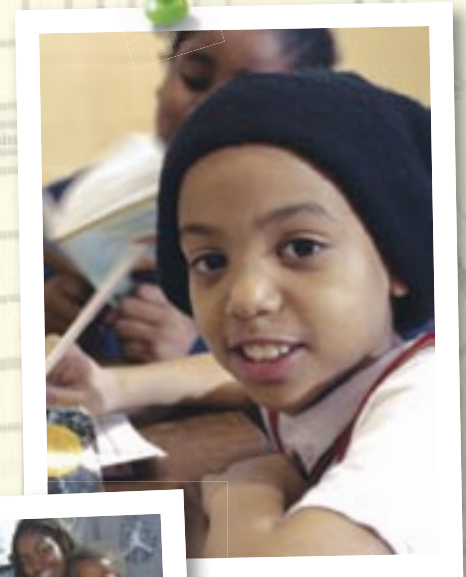


WOODLAWN: Rebuilding the Village

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Woodlawn



Planning Task Force

More than 300 neighborhood residents, business owners, institutional leaders and youth came together over the past year to discuss and contribute to this quality-of-life plan for our community. Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation, The Woodlawn Organization and the University of Chicago thank all participants for their work.

Edward Adams Resident

Stephen Alexander Egan Center, DePaul University

Linda Austin Local School Council, Fiske School

Francine Batey Volunteer, Cottage Kids After-School Program,
Grove Park Plaza

Fran Bell South Side and Wabash YMCAs

Darnell Bonds 6500 South Woodlawn Block Club

Mattie Butler Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors

Helen Carroll Advisory Council, Harris Recreation Center

Jeane Clark 6100 South Rhodes Block Club

Jen Coleman Resident

Ronald Coleman Resident

Hal Eason Volunteer, 5th Ward

Collean Fuller 6200 South Kimbark Block Club

Edward C. Grady 6200 South Drexel Block Club

John T. Hartfield West Woodlawn Council of Block Clubs

Sylvia Hyde 6300 South St. Lawrence Block Club

Lindsey Jefferson, Jr. Columbia Pointe

Arnold Johnson Sedwick's Day Spa

Mitzi M. Johnson Allstate Insurance

Ann Joseph Educator

Cliff Joseph Artist

George Kyros Daley's Restaurant

Lorne Love Woodlawn Community School

Terrance Miller Community Reach Network

Rita Perry Advisory Council, Harris Recreation Center

Julius Polk Local School Council, Hyde Park High School

Annie Pope Plaisance Place Homeowners Association

Gerald Ross Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation Board

Peter Schuler Resident

Laura Singer The Inspiration Corporation Living Room Café

J.W. Smith Homes at Blackstone

Joseph Strickland University of Chicago Hospitals

Willie Cochran (Former) NCP Organizer

Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation

Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation (WPIC) is the New Communities Program lead agency in Woodlawn. It partners on the program with The Woodlawn Organization. The University of Chicago provides technical support and other resources.

WPIC was organized in 1987 by a diverse group of individuals concerned about disinvestment in the neighborhood over previous decades. WPIC has a 12-member board of directors, of which more than two-thirds either live or work in Woodlawn. The board reflects the racial and economic interests of the community and adjacent South Side neighborhoods.

The mission of WPIC is to catalyze redevelopment and revitalization in Woodlawn and to build housing “that poor people can live in, not poor people’s housing.” WPIC is committed to increasing residential housing opportunities and supportive commercial uses to achieve an economically and racially integrated population in Woodlawn.

WPIC strives to redevelop Woodlawn for the benefit of long-time residents and to attract new members who will continue the community’s legacy of activism. Among the organization’s accomplishments are:

- Provision of employment services, after-school programming and free tax-preparation services, in partnership with Center for Economic Progress
- Acquisition and renovation of Grove Parc Plaza Apartments and adjoining retail center
- Participation in partnerships to rehabilitate apartment complexes for low- and moderate-income families, including the 117-unit Renaissance Apartments and 84-unit University Village
- Construction of the 38-unit market-rate Plaisance Place development, in partnership with Thrush Companies
- Completion of the first phase of Columbia Pointe, a market-rate development along 63rd Street, in partnership with Woodlawn Community Development Corporation and All Chicago/Davis Group

A Vibrant Community, Full of Possibilities



A priority of this plan is expanded programming for youth.

Within the next 10 years, Woodlawn will be one of the most attractive and desirable communities in Chicago. An expanded range of housing choices will serve current residents as well as newcomers. The population will be growing because of excellent schools, a thriving business district, safe streets, strong employment possibilities and our enviable location, close to transportation, parks and the University of Chicago. Building on its long tradition of civic involvement, Woodlawn will be a vibrant place where everyone can get involved in neighborhood life through organizations, churches, artist communities, youth programs and small businesses.

Schools Strong parent involvement, partnerships, new school options, after-school activities and high academic standards will make our schools an excellent choice for local families.

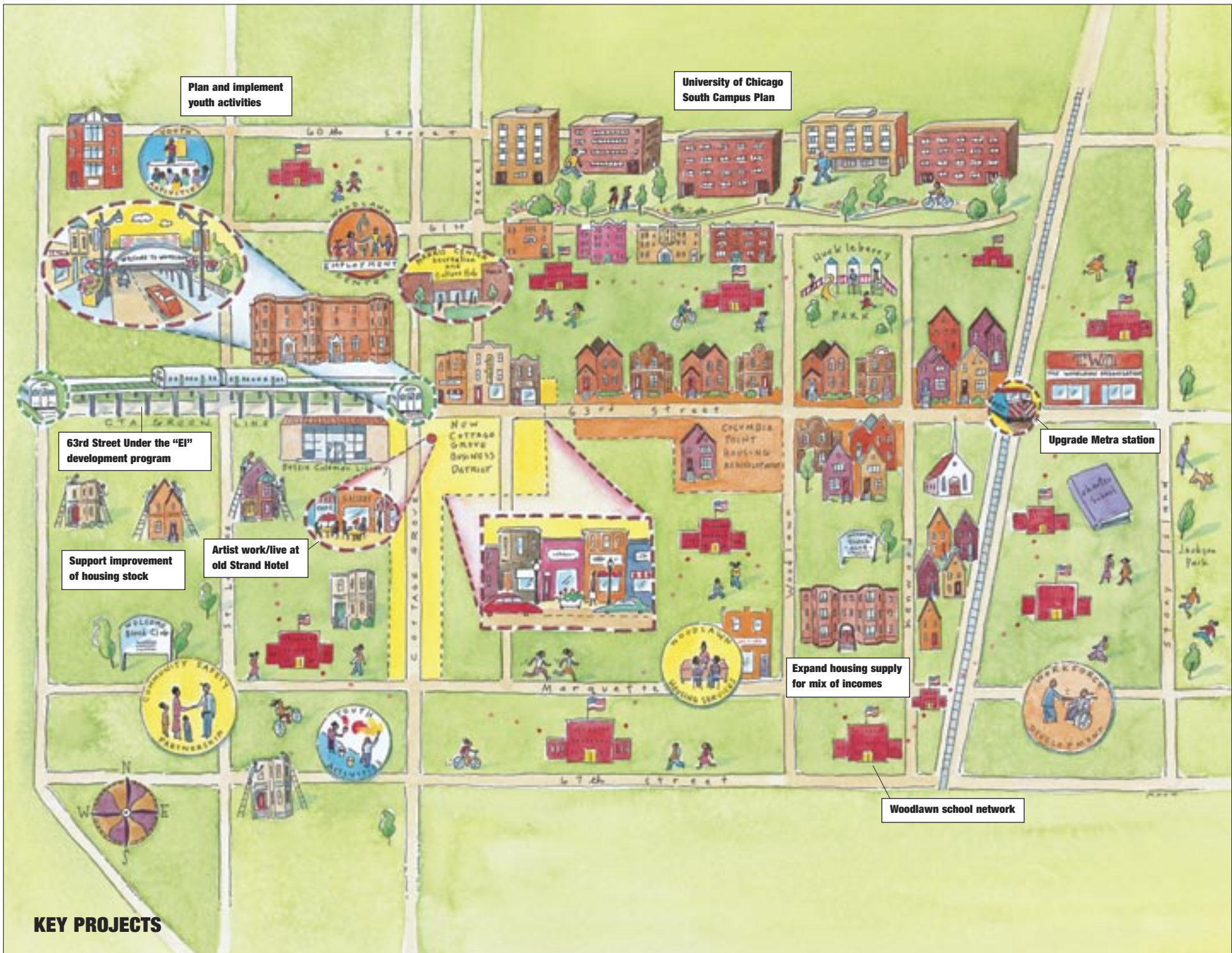
Housing The community will provide an ample choice of quality affordable housing, encourage development of new homes and condominiums and provide support to homeowners and renters to maintain quality housing.

Jobs Employment networks will connect residents to skills training programs and well-paid jobs locally and throughout the region, and specialized programs will

serve those with scant work experience, gaps in their employment history or criminal records.

Shopping A new shopping district along Cottage Grove south of 63rd Street will be busy with small and large retail businesses that serve local residents as well as visitors from other neighborhoods. Smaller retail clusters at key intersections will provide convenient shopping and services.

Youth Our young people will have ample opportunities for recreation, after-school programming, family activities, part-time employment and higher education.



Plan and implement youth activities

University of Chicago South Campus Plan



63rd Street Under the "E" development program



Support improvement of housing stock

Artist work/live at old Strand Hotel



NEW COTTAGE GROVE BUSINESS DISTRICT

COLUMBIA TOWER BUSINESS DISTRICT



Upgrade Metra station

Expand housing supply for mix of incomes

Woodlawn school network

KEY PROJECTS



JACKSON PARK

SUMMARY

Planning for a New Wave of Growth



Attractive brick two-flats line Evans Avenue and many other streets in Woodlawn.

Born of a world's fair and shaped by generations of community activists, the Woodlawn neighborhood is at a crucial point in its history.

Rapidly built up with hotels and apartments for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, our south-lakefront neighborhood experienced a long period of growth followed by four decades of population decline. Today, with carpenters and bricklayers busy on many streets, Woodlawn is once again on its way up.

For 50 years Woodlawn has been a community of activists, home to The Woodlawn Organization and many groups and individuals who speak their minds on issues and develop programs to create a stronger community. That spirit of activism helped lay the groundwork for today's revival, beginning in the 1960s with advocacy for better schools and housing. In the 1990s, local organizations and private developers formed partnerships to build new housing, sparking the wave of investment that is now underway.

But it will take more than new housing to achieve our vision. To become a community that people choose for raising their families or purchasing a home, we must develop a full range of social and recreational amenities, safe streets and better schools.

Much progress has been made, including the purchase and renovation by the Chicago Park District of the Harris YWCA and development of a strong partnership with the University of Chicago, which is moving forward on its South Campus development north of 61st Street. But much more will be needed in the form of improved school performance, a renewed retail environment, expanded youth programming and stronger links to the regional job market.

This plan provides a framework for pursuing eight major strategies that can make Woodlawn a growing and prosperous place—a neighborhood that many types of people will want to call home.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

STRATEGY 1 Expand the supply of new housing for a mix of incomes, and support improvement of existing housing stock.

- 1.1** Promote balanced development of housing that includes new and rehabbed market-rate units, while preserving affordable housing opportunities.
- 1.2** Establish a comprehensive housing center.
- 1.3** Improve maintenance of and encourage reinvestment in rental housing.
- 1.4** Survey housing conditions to identify problem properties.
- 1.5** Engage residents and stakeholders in a planning process for improvements to Grove Parc Plaza.
- 1.6** Support development of the Living Room Café.
- 1.7** Develop new housing options for seniors.

STRATEGY 2 Develop a vibrant retail and business environment and a central shopping district along Cottage Grove south of 63rd Street.

- 2.1** Create a central business district along Cottage Grove from 63rd to 67th Streets.
- 2.2** Beautify the section of 63rd Street that runs under the L tracks, from Cottage Grove to King Drive.
- 2.3** Create a local chamber of commerce.
- 2.4** Incorporate public art, historic preservation, landscaping and community heritage.
- 2.5** Create concentrated nodes of commercial development.
- 2.6** Coordinate with the University of Chicago's South Campus plan.

STRATEGY 3 Promote economic opportunity, workforce development and improved connections to the job market.

- 3.1** Add a Center for Working Families component to the Woodlawn Employment Center to provide comprehensive employment and financial services.
- 3.2** Develop local job opportunities for adults and youth.
- 3.3** Connect residents to specialized training and job opportunities for residents with criminal records, limited employment histories or disabilities.
- 3.4** Promote local entrepreneurship and new-business start-ups.

STRATEGY 4 Organize people and resources to make all Woodlawn schools excellent.

- 4.1** Create a Woodlawn schools network.
- 4.2** Develop two new charter schools.
- 4.3** Create community schools.
- 4.4** Develop local and citywide resources to strengthen educational opportunities.
- 4.5** Expand and strengthen early childhood development programs.
- 4.6** Provide community service, internship and co-op employment opportunities.
- 4.7** Develop programs to reduce the dropout rate and combat high-school truancy.
- 4.8** Create opportunities for intergenerational activities.

STRATEGY 5 Improve communication and coordination among organizations, residents and institutions.

- 5.1** Expand the local tradition of block club organizing.
- 5.2** Create a program to welcome newcomers.
- 5.3** Promote residents' involvement with local agencies.
- 5.4** Identify collaborative opportunities for social service agencies to improve and coordinate programming and services for residents.
- 5.5** Develop stronger connections and programming among religious institutions.
- 5.6** Create safer streets for residents through expanded partnerships.
- 5.7** Monitor crime and develop programs to improve safety.
- 5.8** Disseminate community information about social and economic issues.

STRATEGY 6 Plan and implement activities and programs for youth.

- 6.1** Organize a planning process around youth needs.
- 6.2** Develop new or expanded programs based on the planning process and other identified needs.
- 6.3** Coordinate and promote established and new programs, including after-school tutoring and cultural activities such as dance, music and visual arts.
- 6.4** Build an injury-free playground for young children in the area bounded by 63rd to 67th Streets and Cottage Grove to King Drive.

STRATEGY 7 Expand recreational activities for all ages, and develop new programs around arts and culture.

- 7.1** Expand recreational programming throughout Woodlawn.
- 7.2** Develop the Chicago Park District Harris Recreation Center as a cultural and recreational hub.
- 7.3** Expand neighborhood-friendly programming at nearby major facilities.
- 7.4** Create a Woodlawn arts council.
- 7.5** Support development of a live-work space for artists.
- 7.6** Establish a program of public art and beautification along key streets and in public facilities, and involve youth in creating the artwork.
- 7.7** Establish social and informational get-togethers for senior citizens.

STRATEGY 8 Provide professional development resources and other support to health and social service agencies.

- 8.1** Sponsor regular health fairs and screenings, seminars and other events.
- 8.2** Support and strengthen local providers of social and health services.
- 8.3** Regularly analyze community health and social service needs to assist in evaluating programs and services.

New Communities Program

NCP is a long-term initiative of Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago to support comprehensive community development in Chicago neighborhoods. It seeks to rejuvenate challenged communities, bolster those in danger of losing ground and preserve the diversity of areas in the path of gentrification. Each effort is led by a neighborhood-based lead agency that coordinates programs among other local organizations and citywide support groups.

The program gives each of the lead agencies several resources: two full-time staff positions (an NCP director and organizer), technical support for planning and documenting the planning process, a pool of loan and grant funds distributed on a competitive basis for project seed money, and opportunities for learning from both peers and subject-area experts.

All NCP neighborhoods spend their first year undertaking a structured community planning process that leads to the quality-of-life plan, then move on to implementation. They are encouraged to be “doing while planning,” undertaking short-term “Early Action Projects” such as launching a youth program, opening an employment center, creating public art or sponsoring local health fairs.

NCP is designed to strengthen communities from within—through planning, organizing and human development. The comprehensive approach is designed to help broaden opportunities for local residents through better education, broader housing choices, safer streets, stronger personal finances and new economic opportunities. The strengthened community is better equipped to take advantage of larger market forces, attract new investment and enhance the overall quality of life.

For more information

Ivy Dilworth *Interim Executive Director*

Karen R. King *New Communities Program Director*

Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation
822 E. 63rd St.

Chicago, IL 60637

Phone: 773-363-4300

Fax: 73-363-4308

ivydilworth@ameritech.net

kroking@aol.com

Sean Harden *Program Officer*

LISC/Chicago

1 N. LaSalle St., 12th Floor

Chicago, IL 60602

312-697-6442

www.lisc-chicago.org

To download full plans, go online to:

www.newcommunities.org

Staff and Consultants

LISC/Chicago

Andrew Mooney *Senior Program Director*

Amanda Carney *Director, New Communities Program*

Susana Vasquez *Deputy Director,
New Communities Program*

Patrick Barry *Scribe Coordinator and Editor*

Tarshel Beards *Scribe*

Camiros Ltd.

Leslie S. Pollock *Principal Planner*

William James *Project Planner*

Jing Cui *Urban Designer*

Dena Hicks *Landscape Architect*

Denise Lea *Planner*

Brad Lents *Landscape Architect*

Kym Abrams Design, Inc.

Kym Abrams *Creative Director*

Kelly Komp *Design Manager*

Andy Eltzroth *Designer*

Illustration and Photo Credits

Steven Mach *Illustration*, page 4

Andrew J. Greenlee, cover (middle left)

Eric Young Smith, cover (far right), pages 3, 5

Beverly Swanagan, cover (far left and middle right)

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