WASHINGTON PARK: Historic, Vibrant, Proud and Healthy
The Washington Park neighborhood is immediately west of the park of the same name. It has excellent transportation access via CTA rail and bus routes and the Dan Ryan Expressway.
Planning Process: A Historic Coming Together

The 2007 election of a new 20th Ward alderman and the inclusion of Washington Park as the centerpiece of Chicago’s 2016 Olympic bid provided the impetus to launch quality-of-life planning in this historic South Side community. Alderman Willie B. Cochran convened the first meeting of local stakeholders on December 28, 2007. The stakeholders formed a steering committee that organized subsequent meetings, identified community leaders and issued an open invitation to join in the planning.

The first meeting of the full Washington Park Community Planning Task Force, on March 29, 2008, marked the beginning of a nine-month process that involved about 200 residents and stakeholders representing dozens of local organizations, churches and institutions. The process built on earlier community improvement efforts led by St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation during the first five years of LISC/Chicago’s New Communities Program. Participants in the 2008 process included residents, church leaders, business owners, homeowners, community advocates, a major university, several neighborhood associations and other stakeholders.

Steering Committee

Alderman Willie B. Cochran, 20th Ward, convener
Dr. John Awah, Korle Bu Health Center
Rev. Torrey Barrett, Life Center Church of God in Christ
Rev. Walter Bauldrick, Coppin Memorial A.M.E.
Gregg Brown, South Side Community Federal Credit Union
Rev. Bill Brown, Christ Unity Evangelical
Kimberly Cook, 311 Chicago City Services
Alderman Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward
Timothy Gallagher, Great Lakes Radio
Donna Hampton-Smith, 5th District Office of Illinois State Rep.
  Ken Dunkin
Cecelia Hunt, St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation
Hon. Mattie Hunter, State Senator, Illinois General Assembly
Judy Minor-Jackson, Chicago Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning
Brandon Johnson, Ex officio member
Murray Johnson, Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Rev. Jesse Knox, III, Church of the Good Shepherd
Karin Norington-Reaves, 20th Ward Public Service Office
Sonya Malunda, University of Chicago
Will Malone, Formerly with Chicago Department of Planning and Development
Della Mitchell, Brand New Beginnings
Joyce Moran, Coppin Memorial A.M.E.
Bishop Edward Peecher, Chicago Embassy Church
Cynthia Smith, It’s Your Hood 2
Lanyaird Smith, Washington Park Chamber of Commerce
Rev. Richard Tolliver, St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation
Joanna Trotter, Ex officio member, Metropolitan Planning Council
Shaan Trotter, Lurie Cancer Center of Northwestern University
Task Force

Delores Allen
Lionel Alonzo
Israel Anchon
Zahra Baker
Tasha Baker
Debra Banks
Joseph Banks
Kenneth Beasley
Leon Berean
Alvin Black
Jennifer Blackman
Myer Blank
Leeswann Bolden
Joe Bouden
Leroy Bowers
Cynthia Bowers
Saundra Brady
Wallace Budy
Danielle Brown
Denise Brown
G. Bruce
Linda Bryant
Cecilia Butler
Eugene Carr
Edward Chaney
Monique Cook-Bey
Cheryl Corcoran
Joseph Cotton
Rev. John Crawford
Curtis Daniel
Antonio Daniels
Mary Datcher
Margaret Davis
Helen Davis
Leolien Davis
Marcia Day
Augusta Deans
Laura Derks
Shirley Dorsey
Michelle Doty
Andrea Earles
Eve Earles
JoAnn Earls
Hal Eason
LaJuanda Evans
Blackmon Family
Ghian Foreman
Patricia J. Fox
Clarence Gaines
Darrell Gibson
Quin. R. Golden
Michelle Goree-Frazier
David Granberry
S. Gray
Hurley Green
Jennifer Greene
Cornelia Gumbus
Dorese Hall
Josephine Harris
Victor Harris
Catherine Haskins
Helen Havis
Belinda Henderson
Jewelle Hicks
Elisabeth Higgins
Earl Hightower
Shirley Hill
Thomas Holman
A. Houston
Denise Hughes
Pasha Hunt-Golliday
Carlette Hyde
Alonzo Jackson
Shirley Jackson
Jamesetta James
Evelina Jauregui
Mario Jauregui
Celestine Jeffries
Benjamin Johnson
Martha Johnson
Raquel Jone
Patricia Jones
Arnold Kas
Madiem Kawa
Hyacynthia Lanier
J. Lansing
Dorothy Lawson
Maurice Lee (20th Ward Office)
Joyce LeFlore
Yvette LeGrand
Valerie Leonard
Wallace Louis
Berrenda Love-Lewi
Harold Lucas
Loretta Mann
Dr. Amina Cora Mayo
Michael McClinton
Marilyn McCoy
Don McCoy
Viola McKenzie
M.F. McKenzie
Ernest Melendez
Nikol Miller
Yolanda Miller
Latoya Mills
Eric Mitchell
Melinda Mitchell
Angela Moore (20th Ward Office)
Lincoln Morris
Dollie Nash
Brenda Nelson
Karim Norington-Reaves (20th Ward Office)
Jon O'Brien
Louis Outlaw
Niche Owens
Veronica Paige
Felicia Papafo
Sharon Parker
Barbara Patterson
Deborah Payne
Touré Peck
Andrea Perkins
Karen Phillips
Victoria Pole
Adele Polk
Lorraine Powell
Dawn Prather-Hawk
Stephany Price
Chris Ragsio
Dr. Mikal Ramadan
Benedette Rapier
Kim Reese
Evan Riley
Denise Rimmon
Genita C. Robinson
Carl Rogers
Suzanne Rosenberg
Fred Royster
Consuelo Rudder (20th Ward Office)
Janaka Sanford
Barbara Satterson
Donald Seals
Edgar Shorter
Antoinette Simmons
Ora Simmons
Allen Smith
Frances Smith
Jas Smith
Bane Stevens
Latrice Stovall
Randell Strickland
Henry Sutton Jr.
Althea Taylor
Deborah Taylor
R.C. Thomas
Seena Thompson
Pamela Thornton
Anthony Tobias
Robin Toewe
Regina Tramble
Carl Tunstall
Annie Turner
Rashad Ummani
Kevin Vinson
Dave Walker
Selma Walker
Tonya Walker
Willie Wheeler
Dr. Eric Whiraker
Kelvin White
Wesley Wiley
Odessa Woodall
Henry Woodall
Natalie Woodall
Nathan Wright
Yolanda Wright

This list was compiled from sign-in sheets for planning meetings and may not include all participants. Our apologies for any misspellings or omissions.
A New Era for Washington Park

Our neighborhood of Washington Park is home to a beautiful 372-acre park, wide boulevards, vibrant churches and classic greystone and terracotta buildings. We are a historic South Side African-American community ripe for change and ready to make that change happen.

Major transportation and cultural resources shaped our neighborhood in its earliest days and remain among our greatest assets. Construction of the park and Grand Boulevard (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) in the 1880s spurred construction of elegant mansions and more-modest housing nearby for Irish and German railroad workers. When the South Side elevated line connected downtown to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Jackson Park, our neighborhood boomed. By the 1920s, Washington Park had become a southern extension of Chicago’s famous “Black Belt,” offering some of the best housing available to African-Americans in Chicago.

Since then our community has come full circle. During the great Black Migration to Chicago from the South, the area’s large apartments were subdivided into smaller ones, which created overcrowded conditions and led to severe deterioration of the housing stock. Urban renewal brought demolition of hundreds of buildings as land was cleared for the Robert Taylor Homes public housing towers near 53rd and State Streets. Those 16-story concrete high-rises, at the southern end of a two-mile corridor of 28 buildings, became a breeding ground for social problems and were finally demolished in 2007.

Our community has been losing population for 60 years, from a peak of 57,000 in 1950 to a 2005 U.S. Census estimate of less than 13,000. This means that, once again, our future is one of growth.

Setting a new path

In December 2007, the newly elected alderman, Willie B. Cochran, convened a quality-of-life planning process to begin shaping this new chapter in our history. Through monthly meetings and workshops over the following year, we engaged more than 200 people and learned from each other that Washington Park has many assets still. We hammered out a vision and defined a new path that respects our history while responding to new opportunities.

Now is a critical moment for Washington Park. Thanks to long effort by our churches, property owners and community organizations, the neighborhood is building again. There are new brick townhouses on Michigan Avenue and other streets, freshly rehabbed condominiums in six-flats.
and greystones, and several recent non-profit housing developments. In 2008, the University of Chicago purchased land and buildings along Garfield Boulevard west of the park, seeking a long-term stake in our neighborhood. And while this plan was being developed, Chicago was preparing its bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games, with Washington Park at the very center of the festivities.

Neighborhood stakeholders consider the Olympic bid and the University of Chicago land purchases as both opportunities and threats. While they may bring new investment and trigger implementation of projects in this plan, they also could repeat urban-renewal mistakes of the past that displaced residents or reshaped communities without the input of local residents. We intend to be full participants in decisions about our neighborhood’s future, and will use this plan to guide development.

We face other challenges as well. The loss of some 9,000 housing units since 1970 and a recent wave of foreclosures mean that many buildings are boarded and some blocks have only a few buildings left – or none at all. We have been one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods for many years, with roughly half of individuals and families living below the poverty level in 2000. Five of our six local elementary schools perform in the bottom half of all Chicago schools, according to a 2004 analysis by IFF (formerly Illinois Facilities Fund). And for children and families throughout the neighborhood, safety and gang activity are major concerns.

Building on strengths

But the potential remains to thrive once more. CTA Green Line and Red Line stations provide excellent access to downtown. The Dan Ryan Expressway is steps away. We have major employment centers nearby, including the University of Chicago, with 15,000 employees, Midway Airport, and the southwest industrial corridor. And our vacant land represents opportunities for in-fill housing, commercial development and new green space, all of which can be accomplished without displacement of residents.

Most importantly, both newcomers and longtime residents see Washington Park on the rise. Before the nation’s economic crisis slowed down the housing market, we experienced major new investment in housing by both black professionals and working-class families who want to contribute to the area’s rebirth. The Washington Park Chamber of Commerce was formed to support business development, and churches stepped forward as leaders for the community’s future.

Spirituality has always been important to Washington Park, with eight major congregations and many storefront churches alive with religious fervor. Older and well-established congregations, like St. Edmund’s Episcopal Church, Coppin Memorial A.M.E., and Church of the Good Shepherd, have coupled spiritual missions with social causes by creating and rehabbing housing developments. Chicago Embassy Church runs a rites-of-passage program.
for youth and led a protest against a scrap metal business accused of accepting stolen items. Other faith-based organizations run after-school programs, a community center and youth mentoring programs. Whether church leaders are putting together a choir or registering voters, their commitment runs deep.

We also have a committed base of more than 100 businesses including small grocery stores, fast-food restaurants, gas stations, barbershops, nail and hair salons and home-based businesses. There are a few new businesses, like the Korle Bu Medical Center, a comprehensive health care facility, Great Lakes Radio Big Gospel Express, and strong institutions such as the South Side Community Federal Credit Union. A 2006 estimate by LISC/MetroEdge found that our neighborhood has $93 million in annual spending power, of which more than two-thirds is spent in other neighborhoods. We want to capture that spending by attracting a larger and more diverse base of businesses.

**History in the making**

This new era will build on our proud past. Our physical heritage remains visible in historical treasures on many local streets, and we seek to reuse these facilities as redevelopment anchors. The 1870 Raber House on Lafayette Avenue will become the centerpiece of a new 10-acre park. Commercial buildings along Garfield Boulevard include the elaborately decorated Shulze Bakery (1914), which should be redeveloped for retail and housing uses, and the oldest CTA station house in the city (1892), which could become a coffee shop or neighborhood meeting place.

We would like to see renovation of our classic terra-cotta corner buildings to provide new space for retail businesses and affordable housing on the second floor.

And we will celebrate our history as a center of African-American life. In the basement of the Church of Good Shepherd, where several of our 2008 planning meetings took place, the sociologist Horace Cayton began the research for his famous portrayal of life in Chicago’s segregated neighborhoods, *Black Metropolis*. Later Cayton’s operations moved north to the 1899 Chicago Orphan Asylum building at 5120 S. King Drive. Now home to the Chicago Baptist Institute, the building was granted preliminary landmark status in December 2008. A few blocks east of our neighborhood, at 6140 S. Rhodes in Woodlawn, is the home that playwright Lorraine Hansberry made famous in *A Raisin in the Sun*, the story of black families struggling to find housing in a racist marketplace.
Figure 2 Community assets

This plan will build on the neighborhood’s existing assets, including churches, schools, community organizations, historic landmarks and cultural and recreational resources.

Organizations and Other Assets
1. ACCES Grand Blvd Health Center
2. South Side Federal Credit Union
3. Schulze Baking Company
4. Chicago Youth Center
5. Chicago Youth Programs Community Center
6. K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center
7. Korfe Bu Medical Clinic
8. Park District Recreational Programs
9. Grand Metropolitan Outreach Program
10. Greater WP Community Development Corp
11. Brand New Beginnings
12. WP Neighborhood Association
13. WBGX Great Lakes Gospel Radio
14. It’s Your Hood 2
15. St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corp (SERC housing developments)
16. Leadership Development Training Institute
17. Housing for Homeless Men
18. Yancy Boys & Girls Club
19. Midway Plaza
20. 20th Ward Office
21. ACE Technical Charter High School
22. Beasley Elementary School
23. Burke Elementary School
24. Carter Elementary School
25. Ross Elementary School
26. CICS-WP Charter School
27. DuSable Elementary School
28. University of Chicago
29. Berean Baptist Church
30. Greater Harvest M.B. Church
31. First Unity M.B. Church
32. St. Mary A.M.E. Church
33. Cosmopolitan Community Church
34. Greater Bethesda M.B. Church
35. Hopeful M.B. Church
36. Holy Trinity M.B. Church
37. New Philadelphia Baptist Church
38. Chicago City Church
39. Life Center Church of God in Christ
40. St. Martin’s Church of Christ
41. Coppin A.M.E. Church
42. Gotham United Methodist Church
43. Church of the Good Shepherd
44. Chicago Embassy Church
45. St. Anselm’s Church
46. R. St. Edmund’s Church
47. S. Christ Unity Evangelical Church

Historical Landmarks
1. Chicago Baptist Church
2. Former El Station
3. Raber House
4. Statue of the Republic

Parks & Recreation
1. Washington Park
2. Museum of Science & Industry

Cultural Facilities
1. Refactory & Pool
2. DuSable Museum
3. South Shore Cultural Center
Finally, there is Washington Park itself, a national landmark because of its Frederick Law Olmsted landscape and its historic structures, including the glassed-in Refectory and the DuSable Museum of African American History. Our residents use the park for major festivals, family celebrations, softball games, fishing and jogging. Since 1930, it has been the traditional ending place for the annual Bud Billiken Parade, a celebration of African-American youth and one of the largest parades in the country. If Chicago’s Olympic bid is successful, the park will become the site of the Olympic stadium and swimming facilities, and we will be involved in planning for their use after the Games are over.

The Washington Park Consortium
One of the challenges identified during the planning process was the need for an organization that could bring together the neighborhood’s many groups and stakeholders and coordinate the work of implementing this plan. Our first few meetings were sometimes contentious, in fact, as neighborhood leaders expressed concerns about who the planning was for (we’ve seen many plans over the years but few have benefited our neighborhood) and whether planning would support outside interests rather than the neighborhood and its residents.

But we found over the months of meetings that our churches, community groups and residents all share common goals – and that we can accomplish more if we work together. To guide that work, the Washington Park Steering Committee has formed a new nonprofit organization, the Washington Park Consortium.

Members of the Consortium have already begun implementation of this plan’s 10 strategies. With seed grants from LISC/Chicago, the South Side Community Federal Credit Union began offering checking accounts and expanded its foreclosure counseling; the Life Center Church of God In Christ expanded youth programming at its K.L.E.O. Family Life Center; and Brand New Beginnings extended its outreach to women and families in transition. The Washington Park Advisory Council procured furniture and equipment for its computer technology center and offered a Spring Break Day Camp focused on sports. Seed projects are intended to leverage additional investments. A small grant to Good Shepherd Community Services Organization for youth pre-apprenticeship training in trades such as painting attracted an additional $250,000 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Much more work is ahead, and it will take all of us – along with outside partners – to implement the 59 projects in this plan. “Each of us has to take part, each of us has to participate,” said Cecelia Hunt of St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation, who served on the steering committee. She added that there are opportunities for every individual and every group in the community, no matter how small.

“I think this whole process was much needed and very beneficial,” said Latoya Mills, a 10-year resident of the neighborhood. “I plan to stay here,” she said. “I like the idea of everyone coming together.”
Historic, Vibrant, Proud and Healthy

A vibrant neighborhood that shares its name with the beautiful public space to the east, Washington Park will offer cultural opportunities, housing for all income levels, and a safe environment. We are building on the rich history and culture of Washington Park to offer world-class opportunities for youth, adults and senior citizens through quality education, active and committed residents and a robust economy. We have a vested interest in the place where we live, work and worship and we are committed to serving the needs of all segments of the community. We share a vision of collective success and are committed to working together. Our aim is to improve a neighborhood we already feel proud to call home.

We also believe it is time to strengthen our community-based and faith-based organizations and forge new partnerships to buttress our rebuilding effort and to protect the neighborhood’s interests should proposals for the 2016 Olympics become reality. Our vision for the neighborhood, however, extends beyond the Olympics and is rooted in our commitment to our home: Washington Park.
Improve community health.
Create new park at Raber House
Fill vacant lots with new housing
Support senior citizens
Connect people to jobs
Attract retail stores
Organize forums
Develop block clubs
Create advisory committees
Expand local capacity
Expand local capacity
Our strategies: Ten Paths to a Stronger Future

1. **Build** community capacity to ensure Washington Park benefits from future development plans including the 2016 Olympic bid.
2. **Proclaim** and celebrate Washington Park’s proud past.
3. **Create** an environment where people are safe and accountable.
4. **Provide** a range of housing choices that support existing residents and attract new residents.
5. **Support** development of businesses and retail stores.

6. **Build** partnerships to improve employment options.
7. **Support** healthy lifestyles and better health care.
8. **Provide** supervised activities to engage young people.
9. **Support** youth and adults in and outside of schools.
10. **Provide** solid services and promote active participation in the golden years.
STRATEGY 1

Build community capacity to ensure Washington Park benefits from future development plans including the 2016 Olympic bid

Now is the time in the lifecycle of our community to build up the organizations, leaders and partnerships necessary to rebuild our housing stock and preserve the assets that represent our past and will shape our future.

Whether or not Chicago is chosen to host the 2016 Olympics, our neighborhood must create the social and organizational infrastructure to manage future development plans and ensure that new investments are in alignment with this plan.

We have the building blocks in place – churches, community organizations, involved residents and businesses – but we must expand the capabilities of these resources so that they can be full partners in the future development of Washington Park.

1.1 Build capacity of non-profit, cultural and faith-based organizations.
Our local organizations are an important part of community life, offering services to seniors, youth programs, organizing and development of affordable housing. We will work to expand and strengthen these good works by bringing technical assistance and other supports that increase program skills, assess strengths and challenges, and chart future opportunities.

1.2 Collect and evaluate information that supports decision making.
Solid research and analysis will be vital as the community implements this plan. We will:
- Collect data on physical and mental health needs so that we can improve access to health services;
- Develop an up-to-date profile of the housing stock, demographics and land use;
- Create a database of educational, social and recreational programs, youth services and youth advocates; and
- Conduct surveys and project mapping to identify programs for senior citizens and determine their needs and desires.

1.3 Promote strategies and actions that can be integrated with major development efforts such as the 2016 Olympic bid.
The vision and recommendations contained in this plan are achievable and viable with or without Chicago being selected as the host city for the 2016 Olympics. However, we will seek to fully leverage any investments and infrastructure improvements related to the Olympics and any other major development efforts in and around Washington Park. If the Chicago Olympic bid is successful, we expect it to add greater urgency to implementation of this plan.

1.4 Support and develop block clubs.
We will offer resources and expertise to existing block clubs and organize new ones to increase engagement, uncover talent and build support for community improvements. Whether the issue is civic engagement, public safety, youth programming, education, city services or business development, block clubs can offer leadership, vision, feedback, resources and critiques, all while keeping residents involved.

1.5 Establish community advisory committees.
We will develop active advisory committees around major issues to ensure resident participation in ward and neighborhood activities and decision-making, and to foster a sense of community involvement and empowerment. The committees will also cultivate local leadership and build up the skills, knowledge and interests of residents.

1.6 Organize regular community forums.
Our organizations and leaders will sponsor regular forums to provide opportunities to share information and receive feedback as developments occur, and to offer leaders, organizations, advocates and residents a way to track projects and stay involved.
STRATEGY 2

Proclaim and celebrate Washington Park’s proud past

Washington Park has a proud history as part of Chicago’s “Black Belt,” the group of South Side neighborhoods where African-Americans of all income levels lived and worked in a highly segregated city. The neighborhood’s history represents the whole cycle of African-American migration, from the first major population shift in the 1920s to the overcrowded 1950s to the urban renewal that brought the Robert Taylor Homes public housing development.

Neighborhood residents want this history – and what came before and after – to be preserved through oral traditions, local landmarks and reuse of older buildings as centerpieces of a rebuilt community. These projects honor the meaning of the African term *sankofa* – looking backward to move forward.

2.1 Recruit elders to recount the history of the neighborhood.
Oral histories, presentations at schools and displays about the community’s history will help residents and newcomers understand that Washington Park has played a key role as an African-American community in Chicago. Social gatherings with a historic theme will be organized to highlight the neighborhood’s history and reinforce its cultural identity.

2.2 Preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings.
Our streets and boulevards include many fine buildings from the late 19th or early 20th centuries, including greystone two-flats, wood-frame houses, terra-cotta commercial buildings and brick courtyard buildings. We are fortunate to have a number of irreplaceable historic structures that should be restored; new developments should be designed so that they blend architecturally with the older structures.
- The Schulz Bakery building on Garfield Boulevard, where Butternut Bread was made, could become a highly visible neighborhood gateway;
- The 1892 stationhouse on Garfield Boulevard, the oldest remaining in the CTA system, could become a coffee house or community meeting place;
- The 1870 Raber House on Lafayette Avenue is slated for restoration on 10 acres of new parkland; and
- Attractive terra-cotta storefront buildings, such as those at 61st and King Drive and Garfield Blvd. at Prairie Avenue, should be preserved as commercial anchors whenever feasible.

2.3 Become part of the proposed Black Metropolis District National Heritage Area.
This proposed district, encompassing most of Chicago’s original “Bronzeville” communities, provides a vehicle for telling the story of Washington Park and other neighborhoods that were the city’s base for African-American families and institutions.

2.4 Celebrate the history and culture of the Chicago Park District’s Washington Park through its historic landmarks and boulevards.
We will develop walking tours or trolley tours to highlight the 372-acre Washington Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux. The park includes landmarks such as the 1881 Refectory, used for community meetings and events, and the 1910 administrative building, which houses the DuSable Museum of African American History. Tours will also highlight the park’s extensive recreational facilities, its lagoon and the nearby “streetwall” of brick apartments and condominiums on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

2.5 Preserve housing along King Drive.
We recognize the beauty and value of our “front door” along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and will support preservation of this well-preserved row of historic buildings. We also will seek development of new housing on vacant parcels along the street, stressing the need for sensitive design and similar heights to reinforce the street’s strong sense of place.
STRATEGY 3

Create an environment where people are safe and accountable

Many residents during the planning process expressed concerns about safety on our streets. Our solutions go well beyond working more closely with the local 2nd District Police.

Our vision is to create a more attractive, more engaging environment along our residential streets and on our commercial corners. Residents and visitors will feel safer if the streets and sidewalks are clean, if storefronts are inviting and well maintained, if youth are engaged in positive activities, and if there are fewer vacant lots and boarded-up buildings. We believe that all members of our community have a vested interest in improving behavior and unattractive environments.

Safety is a cross-cutting issue that depends on implementation of many other strategies in this plan. But we can begin the work through the small, achievable projects listed below.

3.1 Organize beautification and cleanup efforts.
We will develop group efforts to clean up and inventory vacant lots, mount periodic beautification projects and create new community gardens (see Project 7.5). We will provide community recognition such as trophies for the best efforts. To maintain and improve our public landscapes over the long term, we will explore use of resources such as Cleanslate, a workforce-training initiative that provides cleaning and landscaping services. We will also investigate use of the county’s Manpower program.

3.2 Build stronger partnerships between community and police.
Our streets will become safer as we build stronger relationships with officers and leaders of the 2nd District of the Chicago Police Department. We will do this through beat meetings and through special efforts such as a planned cotillion for youth sponsored by the police and local businesses. To bring residents and police together, we will encourage:
- Outdoor roll calls, outdoor beat meetings, gatherings at transit stops and “Know Your Neighbor” outreach that encourages more participation;
- Creation of police substations at transit stops or other appropriate areas; and
- Promotion of safety and beautification at block parties and community events, with participation of police officers to help build relationships with youth and adults.

3.3 Involve youth in safety and beautification efforts by awarding service-learning hours.
To engage more local youth in community-building activities, we will work with local high schools and community organizations to provide structured programs that qualify students for the 40 hours of service-learning activities required for graduation.

3.4 Stress personal accountability and consistent law enforcement.
We will recruit residents, youth and business owners as partners on safety issues and work together to hold all segments of the community accountable, including those who are sworn to protect and serve the community.
- Organizations, churches and community leaders will encourage men in the community to take leadership roles in improving safety.
- The community will ask 2nd District Police to enforce ordinances for property standards and public peace, and to write tickets for violations of traffic laws and street-cleaning regulations.
- Residents and police will work together to show that the community has standards that must be respected. For instance, visitors to Washington Park who linger in vacant lots after the park closes will be required to respect laws and the community.

3.5 Increase parent participation on safety issues, after-school programs and youth activities.
We recognize parents as key partners in developing a safer neighborhood and will recruit them to participate in parent safety patrols, as aides in classrooms, on school buses, at beat meetings with police officers, in after-school activities and at community events. Where such programs do not yet exist, we will work with parents to create them.
STRATEGY 4

Provide a range of housing choices that support existing residents and attract new residents

Though our neighborhood was once fully built up, with nearly 57,000 residents in 1950, today’s Washington Park has many vacant or boarded buildings and hundreds of vacant lots. The U.S. Census estimated the 2005 population at less than 13,000 people.

We need new investment in housing on a broad scale: rehabilitation of buildings for existing residents, new affordable rental housing, and new for-sale housing at various price levels to attract new residents.

But to attract new investment, we must first confront the foreclosure crisis that threatens to remove even more of our housing stock. A 2009 study by the Woodstock Institute found 163 foreclosure filings in 2008 in Washington Park, the highest rate per 1,000 properties of all Chicago neighborhoods. Because 40 percent of these foreclosures are in multi-unit buildings, they affect renters as well as owners.

Our vision emphasizes maintaining affordability. It is important to us that longtime residents, seniors and working families not be priced out of Washington Park as the community improves. But we also recognize that our neighborhood can benefit by increasing homeownership options and increasing the percentage of owner-occupied buildings. Much of the new housing can be constructed as “in-fill” housing on vacant lots throughout the neighborhood, with no displacement of existing residents (see land-use map on pages 18-19).

Several nonprofit organizations are already producing affordable housing. Brand New Beginnings rehabilitated two buildings near 58th Street and Michigan Avenue, creating 28 affordable units at the Harriet Tubman Apartments and 24 units of supportive housing at the Sojourner Truth Building. On the 300 blocks of East 55th Place and 56th Street, Coppin A.M.E. Church and the Interfaith Housing Development Corporation built the 54-unit Coppin House for youth who are aging out of foster care and for families with children being raised by grandparents or other relatives. St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation has built or rehabilitated more than 500 units of housing, and Church of the Good Shepherd has built two-unit buildings for families.

Much of the older housing is 80 to 100 years old and lacks insulation and modern heating equipment, which makes it very expensive to heat. These homes and apartments are part of the historic structure of the neighborhood and should be maintained, but they require a new cycle of investment that is out of reach to some of the owners, including many senior citizens.

To implement the projects below, we will seek out and utilize all available housing resources including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, Employer Assisted Housing programs, Cook County Class 9 designation, Housing Trust Fund, Chicago Community Land Trust and Tax Increment Financing. We will work aggressively with non-profits and pursue grants that will help improve housing, especially for seniors and longtime residents.
4.1 Combat foreclosure to improve neighborhood stability.
Foreclosure rates for Washington Park were among the highest in the city in 2007 and 2008. Foreclosures impact homeowners, renters who lose their places to live and neighbors who see valuable housing stock turn into eyesores or trouble spots. We will seek appropriate resources through city, state and federal agencies, including the Chicago Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The South Side Community Federal Credit Union is a local resource for helping homeowners and renters.

4.2 Expand homeownership opportunities.
New housing should provide homeownership opportunities for a broad range of income levels, from starter housing for local residents moving from apartments, to housing for nurses and doctors at local hospitals. Rent-to-own and cooperative housing should be among the choices available.

4.3 Preserve and rehabilitate quality rental housing.
Rental housing has always been a major component of our housing stock and we want to preserve and expand its availability. We will work to preserve existing rental units, including studios and one-bedroom units as well as large apartments for families. Because many buildings will require extensive investment to bring them up to quality standards, we will seek out housing-assistance programs and work with non-profit organizations and private owners to rehabilitate and manage rental housing.

4.4 Invite community participation on all housing-development proposals.
Residents and stakeholders should be well-informed on proposals for new housing and have an opportunity to comment on how the proposed development fits with local priorities. Strong community participation creates an opportunity to weigh the impact of the development and suggest safeguards to prevent displacement of residents who have invested much of their lives in Washington Park. We will encourage such participation through advisory committees, town hall meetings and public forums (see Project 1.6).
4.5 Develop or link to housing education and assistance programs.
Many of our residents would benefit from programs that help them gain better housing, improve their homes, make energy-efficiency improvements or control property taxes. We will connect residents to existing programs and develop new programs as follows:

- The South Side Community Federal Credit Union will provide homeownership counseling to help potential buyers handle the challenges of homeownership.
- A new housing assistance center, in partnership with local and citywide nonprofit organizations, will promote the area’s diverse housing options to renters and homeowners, and offer information about available housing-assistance programs.
- Training programs and workshops will help existing organizations build the capacity to help achieve our housing goals. Initial workshops will cover tenants’ rights and technical assistance to owners of small rental buildings.

4.6 Embrace supportive housing as a tool to alleviate homelessness and dependency.
Supportive housing that provides services and education along with a place to live can help our Washington Park neighbors move forward with their lives – and in the process stabilize our community. We recognize that personal advancement requires a firm foundation that may include housing, counseling and job preparation, such as that provided by Brand New Beginnings and Coppin House.
Community garden (potential)

Infill housing

Proposed neighborhood trolley route

Housing to form "residential streetwall" along King Drive

Enhanced streetscape along 58th Street

Retail/Mixed Use along 55th Street

Enhanced express bus service along 55th Street connecting Midway Airport to the University of Chicago

Washington Park Planning Area

General redevelopment opportunity

Enhance retail environment

New park and green space around Raber House (potential to vacate part of Lafayette Avenue)

Enhanced streetscape along 58th Street

Retail center (existing)

Housing to form "residential streetwall" along King Drive

Proposed neighborhood trolley route

Infill housing

Community garden (potential)
Figure 3  General guidelines for land use

This map provides general guidance on the types of land uses envisioned by community stakeholders.

- **Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Development**  Located near train stations, may include a mix of retail, office, and high-density residential uses like condos, townhouses, and apartments.

- **General Redevelopment**  The vacant land south and north of 55th Street provides opportunities for redevelopment.

- **Freight/Heavy Industry**  May include higher intensity industrial uses, including freight operations, warehousing, manufacturing, and other large-scale commercial/industrial.

- **Office/Light Industry**  May include larger business offices, office parks and other light industry in a campus-like setting.

- **Neighborhood Retail**  While much of the retail would be concentrated near or around 55th St, there are also opportunities for smaller scale neighborhood retail within residential blocks.

- **Retail and Mixed Use**  May include restaurants, professional offices (e.g., doctors, realtor), and businesses offering retail goods and services. Residential units may be placed above retail where appropriate.

- **King Dr Residential “Streetwall”**  Homes along King Dr form a residential “streetwall,” creating a strong street presence across from the park and along one of the neighborhood’s most prominent thoroughfares.

- **Infill Housing**  Infill housing throughout the neighborhood would build upon the existing housing stock while providing opportunities for new or rehabbed housing.

- **Potential Community Green Space**  Vacant land provides opportunities to add park space, gardens and green corridors.
STRATEGY 5

Support development of businesses and retail stores

Washington Park has several nodes of retail businesses near transit stops or major intersections, as well as large tracts of vacant land that could be developed to serve shoppers from across the South Side. The neighborhood offers excellent access to high-volume transportation corridors including two CTA rail lines, several bus routes and the Dan Ryan Expressway, all of which can bring customers to neighborhood stores. These same transportation resources mean that Washington Park is a good place for employers because of easy access for their workforce.

The land-use framework on the preceding page provides general guidelines on appropriate locations for new retail, commercial and housing uses.

5.1 Identify and promote locations for small, unique businesses.
Clusters of businesses already exist on Garfield Boulevard, State Street, and 58th, 61st and 63rd Streets. We will promote these locations, which are well-served by CTA bus and train routes, for new small businesses such as a dry cleaner/tailor, candle and gift shops, small retail center and sit-down restaurants.

5.2 Assemble parcels for large-scale retail development.
Large plots of empty or near-empty land exist, mostly on the west side of the community. By assembling adjacent parcels, the land could be configured for major retailers such as a grocery or general merchandise store. Available vacant land also provides an opportunity for technology firms and environmental businesses involved in alternative energy or “green” products.

5.3 Create “transit-oriented development” near CTA transit centers.
The neighborhood’s four stations on the Green and Red Lines serve a total of 6,600 passengers each weekday. To take advantage of this traffic and to better serve existing residents, we will work with the City of Chicago, property owners and developers to identify opportunities to build mixed-use facilities that encourage walking and transit use while providing convenient access to everyday needs. These developments could include retail spaces, apartments or condominiums, and services such as a child care center or computer center.

5.4 Develop resources and partnerships to support retail.
We will research ways to improve the retail environment in our neighborhood and develop tools to support existing and new businesses, including:

- A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, which could generate funds to attract retailers and improve local infrastructure;
- A business directory and map of business locations, in print and web formats, to help connect buyers and sellers of goods and services;
- Partnerships with the University of Chicago and others, which could help bring customers; and
- Promotion campaigns to draw traffic from the Dan Ryan Expressway and CTA transit lines.

5.5 Develop a Community Benefits Agreement for Washington Park.
If there is an opportunity for large-scale development related to the 2016 Olympics or another major investment, we will seek a community benefits agreement to ensure that neighborhood residents benefit from jobs, contracting and other economic activity related to the investment.

5.6 Increase access to Midway Airport, the Loop and other neighborhoods with rapid bus and Metra service.
As the neighborhood redevelops, we will pursue new or enhanced transit services for residents and employees. For instance, adding a Metra station at Garfield Boulevard would allow fast travel between Washington Park, the Loop and communities to the south and north. The existing X55 express bus service to Midway Airport and the University of Chicago could be upgraded to bus rapid transit, with fewer stops, larger buses and faster boarding, to attract airport travelers and university employees.

5.7 Create a trolley service to improve local circulation.
To provide convenient and cost effective transportation along the neighborhood’s famed boulevards and to increase access to businesses, community events, recreational activity and historic places, we will work with the City of Chicago, University of Chicago and other partners to establish a Washington Park and Hyde Park neighborhood trolley route, similar to the South Chicago Trolley that is operated by the South Chicago Chamber of Commerce.
STRATEGY 6

Build partnerships to improve employment options

Helping residents find jobs and build up their skills for higher paying work are two priorities identified by participants in the planning process. Development of new small businesses, better connections to existing employers such as the University of Chicago, and the attraction of large new employers are also important strategies in rebuilding the economic strength of our community. This need has been underscored by the recent economic crisis and resulting job losses.

6.1 Create a small business/entrepreneurship center. We will work with the Washington Park Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to develop or connect with a small-business development center that promotes available programs, provides marketing support, connects business owners with financial and technical resources, and develops networking among business owners. The center will cultivate entrepreneurial endeavors by developing an incubator that provides low-cost office space, pooled services and skills development trainings. We will also explore government programs and incentives that could support neighborhood businesses.

6.2 Boost technical skills through training and certification. We will work with local colleges, universities and technology centers, including Dawson Technical Institute and ACE Technical High School, to link residents to training programs in office software, computer hardware, health care and other marketable skills.

6.3 Create partnerships with trade unions. To build the earning power of residents, we will establish relationships with Chicago-area trade union apprenticeship programs that lead to well-paid construction and trade jobs. This will be especially important if Chicago hosts the 2016 Olympics because construction of South Side venues will create a large number of skilled jobs.

6.4 Target specific industries for job growth. We will research growing industries such as “green” environmental businesses, rail freight and medical services to bring such jobs to the neighborhood or to connect residents to jobs elsewhere in the region.

6.5 Attract a major employer to locate in Washington Park. Our neighborhood has excellent access to the regional transportation network, is close to hospitals and universities, and offers access to a citywide workforce. We will support land-use decisions that provide suitable locations for new businesses (see Project 5.2) and promote the neighborhood to potential employers.

6.6 Improve opportunities for Washington Park residents to be hired for temporary seasonal and festival jobs. The park attracts large-scale public events ranging from live music and family festivals to the circus. We will seek to place local people into jobs at these events by providing appropriate skills development, training and certification, and better advertising of available positions to the community.

6.7 Create a Center for Working Families. To provide professional employment services and financial counseling to our residents, we will establish a Center for Working Families (CWF) in Washington Park. Like the other CWFs affiliated with LISC/Chicago, the Washington Park facility will provide job services and long-term case management; one-on-one financial and money management counseling; customized banking products; free tax-preparation services; and state-of-the-art screening for public benefits.

Providing training and working with trade unions can lead to higher-paying jobs.
STRATEGY 7

Support healthy lifestyles and better health care

Like other low-income neighborhoods in Chicago, Washington Park has higher than average levels of disease and mortality and lower access to health insurance and quality health care.

We believe that supporting healthy lifestyles means creating a stronger overall environment throughout the community, which we will build through expanded programs in youth engagement, exercise, mental health, nutrition and preventive health education. A clean and attractive physical environment, with plenty of green space, is also essential to achieving healthy lives.

7.1 Increase wellness through educational and intergenerational programs on exercise, sports, recreation and healthy social interaction.
We will create school programs for young children to build an understanding of personal health, nutrition and fitness. For people of all ages, we envision local walking and running programs alongside recreational and sports programs. We will:
- Increase the locations where community residents can go to enjoy healthy physical activity;
- Support youth sports programs and build productive partnerships with agencies such as the Chicago Park District; and
- Encourage active lifestyles through local agencies, churches and other organizations.

7.2 Develop civic education campaigns to highlight and foster positive behavior.
Negative attitudes can contribute to poor mental and physical health. We will build programs to engage residents in positive community-building activities that promote character development, politeness and mutual respect. Respect for each other also encourages respect for the community and the values it represents.

7.3 Take advantage of existing health-related resources in schools and nearby health-services providers.
Our neighborhood’s health-care providers will be partners in the implementation of our wellness strategies. Korle Bu Medical Center, Provident Hospital, University of Chicago Medical Center and other neighborhood health-care providers will be recruited to improve overall community health. We will seek out resources to ensure that financial burdens do not prevent residents from accessing these needed services.

7.4 Expand access to fresh food and produce and make residents aware of healthier choices.
We will promote availability of fresh produce at local stores and the nearby Woodlawn Farmers Market and mount an educational campaign to illustrate the health benefits of good nutrition. We will also develop programs for senior citizens to increase their access to fresh produce and to show how nutritional needs change over time.
7.5 Create or expand open space.
We will create or expand a network of green spaces throughout the community to serve children, youth and families in more intimate settings than the very large Washington Park, which draws visitors from across the city. Particular opportunities include:
- A campus park at Carter Elementary School.
- A new 10-acre park centered on the historic Raber House at 58th and Lafayette. More than half the required land has been acquired and plans are underway to demolish the empty school building on the north end of the plot.
- Expansion of Lorraine Hansberry Park at Indiana Avenue and 57th Street onto adjacent vacant land.
- Creation of a park or ball field on two acres owned by the Chicago Housing Authority near the Boys & Girls Club at 6245 S. Wabash.
- Development of a community garden on vacant land at 58th and Prairie, which could be part of a “green” corridor east of the Raber House park.

Figure 4 Raber House Park and 58th Street green corridor
STRATEGY 8

Provide supervised activities to engage young people

Our neighborhood needs more programs that provide constructive activities to help our youth avoid unhealthy behaviors. Youth involvement programs can also provide a way to connect youth with senior citizens and address needs connected to education, health, safety and other issues.

8.1 Launch Open Mic competitions and “corner actions.”
The K.I.E.O. Community Family Life Center and community partners will sponsor regular Open Mic competitions and outdoor gatherings to attract youth and families to healthy, community-oriented activities. One way to build participation in the events is to create partnerships among organizations and to invite each partner organization to recruit youth. Mounting a “corner action” means that a local group goes to a corner where youth are hanging out and invites them to a nearby activity.

8.2 Support students headed back to school.
Each summer as families prepare to go back to school, we will organize and support activities such as free haircuts, medical check-ups for youth, and donations of book bags and school supplies.

8.3 Link evening programs with life skills and values training.
Churches will offer fun programming for youth that includes spiritual study or life-skills training such as interviewing and dressing for success, financial literacy, budgeting and money management. For instance, churches will sponsor youth-oriented “Tom Thumb” weddings that help raise funds for community projects while teaching children values and the importance of marriage. Participants who sell the most ads for a program book become the bride, groom and wedding party; others attend as “celebrities.” A possible resource for youth skills and training programs is the organization YouthBuild U.S.A.

8.4 Create a residential school for at-risk youth.
Recognizing that some youth need more intensive services than schools or community organizations can provide, Washington Park leaders will explore the creation of a residential program for at-risk youth such as the Casa Tepeyac program run by Boys Town Chicago in Back of the Yards.

8.5 Develop a Washington Park Peace Festival.
Community organizations will organize a large-scale event in the park, possibly in partnership with the Family Federation for World Peace. The festival will offer entertainment, connect youth with services needed to improve their lives, and promote peace in the neighborhood.

8.6 Support and promote organized sports and recreation leagues.
We will use community organizations, churches and communications vehicles to better inform youth about existing programs and opportunities available through the Washington Park Fieldhouse and Chicago Park District.
Support youth and adults in and outside of schools

Educational opportunities for residents of all ages are central to achieving our vision of a healthier, stronger and safer community. Participants in the planning process called for creation of a network of programs and supports for youth as well as adults to improve the quality of education, build employment skills and increase the earning power of residents.

9.1 Develop programs to improve attendance and student achievement.

Incentive programs, “surrogate” parents and mentors, and more community interaction are keys to this strategy, which will explore multiple approaches to better educate our children:

- Students and parents will be surveyed to solicit input on what is needed to improve schools;
- Programs for 7th and 8th graders will be created to help them understand their choices among high schools citywide;
- A homework helpline staffed by honor students will allow youth to assist one another;
- Outside partnerships with organizations such as CityYear, Public Allies, AmeriCorps and Big Brothers Big Sisters will be explored to help promote student academic success and overall development;
- Mentorship programs will be established to support a positive learning environment, emphasize the importance of education and expose students to career alternatives; and
- Local schools will be connected to community activities (such as cleanups and service projects) to provide healthy engagement of students.

9.2 Increase parent involvement in schools.

School faculty and staff will be recruited to make presentations at community meetings about the work they are doing and to improve engagement with families and community members. This project should be coordinated with Project 3.5, which focuses on parent involvement throughout the neighborhood. An early effort will focus on creating parent safety patrols.

9.3 Improve digital literacy through a network of computer centers.

We will increase the use of computers and other digital technology by residents of all ages by expanding and improving programming by local organizations that offer computer access, including the Washington Park Advisory Council, St. Anselm’s Church and K.L.E.O. Family Life Center. We will teach software and hardware skills to students, parents and other adults and develop academic programming in coordination with local schools, such as ACT test-prep or math skills-building.
9.4 Develop a College Resource Center and host career and education fairs for youth and adults.
We will build partnerships with local institutions of higher learning, such as Kennedy-King College, University of Chicago, Chicago State University, Illinois Institute of Technology and City Colleges of Chicago, to showcase learning paths that lead to stable, well-paid careers. We also will increase opportunities for career exploration through in-school career fairs, college visits, guest speakers and internships that provide real-world experiences including summer jobs.

9.5 Attract a military-style drill program to a local school.
The Veterans Neighborhood Builders Association, a local organization, has run a marching and close-order-drill program for special education students at Carter G. Woodson Charter School and could bring such a program to Washington Park. The program for 3rd to 6th graders teaches discipline and helps students burn off excess energy that can lead to classroom disruptions; students enter through teacher recommendations.

9.6 Support lagging students with catch-up and GED programming.
We will create a program that utilizes after-school hours to provide academic assistance for struggling students long before students fail or are forced to attend summer school. The program will be advertised to students, parents and teachers to encourage early referrals. A parallel program for students who have dropped out of school will provide General Equivalency Degree (GED) training.

9.7 Offer vocational and entrepreneurial training as well as creative, performing and fine arts programs during and after school.
We will work with Chicago Public Schools to expand the variety of educational offerings at our schools to better engage students and to tap into their individual talents and interests.
STRATEGY 10

Provide solid services and promote active participation in the golden years

With more than 2,100 residents over the age of 55, Washington Park has a sizable population of senior citizens, and it is expected to grow. Planning participants stressed that the community should support a full range of senior programming to fully engage these residents, many of whom have spent decades in the neighborhood.

10.1 Create or engage a central agency or ombudsman to serve and advocate for senior citizens.
The agency will coordinate outreach to home-bound seniors and the residents of senior buildings, create a volunteer group to check on seniors, and distribute information on social events and services.

10.2 Create financial counseling and literacy programs for seniors.
We will work with the South Side Community Federal Credit Union and local banks to create programs that help senior citizens with planning, budgeting and other financial needs.

10.3 Build senior-youth relationships.
We will develop programs that create opportunities for cross-generational interaction and build relationships between youth and elders. While youth learn from elders and better understand the history and values of the community, elders can become more familiar with the youth, too, and thus be more comfortable interacting with them on the street and in other venues. One focus of the program will be safety, stressing greater parental and community accountability for how youth interact with senior citizens.

10.4 Help seniors with housing needs related to foreclosure prevention, property maintenance, home improvements and weatherization.
We will work with housing agencies to connect seniors to current programs or create new programs that address senior housing needs, in particular those that require heavy physical labor, such as home repairs, or technical knowledge, such as weatherization and energy conservation improvements (see Project 4.5).

10.5 Create a door-to-door shuttle service for senior activities and take advantage of PACE shuttle services.
We will make transportation safer and easier for our older residents by exploring a neighborhood shuttle service, a trolley route (see Project 5.7) and better use of the regional paratransit services offered by PACE.
Letters of Support from Local Aldermen

Thank you for embarking on this journey to renewed health, wealth and prosperity for the Washington Park community! For more than a year we have engaged in a rich dialogue and visioning process to determine exactly what our great neighborhood should and will be in future years. Because of you, we have developed a comprehensive plan that will serve for years to come as a roadmap for residents, businesses, community organizations and future leaders.

Now, the hard work begins. As we endeavor to build capacity in our community organizations, improve our schools, expand housing options and stimulate economic development, we need everyone to get involved. We need your skills, passion, experience and commitment to restore Washington Park to its glorious past and even brighter future.

I am proud of the foundation we have laid. And I will continue to bring resources and leadership to this community as it evolves to its Historic, Vibrant, Proud and Healthy future. I look forward to seeing our plan become reality.

Willie B. Cochran
Alderman, 20th Ward
MAY 14, 2009

Congratulations to Washington Park residents and stakeholders for developing this comprehensive plan to create a stronger community. Because of your public process and hard work, this plan is realistic and achievable, and the partnerships are in place to move from planning to action.

I look forward to working with local organizations and residents to further develop the ideas in this plan and seek out the resources needed to make them a reality. An important step is to expand the capacity of local organizations and leaders so that they can take on the plan’s more ambitious projects, such as offering world-class opportunities for our youth in education, social settings and the work world.

Implementation of this plan is essential whether or not Chicago is chosen to host the 2016 Olympics. It provides important guidance for local land-use decisions and, most importantly, promotes an open and public process to make sure those decisions are aligned with the community’s interests.

I look forward to working in full partnership with you as we improve the Washington Park community together.

Pat Dowell
Alderman, 3rd Ward
MAY 14, 2009
The following organizations are potential leaders or participants in implementation of this plan. Some projects will be overseen by new Washington Park Consortium task forces. More groups are expected to participate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Key to Participating Organizations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Metropolis Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council</td>
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<td>Yancey Boys and Girls Club</td>
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<td>Brand New Beginnings</td>
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<td>CARA The Cara Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD Chicago Police Department (2nd and 3rd Districts)</td>
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<td>CPS Chicago Public Schools</td>
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<td>City Year</td>
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<td>Chicago Embassy Church</td>
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<td>CleanSlate (Maintenance and beautification services of The Cara Program)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coppin House</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTA Chicago Transit Authority</td>
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<td>DCD Chicago Department of Community Development</td>
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<td>DuSable DuSable Museum of African American History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd Good Shepherd Community Service Organization</td>
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<td>Grand Families Grand Families Program of Chicago</td>
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<td>Growing Home</td>
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<td>K.L.E.O. Keep Loving Each Other Community Family Life Center</td>
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<td>Korle Bu Korle Bu Medical Group</td>
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<td>LISC Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago</td>
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<td>Local Businesses</td>
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<td>Local Churches</td>
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<td>Local Faith-Based Organizations</td>
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<td>Local Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metra Metra commuter rail agency</td>
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<td>PACE PACE paratransit bus services</td>
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<td>Park District Chicago Park District</td>
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<td>Private Developers</td>
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<td>SERC St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSCFCU South Side Community Federal Credit Union</td>
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<td>20th Ward Office of 20th Ward Alderman Willie B. Cochran</td>
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<tr>
<td>UofC University of Chicago</td>
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<td>UCMC University of Chicago Medical Center</td>
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<td>VNBA Veterans Neighborhood Builders Association</td>
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<td>WPAC Washington Park Advisory Council</td>
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<td>WP Chamber Washington Park Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>WPC Washington Park Consortium</td>
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<td>WP Fieldhouse Washington Park Fieldhouse</td>
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<td>WPAHA Washington Park Area Homeowners Association</td>
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<td>WPMA Washington Park Ministerial Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>WPNA Washington Park Neighborhood Association</td>
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## Schedule and Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO ENSURE WASHINGTON PARK BENEFITS FROM FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS INCLUDING THE 2016 OLYMPICS BID</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Build capacity of non-profit, cultural and faith-based organizations</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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<td>1.2 Collect and evaluate information that supports decision making</td>
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<td>1.3 Promote strategies and actions that can be integrated with major development efforts such as the 2016 Olympic bid</td>
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<td>1.4 Support and develop block clubs</td>
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<td>WPAHA</td>
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<td>1.5 Establish community advisory committees</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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<td>1.6 Organize regular community forums</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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<td><strong>2. PROCLAIM AND CELEBRATE WASHINGTON PARK’S PROUD PAST</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Recruit elders to recount the history of the neighborhood</td>
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<td>WPNA</td>
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<td>2.2 Preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings</td>
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<td>■</td>
<td>Good Shepherd, SERC, Brand New Beginnings, Private Developers</td>
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<td>2.3 Become part of the proposed Black Metropolis District National Heritage Area</td>
<td>■</td>
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<td>Black Metropolis, WP Chamber</td>
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<td>2.4 Celebrate the history and culture of the Chicago Park District’s Washington Park through its historic landmarks and boulevards</td>
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<td>WPAC, DuSable, UofC, 20th Ward</td>
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<td>2.5 Preserve housing along King Drive</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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<td><strong>3. CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE ARE SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Organize beautification and cleanup efforts</td>
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<td>WPAHA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Build stronger partnerships between community and police</td>
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<td>■</td>
<td>20th Ward, WPC, WPMA, CPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Involve youth in safety and beautification efforts by awarding service-learning hours</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>K.L.E.O.</td>
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<td>3.4 Stress personal accountability and consistent law enforcement</td>
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<td>WPC, 20th Ward, CPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 Increase parent participation on safety issues, after-school programs and youth activities</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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### 4. PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES THAT SUPPORT EXISTING RESIDENTS AND ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Combat foreclosure to improve neighborhood stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Expand homeownership opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3 Preserve and rehabilitate quality rental housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Invite community participation on all housing-development proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Develop or link to housing education and assistance programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.6 Embrace supportive housing as a tool to alleviate homelessness and dependency</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4-5</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSFCCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd, Brand New Beginnings, Private Developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd, Brand New Beginnings, Private Developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPC, WP Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSCFCU, WPC, 20th Ward, SERC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coppin House</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAD ORG(S.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20th Ward</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd, Brand New Beginnings, Private Developers</td>
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### 5. SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESSES AND RETAIL STORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Identify and promote locations for small, unique businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Assemble parcels for large-scale retail development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Create “transit-oriented development” near CTA transit centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Develop resources and partnerships to support retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Develop a Community Benefits Agreement for Washington Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Increase access to Midway Airport, the Loop and other neighborhoods with rapid bus and Metra service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Create a trolley service to improve local circulation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
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<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber, CTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber, CTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WPC</td>
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<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber, CTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>WPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Ward, WP Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA, Metra</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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### STRATEGY

#### 6. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

<table>
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<td>6.1</td>
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<td>SSCFCU</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.2</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
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<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
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<td>WP Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
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**LEAD ORG(S):**

- 20th Ward, WPC
- WPC

**POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S):**

- 20th Ward
- WPC
- CARA

#### 7. SUPPORT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND BETTER HEALTH CARE

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<td>7.1</td>
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<td>Korle Bu</td>
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<td>Korle Bu</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Korle Bu</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
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<td>WPC</td>
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</table>

**LEAD ORG(S):**

- 20th Ward
- Korle Bu

**POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S):**

- UCMC
- Coppin House
- Park District
- Grand Families
- K.L.E.O.
- 20th Ward
- WNBA
- Boys and Girls Club

#### 8. PROVIDE SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
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<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
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<td>K.L.E.O.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>WP Fieldhouse</td>
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**LEAD ORG(S):**

- K.L.E.O.
- Local Churches
- K.L.E.O.
- Local Churches
- K.L.E.O.
- 20th Ward

**POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S):**

- 20th Ward
- Park District
- VNBA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNER ORG(S.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. SUPPORT YOUTH AND ADULTS IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOLS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.1 Develop programs to improve attendance and student achievement</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.2 Increase parent involvement in schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.3 Improve digital literacy through a network of computer centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.4 Develop a College Resource Center and host career and education fairs for youth and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.5 Attract a military-style drill program to a local school</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.6 Support lagging students with catch-up and GED programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.7 Offer vocational and entrepreneurial training as well as creative, performing and fine arts programs during and after school</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10. PROVIDE SOLID SERVICES AND PROMOTE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE GOLDEN YEARS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.1 Create or engage a central agency or ombudsman to serve and advocate for seniors</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10.2 Create a financial counseling and literacy program for seniors</td>
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<td>10.3 Build senior-youth relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.4 Help seniors with housing needs related to foreclosure prevention, property maintenance, home improvements and weatherization</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.5 Create a door-to-door shuttle service for senior activities and take advantage of PACE shuttle services</td>
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The 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 undertake 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 respond to economic challenges and opportunities, attract new investment and enhance the overall quality of life.

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LISC/Chicago
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www.lisc-chicago.org

To download this plan and others, go online to:
www.newcommunities.org

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Kym Abrams Creative Director
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Karen Gibson, map illustrations
Patrick Barry, pages 4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21
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20th Ward Office, page 26
Joe Zekas, YoChicago, pages 7 (center), 8, 20
Joe Ziolkowski, Museum of Science and Industry,
page 7 (right)