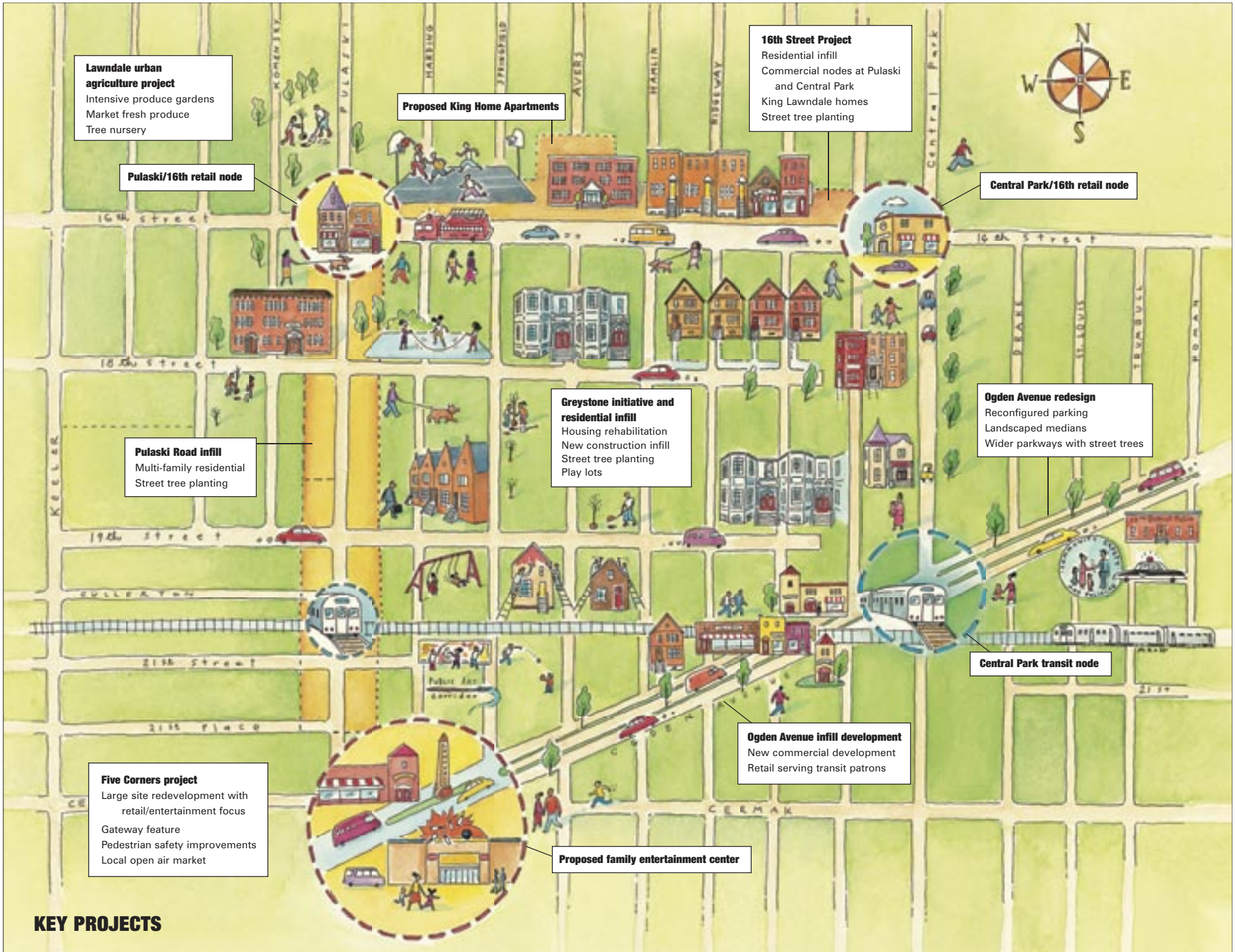


Pride in ownership is reflected in well-maintained greystone and brownstone residences along Central Park Avenue.

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.



**Lawndale urban agriculture project**  
Intensive produce gardens  
Market fresh produce  
Tree nursery

**Proposed King Home Apartments**

**16th Street Project**  
Residential infill  
Commercial nodes at Pulaski and Central Park  
King Lawndale homes  
Street tree planting

**Pulaski/16th retail node**

**Central Park/16th retail node**

**Pulaski Road infill**  
Multi-family residential  
Street tree planting

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

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

**Central Park transit node**

**Ogden Avenue infill development**  
New commercial development  
Retail serving transit patrons

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

**Proposed family entertainment center**

**KEY PROJECTS**

## SUMMARY

# North Lawndale Is Rising Again



United Power's Ezra Homes development fills a once-vacant block in North Lawndale.

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.

## 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.



Creating positive environments for youth is a key strategy of this plan.

## **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.

## **For more information**

**Richard Townsell** *Executive Director*  
**Stanley Merriwether** *NCP Director*  
**Tiffany Childress** *NCP Organizer*  
Lawndale Christian Development Corporation  
3843 W. Ogden Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60623  
Phone: 773-762-8889  
Fax: 773-762-8893  
smerriwether@lcdc.net  
www.lcdc.net

**Keri Blackwell** *Program Officer*  
LISC/Chicago  
1 N. LaSalle St., 12th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602  
312-697-8211  
kblackwell@liscnet.org  
www.lisc-chicago.org

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

## **Staff and consultants**

### **LISC/Chicago**

**Andrew Mooney** *Senior Program Director*  
**Amanda Carney** *Director, New Communities Program*  
**Susana Vasquez** *Deputy Director, New Communities Program*  
**Keri Blackwell** *Program Officer*  
**Patrick Barry** *Scribe Coordinator and Editor*  
**Caroline Kenney** *Scribe*

### **Camiros Ltd.**

**Leslie S. Pollock** *Principal Planner*  
**Barry Gore** *Project Planner*  
**Jing Cui** *Urban Designer*  
**Dena Hicks** *Landscape Architect*  
**Denise Lea** *Planner*

### **Kym Abrams Design, Inc.**

**Kym Abrams** *Creative Director*  
**Kelly Komp** *Design Manager*  
**Andy Eltzroth** *Designer*

## **Illustration and photo credits**

**Steven Mach Illustration**, page 4  
**Barry Gore, Camiros, Ltd.**, page 5  
**Lawndale Christian Development Corporation**, cover (left and right), page 3

The New Communities Program (NCP) is supported by a major grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Living Cities, Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, Nationwide Insurance, Partnership for New Communities, Polk Bros. Foundation and Surdna Foundation.