

RE:NEW

PREMIERE
EDITION

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TO GET NCP PROCESS ROLLING, RESIDENTS DO THE VISION THING

By John McCarron



Board member Mayra Garcia of The Resurrection Project tells the group about Pilsen's vision.

Amanda Norman is not a professional organizer or a planner or a dreamer of grand things. She is a sober-sided senior citizen, a medical records secretary and head of the 7500 S. Parnell Avenue Block Club on Chicago's South Side.

But there she was on a Saturday morning in late May, seated at a round table in a fancy hotel conference room, helping organize and plan and dream a better future for her Auburn-Gresham neighborhood.

"You're either going to lay down and leave, or hold your ground and stay," said Norman. "I plan on staying, until God comes to get me."

Mrs. Norman was participating in a "visioning session" convened by LISC/Chicago's New Communities Program. The idea is to bring together neighborhood leaders—and potential leaders—to think about the past, the present and, most importantly, the future of their community. Visioning is the first step by which all 16 neighborhoods in the NCP program will develop a quality-of-life plan—a comprehensive outline to guide development of their communities over the next five years.

"We want you to stretch, to think outside the box, to think past your past," said Andrew Mooney, senior program director of LISC/Chicago, in his opening charge to participants.

More than a hundred leaders, from relative amateurs like Mrs. Norman to veteran activists such as Woodlawn's Rev. Leon Finney, attended the session May 31 at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in Hyde Park. Nearly all were South Siders active with the 10 community development organizations that will anchor NCP activity in their neighborhoods.

A second visioning session, for four additional NCP neighborhoods, was held June 14 at the Hyatt at University Village.

Imagine the future

Training consultants Larry Stanton and Gabriel Najera kicked off the planning by asking each group to catalog where their neighborhood was five years ago and where it is today. Each group made a brief presentation on their history and status quo. After a chat-filled lunch break, Stanton and Najera asked all to imagine what could be accomplished over the next five years.

"Be energized. Be creative. Leave your business back at the office," exhorted Susana Vasquez, LISC's newly-hired program officer for NCP and a former manager at The Resurrection Project.

And so they did, though some of the more seasoned groups, being old hands at the vision thing, were provocative from the start.

Rev. Finney, a longtime leader of The Woodlawn Organization now active with the Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corp., said the goal of community-based developers should be "to put ourselves out of business" once private investors take over.

James Capraro, longtime executive director of Greater Southwest Development Corporation and one of the savviest organizers in the city, asked his delegation at day's end if anybody wanted to quit. Hearing only silence, he asked each to prepare a list of "other people we need in this mix." Like politics, community building is about addition, and ultimately, multiplication.



Michelle Scheidt of Metropolitan Family Services served as recorder for the South Chicago community.

Big-picture thinking

Some of the most earnest discussions, however, took place at the tables of so-called "nascent" organizations—new coalitions of single-issue groups that are thinking big-picture for the first time.

Ald. Latasha Thomas (17th) said attitudes began changing in problem-plagued Auburn-Gresham in 1996, when Pastor Michael Pflieger called a seminal meeting at St. Sabina Catholic Church. Now the brainchild of that meeting—the Greater Auburn-Gresham Community Development Corporation—wants to move beyond trouble-shooting and into community-building.

The goal? "We're going to rebuild," she said, "block-by-block, until 17 is like 19." (A reference to the well-stocked ward to the west presided over by powerhouse Democratic Committeeman Thomas Hynes.)

Meanwhile, trooper Amanda Norman says she'll keep on copying the license plate numbers of strange cars that cruise her block at night for crack cocaine. But she admits now to a wider vision. She even voted for the motto every group was asked to coin for their neighborhood: "Auburn-Gresham: Gateway to quality, urbane living."

With a little help from NCP, who's to say the vision cannot become reality?



Lunchtime was an opportunity for participants from different neighborhoods to get to know one another.

AFTER DECADES OF FALSE STARTS, ENGLEWOOD HAS REASON FOR HOPE

By John McCarron

This is the place urban renewal came to die. It died during the early '70s, right here in Chicago, at the intersection of 63rd and Halsted Streets. By then, so much had been dying in the neighborhood called Englewood—shopping, housing, young men, hope for the future—that nobody mourned the end of that ham-handed method cities once used to erase their problems.

Which was just as well, because urban renewal often did far more harm than good. Englewood may be America's saddest example.

Then again, *something* had to be done about the population plunge that reduced this community to less than half of what it was in 1950; about the flight of merchants from what was, well into the '50s, Chicago's second busiest shopping district; about the fires and the demolitions, the board-ups and the blight.

"We need a success so big that others will join in."

Saul Klibanow, Pullman Bank Initiatives

But urban renewal didn't work. Nor did "slum clearance," the wholesale leveling of abandoned stores, houses and apartment buildings that left parts of Englewood looking like a weedy Tobacco Road. Nor did it help to "mall" the failing shopping district by diverting car traffic around it with Interstate-caliber loops of concrete. Federal urban renewal dollars were plentiful then, but no amount of clearance or concrete could stem the tide of unemployment and addiction, of dope dealing and murderous gang banging.

Why, then, is there a new optimism about Englewood?

Rebuilding the core

One reason is Mayor Richard M. Daley's announcement, in late 1999, of a quarter-billion-dollar makeover of the 63rd and Halsted area. A relocated Kennedy-King city college will rise there along with a new Washburne Culinary Institute, performing arts center and TV studio for WYCC/Channel 20.

To some this may sound like more top-down urban renewal. But this time it could be different. A local advisory commission is helping steer the college project and locate the new 7th District police station farther west on 63rd. Wieboldt's and Sears are long gone, but Walgreens plans a store at 63rd and Union and the city hopes to

recruit a grocery for the northwest corner of 63rd and Halsted.

Still missing was a community-based developer capable of bringing the all-important residential piece to the mix. Sure, there have been scattered success stories to the east, the most impressive being houses built and rehabbed by partnerships led by St. Bernard Hospital and Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. But their resources are stretched. The housing piece would require a broader, better-capitalized development team.

And the timing couldn't have been better. It happened that Saul Klibanow, president of Pullman Bank Initiatives, Inc., was looking for partners to do housing on the half-empty blocks that stretch away from the bank's buildings on 63rd.

"The Kennedy-King project is a great opportunity," said Klibanow, who previously developed affordable housing in South Shore and Rogers Park for a banking industry arm called Rescorp. "But how do you integrate a development like that into a residential neighborhood? It's not easy. But there's a chance here to do something with scale. A house here and a house there is a recipe for disaster. Englewood has had too many disasters. We need a success so big that others will join in."

It was city Commissioner Jack Markowski, whose Department of Housing also was looking



At the corner of 63rd and Halsted are NCP participants Saul Klibanow of Pullman Bank Initiatives (left) and Rev. Albert Shears of Greater Englewood United Methodist Church.



PHOTOS: MARTHA BROCK

The exodus of 57,000 residents since 1960 has left thousands of empty lots—but some buildings could still be saved.

for Englewood partners, who steered Klibanow to LISC/Chicago's senior program director, Andrew Mooney, and to LISC's New Communities Program.

Teamwork Englewood

The pieces and players fell into place: Pullman Bank Initiatives will partner with St. Bernard Hospital and Greater Englewood Parish United Methodist Church, with support from the two activist alderwomen whose wards meet at 63rd and Halsted—Shirley Coleman (16th) and Arenda Troutman (20th). Technical assistance will come from Lakefront Supportive Housing and Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), two of the city's premier housing organizations. Other partners are being recruited.

Called Teamwork Englewood, the coalition will use resources from LISC and the MacArthur Foundation to hire a full-time NCP director, organize a community planning process and begin developing a quality-of-life plan. They'll be working with the same group of professional planners—Camiros, Inc.—that is drawing up the city's plan for the area.

What's next?

"Whatever we do," said the Rev. Albert Shears, senior pastor of Greater Englewood United Methodist, "I can tell you it won't look like urban renewal. No more John Wayne from City Hall riding to the rescue. This time, regular folk will be at the table."

Could it be that a new community—their community—will rise from this fabled grave of urban renewal?

Contact: Saul Klibanow, Pullman Bank Initiatives, 773-602-8200, and Rev. Albert Shears, Greater Englewood Parish United Methodist Church, 773-651-1235.

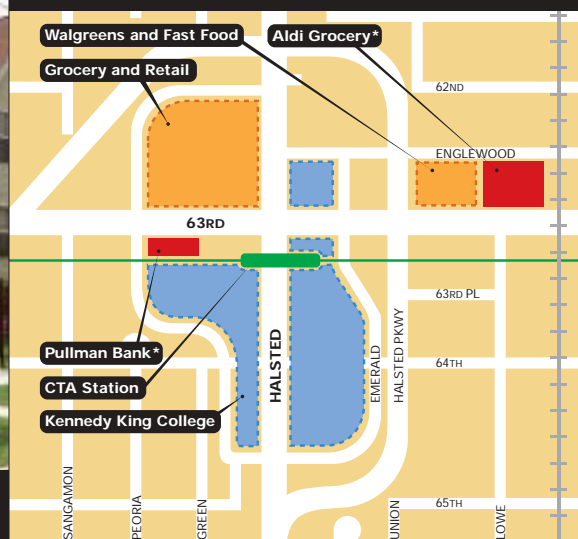


St. Bernard Hospital has helped bring new housing to streets nearby.

63RD AND HALSTED

Approximate location of planned developments

*Existing businesses



Englewood Community Area

POPULATION		
Population	40,222	Down 17% since 1990.
Pop. Chg. (1960-2000)	Down 57,373	30,000 left in 1970s.
Racial/Ethnic Makeup	98% Afr.-Amer.	Little change since 1960s.
HOUSING		
Housing units	15,210	Down 10.1% since 1990.
# of vacant units	2,591	Vacancy rate 17%.
Owner-occupied	31.5%	Rising as rentals are lost.
INCOME		
Pop. below poverty level	43.8%	6th highest of city's 77 areas.
Hsholds w/ pub. assistance	2,718 (21.6%)	8.7% use Section 8 housing.
Hsholds w/ income more than \$35,000/year	2,579 (20.4%)	573 have income over \$75,000.

Sources: U.S. Census data from www.chicagoreahousing.org and Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1984 and 1995. All figures are for 2000 unless noted.

COLLABORATORS BRING RESOURCES TO BOOST NCP NEIGHBORHOODS

Too much work, not enough resources. Even with two NCP staff positions at each lead agency and more support available via grants and technical assistance, no one is going to run out of work in the NCP neighborhoods. There is simply too much to do.

That's why the program will seek out citywide organizations and other collaborators that can contribute additional expertise and person-power. Several organizations have been lined up already and many more are expected as the program develops.

"We encourage organizations to identify specific needs where another group might be able to help," says Amanda Carney, LISC Program Officer and director of NCP. "We can help find the right partner or they might have an idea from their own experience."

The **Center for Economic Progress (CEP)**, for instance, has agreed to work with NCP neighborhoods to promote its tax-preparation services. Last year, CEP volunteers helped 14,700 eligible residents claim the Earned Income Tax Credit, bringing \$19.5 million in tax refunds. The tax prep site in Pilsen alone produced \$1.34 million for local residents.

Another NCP collaborator is **Neighborhood Housing Services**, which provides lending and construction expertise in many NCP neighborhoods. NHS will work with lead agencies to support community goals and leverage new resources for housing.

The **Chicago Park District** has worked with many community-based agencies to improve programming in its parks and to add open space; it has agreed to work with NCP neighborhoods that seek a partnership. Another group able to work on open space issues is the **Trust for Public Lands**, which has already consulted with the Southeast Chicago Development Commission, The Resurrection Project, Logan Square Neighborhood Assn. and Little Village CDC.

On the employment front, **Project Match** has brought its expertise and job-tracking software to employment centers started or expanded with LISC funding.

Other potential partners are **City of Chicago** departments (Planning and Development, Housing, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and others), local banks and other organizations with expertise in urban development issues.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD



PHOTO: SUE STEVENS

Garden team

Day campers at Russell Square Park in South Chicago helped maintain the new garden built last October with a \$30,550 grant from LISC. Along with raised beds, ornamental plantings and fencing, the garden features mosaic stepping stones, decorative painted benches and three branch sculptures made by residents under the guidance of three local artists.

Near West CDC organizes principals at eight schools

By Ed Finkel

Acting on community concerns that eight of its schools were on the state's warning list, the Near West Side Community Development Corp. began to meet with school principals in spring 2002. The resulting West Haven School Network is now up and running.

During one-on-one interviews, Near West Side CDC found the principals were not well informed about community issues and often did not know each other – but they had an interest in working together. The CDC secured a \$10,000 grant from LISC to develop the school network, which in turn created a strategic plan for community-school partnerships and undertook activities to increase cohesion.

The network developed a newsletter to applaud accomplishments of each school, established teacher training programs at University of Illinois at Chicago and began recruiting teachers from among the college's recent graduates. It also launched a pilot program with UIC and Malcolm X College to provide support for college-bound students, including prep classes for ACT and SAT tests.

The network is working with Victor Herbert Elementary to complete an oral history project, redesigning the community garden at Suder Elementary, helping prepare Crane High School students for a local and state history contest (which the students won locally), and holding a workshop at Best Practice High School on careers in community development.

Contact: Mark Payne, Near West Side CDC, 312-738-2279, markpayne@lycos.com

South Chicago extends day at community school

By Ed Finkel

It didn't make sense to the Southeast Chicago Development Commission (SCDCoM) that schools would close their doors every afternoon and shut down completely each summer. Why not stay open into the evenings so that students and parents could use the facility?

The concept of "community schools" is being embraced in cities around the nation, and after three years of trying, SCDCoM has raised the funds to extend the day at the New Sullivan School, 8331 S. Mackinaw.

With nearly \$225,000 raised from the Illinois State Board of Education's 21st Century Community Schools Program, the McDougal Family Foundation, Chicago Public Schools and LISC, the K-8 school began offering academic and sports programs this summer. It will add evening activities in the fall, possibly arts-and-crafts, band, puppetry, quilting, computers, G.E.D. or English as a Second Language (ESL).

"We've been working to make it a community school for a long time," says Mary Karen Reynolds, SCDCoM's NCP director. The funding "allows us to keep the building open until 7 or 8 at night."

Some fall activities will be open to parents and teachers, Reynolds says. A committee of parents and residents will decide what should be offered based on the results of a request-for-proposals. "There will be a tech component for sure," says Reynolds, but the rest is wide open. "One guy proposed a jewelry class."

Contact: Mary Karen Reynolds, SCDCoM, 773-731-8755, ext. 20, mreynolds@southeastchicago.org



PHOTO: PATRICK BARRY

Mural honors elders who fought stadium plan

Nearly 100 residents turned out August 8 for a mural unveiling at Victor Herbert School, 2131 W. Monroe in West Haven. The mural was dedicated to 30 senior citizens who led opposition to a Bears stadium in the 1980s. "Six of our residents lived at Monroe and Damen, where the Bears wanted their stadium," recounted Earnest Gates, NCP director for the Near West Side CDC. "Tersia Cornell told the Bears that they would have to settle with the whole community before the six homeowners would discuss any deal." The Bears later withdrew their proposal, and the subsequent building of the United Center included a partnership with the neighborhood. The mural was painted by sixth through eighth graders under direction of artist Yamani Hernandez, and funded by LISC/Chicago.

St. Edmund's inks deal on CHA townhouses

By John McCarron

It took nearly 10 years of give-and-take negotiation, but St. Edmund's Meadows promises to be worth the wait. It's the latest undertaking of St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corporation (SERC), the church-based dynamo leading the revival of the Washington Park neighborhood. It's also the first time the Chicago Housing Authority has sold apartments to a not-for-profit for rehab.

Under the \$9 million plan, a SERC investment partnership will purchase and rehab all seven buildings and 56 apartments of the CHA's Washington Park scattered sites—the largest cluster of which is across from the Episcopal church on the 6100 block of South Michigan Avenue.

After the grim, project-style row houses are transformed into bright, state-of-the-art townhouses, a quarter of the units will be leased back to CHA and qualified public housing tenants. Another 31 will be leased, at affordable rents, to families earning less than 60 percent of the area median income. Eleven will be marketed to the middle-class families that are beginning to return to Washington Park. LISC helped secure pre-development financing for the Meadows, and will be helping SERC develop a wider plan for Washington Park via the New Communities Program.

Contact: Rev. Richard Tolliver, St. Edmund's, 773-288-0038

PEOPLE & PLACES

NCP staffing news

Lead agencies were busy this summer interviewing candidates for the new positions of NCP director and organizer. Among the positions filled so far:

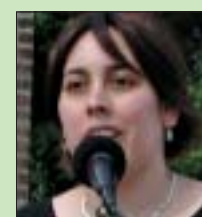
Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corp. has hired **Nicole Johnson** as NCP director. Formerly a client-service-section manager for Northern Trust Company, she is a St. Sabina parishioner and has been very active in the community.

Donna Stites has been named NCP director at the Greater Southwest Development Corp. She previously served as a director and manager with nonprofit and public entities in Boston.

Gwen O'Connor Griffin (at left) will be NCP organizer for the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance. She has extensive community service experience in Garfield Park and



citywide through positions with Centers for New Horizons, Westside Health Authority, Chicago Park District and Neighborhood Housing Services.



Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp. has promoted **Dena Al-Khatib** (at left) to be NCP director. She chairs the housing committee of the Humboldt

Park Empowerment Partnership.

Adriana E. López is the new NCP director for Little Village CDC. The former associate coordinator of the Pilsen/Little Village Information Center hopes to upgrade outreach and communications to younger Mexican-Americans.

Stanley Merriweather will serve as NCP director for the Lawndale Christian Development Corp.

New CDC formed

A new community development corporation was formed to take advantage of the opportunities of the New Communities Program. The **Quad Communities Development Corp.** was incorporated to serve parts of four Chicago community areas: Grand Boulevard, Douglas, Oakland and North Kenwood. Ald. Toni Preckwinkle helped get the organization off the ground.

The New Communities Program serves 16 Chicago communities through these 14 lead agencies:

Auburn Gresham

Auburn Gresham Community Development Corp.

Chicago Lawn

Greater Southwest Development Corp.

Douglas, Grand Boulevard and North Kenwood-Oakland

Quad Communities Development Corp.

East Garfield Park

Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance

Englewood

Teamwork Englewood

Humboldt Park

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp.

Little Village (South Lawndale)

Little Village Community Development Corp.

Logan Square

Logan Square Neighborhood Assn.

North Lawndale

Lawndale Christian Development Corp.

Pilsen (Lower West Side)

The Resurrection Project

South Chicago

Southeast Chicago Development Commission

Washington Park

St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corp.

West Haven (Near West Side)

Near West Side Community Development Corp.

Woodlawn

Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corp.

WHAT'S NCP?

SERIOUS RESPONSE TO TOUGHEST URBAN CHALLENGES

By Patrick Barry

To anyone who knows Chicago, it is a daunting list. The 16 neighborhoods in the New Communities Program face some of the most vexing issues in urban America. Abandonment. Gentrification. Racial change. Redevelopment of public housing. Disconnection from the main-stream economy.

South Chicago is a once-thriving neighborhood humbled by the closing of three steel mills. Woodlawn and Englewood and North Lawndale underwent rapid racial turnover followed by decades of disinvestment and population loss. Oakland's old public housing is being demolished and its residents relocated until new housing is built. These are bleak and worn-out neighborhoods waiting – hoping – for better times.

Much different are West Haven and Humboldt Park and Logan Square, squarely in the path of a gentrification tidal wave. As new residents arrive, they trigger deep concerns about displacement of existing residents, racial and class tension and loss of community ties.

The New Communities Program is a serious, long-term response to these challenges, and it is ambitious. With support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and others, the program seeks to bring together the right combination of resources to revive

stagnant neighborhoods, stabilize those facing decline and lessen the displacement that gentrification can bring.

The approach, called comprehensive community development, helped revive large tracts of the South Bronx in New York and has shown promise over the past few years in a LISC/Chicago pilot project in three neighborhoods.

"LISC's comprehensive approach makes sense to us and we are pleased to help put it to work at an even bigger scale," said Jonathan F. Fanton, President

"Resources and promise in every neighborhood."

Jonathan F. Fanton, MacArthur Foundation

of the MacArthur Foundation. "There are challenges, but there are also untapped resources and promise in every neighborhood. The New Communities Program will enable us all to work together to strengthen those neighborhoods and help them realize the full potential of the people who live in them."

Part of the NCP formula is that efforts in each community are coordinated by a lead agency. Over the past year, LISC/Chicago chose an intentionally diverse mix of old-pro community development corporations, fledgling groups with solid

connections and single-issue organizations ready to try new tools.

A key building block is community planning. Each neighborhood will organize a planning process that looks beyond housing and commercial uses to schools, health needs, youth programming and recreation.

Collaborating organizations will bring expertise in housing, violence prevention, employment and creation of parks. The lead agencies will be encouraged to learn from each other and hook up with adjacent neighborhoods to build on each other's gains.

And finally there is money. MacArthur has committed \$12.5 million for the first five years to cover two NCP staffers at each agency plus seed money for projects. LISC/Chicago will pump in \$5 million of its own resources and help leverage private and public funding to buy land, jump-start developments and provide technical assistance. All told, perhaps \$100 million can be brought to the task.

"We're looking for innovation, flexibility, partnerships and tangible results," said Andy Mooney, LISC/Chicago's senior program director, at a kickoff meeting with lead agencies in March. "We want you to do things that you've been thinking about for 10 years but haven't known how to do. You'll learn by doing, and we are all going to have to be on top of our game to succeed."



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Power planning: Greater SW to interview 100 residents

By Ed Finkel

NCP participants in Chicago Lawn are using a tried-and-true organizing approach to launch their quality-of-life planning process. They are interviewing 100 leaders from various walks of life.

Senior staff from the Greater Southwest Development Corp. and Southwest Organizing Project drew up a "short list" of leaders with interests ranging from business and education to healthcare and religion. "We created a spreadsheet almost on the fly," says Jim

Capraro, executive director of Greater Southwest. In addition to names and contact info, the spreadsheet included notes on leadership ability and that person's potential to influence systems. "Once we put in those last two columns, we said, 'this list is highly secretive,'" Capraro says with a laugh.

The two groups had conducted 40 interviews by early August, asking what each person sees as the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. The interviewers also took down a thumbnail profile of each participant that included data like ethnicity and how long they had lived in Chicago Lawn.

"We wanted a snapshot of perceptions of the neighborhood from people we consider to be leaders," Capraro says. "But we're not just doing 100 interviews and then we're done. We want to gather data, but we also want to create the relationship. Those relationships become the human capital to ensure that the New Communities Program is successful."

Capraro doesn't expect there will be clear, easy answers on what the neighborhood needs. "So what if it's complicated?" he says. "People are complicated and communities are complicated."

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