CHICAGO SOUTHWEST: Making Connections
We thank the more than 300 residents, community leaders, business owners and service providers who shared their stories and dreams with us and with each other. Their ideas, time and effort were invaluable in developing this plan. We especially commend you for daring to build new relationships that will create a revitalized Chicago Lawn.

**Planning Task Force Commissioners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judith Anderson</td>
<td>New Hope Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Andrade</td>
<td>St. Rita of Cascia Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Atiáno</td>
<td>St. Gall Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thom Bamford</td>
<td>Marquette Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Bartow</td>
<td>Southwest Organizing Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Betlejewski</td>
<td>St. Rita of Cascia Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilana Bodini</td>
<td>Healthy Chicago Lawn Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Capraro</td>
<td>Greater Southwest Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gintaras Cepenas</td>
<td>Greater Southwest Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika Francois-Ramirez</td>
<td>Maria High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalia Gomez</td>
<td>Maria High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Gutierrez</td>
<td>St. Mary Star of the Sea Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Harbison</td>
<td>Model Bungalow Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhelí Herrera</td>
<td>Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelly Hughley</td>
<td>Southwest Women Working Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark McHugh</td>
<td>Metropolitan Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittney McKinney</td>
<td>Morgan Park High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Meyer</td>
<td>Ashburn Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriette Minnms</td>
<td>15th Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenore Murdock</td>
<td>Neighborhood Housing Service of Chicago Lawn/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gage Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rami Nashashi</td>
<td>Inner-City Muslim Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul O’Toole</td>
<td>Marquette Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corina Pedraza-Palomino</td>
<td>Southwest Youth Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amina Peterson</td>
<td>Inner-City Muslim Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafi Peterson</td>
<td>CeaseFire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Porter</td>
<td>Block Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Stan Rataj</td>
<td>St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Reardon</td>
<td>Neighborhood Housing Service of Chicago Lawn/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gage Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon Rice</td>
<td>State Farm Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Robles</td>
<td>St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Ryan</td>
<td>Holy Cross Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imelda Salazar</td>
<td>St. Mary Star of the Sea Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Salgado</td>
<td>Institute Del Progresso Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri Sosnowski</td>
<td>Eberhart Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livia Villarreal</td>
<td>Eberhart Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loisteen Walker</td>
<td>United Block Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Zalot</td>
<td>Maria High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chicago Lawn Community Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carmen Abrego</td>
<td>Southwest Youth Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmine Abu-El-Kheir</td>
<td>Inner-City Muslim Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Aceves</td>
<td>St. Rita of Cascia Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Aceves</td>
<td>St. Rita of Cascia Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Agnese</td>
<td>Sisters of St. Casimir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Akhtar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahaia Ahmed</td>
<td>Metropolitan Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reza Al-Rifai</td>
<td>Chicago Islamic Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Allschied</td>
<td>Greater Southwest Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lety Almazan</td>
<td>St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Analete</td>
<td>Sisters of St. Casimir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Paul Anderson</td>
<td>New Hope Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Grace Ann</td>
<td>Sisters of St. Casimir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imelda Antuné</td>
<td>Queen of the Universe Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmine Atruné</td>
<td>Queen of the Universe Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Arces</td>
<td>CeaseFire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jalon Arthur CeaseFire
Lindberg Askew 17th Ward
Sister Magdalene Bagdonas Sisters of St. Casimir
Sister Mary Balkus Sisters of St. Casimir
Maria Baltazar St. Clare of Montefalco Church
Penny Banks Olive Branch Mission
Todd Banks ComEd
Abel Barrera St. Rita of Cascia Church
Margarita Barrera St. Rita of Cascia Church
Emilio Barrios St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
David Bates Olive Branch Mission
Samuel Beckless Ashburn Lutheran Church
Lidia Bernal St. Clare of Montefalco Church
Chris Bertucci St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Bill Black Southwest Organizing Project
Joel Bookman Joel D. Bookman & Associates
Doug Borders Chicago Park District (Marquette Park)
Roger Bowman CeaseFire
Michelle Boyd Holy Cross Hospital
Suzanne Burke Southwest Women Working Together
Tynia Burton Marquette Elementary School
Ophelia Cage Block Club
Martha Cahue St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Evelyn Califfe St. Mary Star of the Sea School
Patricia Castellanos St. Gall Church
Jose Castro St. Rita of Cascia Church
Judy Chapman Southwest Women Working Together
Maria Chardez Queen of the Universe Church
Jaime Chavez Queen of the Universe Church
Juan Pablo Chavez Southwest Organizing Project
Rev. Jim Christian Ashburn Lutheran Church
Sister Clement Sisters of St. Casimir
Meg Collins  Senator Jacqueline Collins  Illinois Senate District 16
Wayne Conley  State Farm Insurance
Sister Constance  Sisters of St. Casimir
James Covello  St. Clare of Montefalco Church
George Cvack  First Personal Bank
Sister Marylynn  Sisters of St. Casimir
Lenora Dailey  Greater Southwest Development Corporation
Demetrius Daniels  Southwest Women Working Together
Barbara DeKirf-Shimoda  Lionel Hampton School
Sister Therese Delgenio  PADS
Eric DeLeon  Richard J. Daley College
Sister Delphine  Sisters of St. Casimir
Mark DiValerio  Peoples Energy
Maria Dimas  St. Gall Church
Midge Dinou  Carolyn Grisko and Associates
Pamela Dominguez  Southwest Women Working Together
Fr. Larry Dowling  St. Denis Church
Sister Regina Dubickas  Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse
Tiombe Eiland  Maria High School
Linda Ewing  Holy Cross Hospital
Sherene Fahkran  Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Fr. Farfan  St. Gall Church
Nina Farnia  Southwest Youth Collaborative
Luis Flores  Gage Park High School
Mary Frech  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
John Freely  Chicago Park District
Guadalupe Garcia  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Juan Garcia  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Leonor Garcia  St. Gall Church
Eduardo Garza  FUERZA
Frank Gavin  Trans-American Moving & Storage
Sister Genevieve  Sisters of St. Casimir
Sister Jean Girzaitis  Sisters of St. Casimir
Caroline Goldstein  Bank One
Gloria Gonzalez  Queen of the Universe Church
Melania Gonzalez  Queen of the Universe Church
Melissa Gonzalez  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Christina Gutierrez  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Francisco Gutierrez  St. Gall Church
Sylvia Gutierrez  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Cynthia Hamilton
Sgt. Tom Hennegan  Chicago Police Department
Eduardo Hernandez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Juan Hernandez  LaSalle Bank
Sandra Hernandez  St. Adrian Church
Tim Herwig  TCF Bank
David Huesser  Ford City Mall
Linda Hicks
Ryan Hollon  Field Museum
Jessica Hooberman  Chicago Department of Public Health
Stanley Horn  LeClaire Courts
Rosetta House  Centennial
Officer Howard  Chicago Police Department
Susie Jackson
Yolanda Jackson  United Block Clubs
Joyce Jager  Eberhart Elementary School
Gail Jarocki  Eberhart Elementary School
Helen Jobarias  Nativity B.V.M.
Earl Johnson  Block Club
Irene Johnson  LeClaire Courts
Helen Juozapavicius  Southwest Home Equity Assurance Corporation
Vernel Johnson
Sister Juline  Sisters of St. Casimir
Ellen Kilmurry  St. Denis Church
Carol Kurth  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Sister Marilyn Kuzmickus  Sisters of St. Casimir
George Lacey  Block Club
James Lackland  Community Investment Corp.
Jeremy LaHoud  Southwest Youth Collaborative
Carla Land  Greater Southwest Development Corporation
Lona Lane  Greater Ashburn Planning Association
Tomasa Lara  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Loi Lazcano  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Socorro Lazcano  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Fr. Bill Lego  St. Rita of Cascia Church
Brian Lemon  Holy Cross Hospital
Sister Lourdone  Sisters of St. Casimir
Paul Lopez  Park Federal Savings
Carol Lovely  Lionel Hampton School
Adalberto Madrigal  Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Beatriz Magaña  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Armando Mares  CeaseFire
Angie Marks  Neighborhood Housing Services
Dan Marquez  Holy Cross Hospital
Delmar Marshall
Janelle Marshallon  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Paul Marshallon  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Fr. Miguel Martinez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Sister Mary Margaret  Sisters of St. Casimir
Sister Marylynn  Sisters of St. Casimir
George Matysiewicz
Sister Maureen  Sisters of St. Casimir
Helen Mazanec  Sisters of St. Casimir
Fr. McDonnell  St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Sarah McKinley  Greater Southwest Development Corporation
Jesus Medina  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Lupe Mendez
Sister Mercedes  Sisters of St. Casimir
Lucille Moore
Irma Morales  Neighborhood Housing Services
Deborah Muldrow  Academy of St. Benedict the African
Rene Mulligan  Maria High School
Meh Naby  Metropolitan Family Services
Jackie Norwood  LeClaire Courts
Camillie Odeh  Southwest Youth Collaborative
Clementina Orozco  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Eleano Pacewic
Pedro Palominos  Model Bungalow Block
Sister Therese Papsie  Sisters of St. Casimir
Joe Parra  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Milt Patterson  Candidate 32nd district (2004)
Eva Paulauskas  Nativity B.V.M.
Sister Paulia  Sisters of St. Casimir
Jonathan Peck  Southwest Youth Collaborative
Maggie Perales  Southwest Organizing Project
Javier Pineda  St. Francis Church
Juana Pineda  Queen of the Universe Church
Pedro Pineda  Queen of the Universe Church
Deborah Poturalski  Queen of the Universe School
Ruth Prescott  Metropolitan Family Services
Olga Puente  St. Rita of Cascia Church
Kevin Quinn  13th Ward
Martin Quinn  13th Ward
Jose Ramirez  St. Rita of Cascia Church
Rocio Ramirez  St. Rita of Cascia Church
Sylvia Ramos  Richard J. Daley College
Aaliyah Rashad  Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Cmdr. Dennis Rayl  Chicago Police Department
Joe Rice  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
DiAnne Richardson
Hector Rico  Latino Organization of the Southwest
Lori Rios  Marquette Elementary School
Dionicio Robles  St. Bruno Church
Ramon Robles  St. Bruno Church
Alma Rodriguez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Gabriela Rodriguez  St. Gall Church
Humberto Rodriguez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Monica Rodriguez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Socorro Rodriguez  St. Bruno Church
Juana Ruiz  St. Clare of Montefalco Church
Imam Abdul-Malik Ryan  Inner-City Muslim Action Network
Tommy Ryan  City of Chicago Streets and Sanitation
Maureen Rzasa  Queen of the Universe Church
Vida Sakevicius  Nativity B.V.M. Church
Carol Salazar
Adriana Salinas
Delfino Sanchez
Francisco Sanchez
Guadalupe Sanchez  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Josefin Sanchez  St. Bruno Church
Corina Saucedo  Maria High School
Tom Schergen  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Jaime Servano  Field Museum
Jeri Shinners  Queen of the Universe Church
Celeste Shores  New Hope Lutheran Church
Allisa Starks  Inner City Entertainment, Inc.
Willie Steward
Dawn Stockmo  Fannie Mae Foundation
Sister Doctor Nancy Streitmatter  Holy Cross Hospital
Maria Suluaga  St. Clare of Montefalco Church
Norberto Suluaga  St. Clare of Montefalco Church
Sophia Sura  Nativity B.V.M. Church
James Talley  Monument of Faith Church
Sister Tarcisia  Sisters of St. Casimir
John Taylor  Erie House
Abolode Tayo  Hkosi Enterprises
Fr. Ted Ostrowski  St. Adrian Church
Alderman Theodore Thomas  15th Ward
Trakia Thomas  Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Katheryn Tomlin  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Ernestine Troope  Apostolic Church Of God
Joaquin Varela  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Vicky Varela  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Fr. George Velloratti  Queen of the Universe Church
Sister John Vianney  Sisters of St. Casimir
Irene Villafuerte  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Petra Villazana  Neighborhood Housing Services
W. Waters
Kathy Welch  Senator Collin’s Staff
Sister Immacula Wendt  Sisters of St. Casimir
Martha Williams  Stylmaster
Warteen Williams  LeClaire Courts
Bruce Wilson  Block Clubs - Anderson Academy
Joan Wisniewski  Sweetheart Cup
Nathan Wright
George Yara  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Hazel Yara  St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Angelica Zamudio  St. Gall Church
David Zverow  Metropolitan Family Services
Vytenis Zygas  Nativity B.V.M Church
CONTENTS

SUMMARY
To Build a New Community, We Begin with Relationships

OUR COMMUNITY
New Opportunities for Our Changing Community
Lead Agencies: Greater Southwest Development Corporation and Southwest Organizing Project
Planning Process: A Broad and Inclusive Discussion

VISION
An Attractive, Safe and Inviting Place

STRATEGIES
Eight Approaches to Implementing the Vision

WORK PROGRAM
Schedule and Lead Organizations
Figure 1 In the bungalow belt

Located on the Southwest Side near Midway Airport, Chicago Lawn and neighboring communities are largely residential. This plan covers the Chicago Lawn neighborhood and portions of Gage Park, West Elsdon, West Lawn and Ashburn.
To Build a New Community,
We Begin with Relationships

We have decided to stay—and to get to know one another. Despite the abandoned houses that dot some blocks, the gang presence and the unfamiliar faces, we are encouraged by the affordable bungalows and apartments, the possibility of finding a job nearby and the growing signs of revitalization. We are newcomers, long-time residents and neighborhood leaders committed to creating a safe and vibrant community.

Chicago Southwest—which centers on the community of Chicago Lawn and includes portions of Gage Park, West Lawn, West Elsdon and north Ashburn—is adjacent to Midway International Airport and includes the Greater Southwest Industrial Corridor. It is home to Marquette Park, the “green bungalow block” of environmentally-friendly rehabbed homes and dozens of religious institutions, community-based organizations, public and Catholic schools, ethnic restaurants and businesses.

We are a multi-cultural community where residents are of African, Mexican, Middle Eastern and European descent—arguably the most culturally diverse group of neighborhoods on the South Side. Yet we are not without racial tensions and economic challenges. We must address low-performing schools, violence and crime, a troubled housing market and many other issues.

After years of economic and demographic change, we are struck by a lack of connectedness in our neighborhood. We recognize the need to build new relationships with one another and with the organizations and institutions that help keep Chicago Southwest viable.

This Quality-of-Life Plan was developed with participation of more than 300 residents and dozens of institutions. We believe successful transformation of Chicago Southwest into a new community hinges on the continued commitment, engagement and vision of our residents and institutions, on our ability to connect and build positive relationships, and on our capacity to cultivate new leaders who are representative of the new stakeholders in our neighborhood. We are up for the challenge.
STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

STRATEGY 1 Promote stable investment and protect our affordable housing market
1.1 Launch the New Communities Housing Connection to protect new homeowners.
1.2 Strengthen and implement anti-foreclosure policy and assist homeowners with advice and education about financing and foreclosure risk.
1.3 Build a new network of landlords, tenants and homeowners to improve relations and hold absentee landlords accountable.
1.4 Launch an initiative to reduce local rent increases that result from use of Section 8 vouchers.

STRATEGY 2 Establish an active town center by revitalizing the 63rd Street commercial district
2.1 Redevelop the Sears/Jewel/cinema shopping center as a Town Center.
2.2 Create a revitalized pedestrian-oriented district on 63rd St. from Western to Rockwell.
2.3 Enhance the 63rd and Western district with compatible and coordinated developments nearby, such as artist live/work facilities, mixed-use development and in-fill housing.

STRATEGY 3 Strengthen and sustain leadership and community commitment
3.1 Connect leaders and organizations and provide regular forums to discuss community issues.
3.2 Increase community participation in local, State, and Federal elections.
3.3 Strengthen bonds between old and new generations of Chicago residents.
3.4 Champion civil rights and broader human rights through our strong tradition of community activism.
3.5 Promote intercultural understanding and respect in our community with special importance given to building relationship with the Muslim and Middle Eastern community.

STRATEGY 4 Create a safe neighborhood by investing in marginalized youth and young adults and building positive resident/police relations
4.1 Provide alternatives to gang life through non-traditional education programs such as alternative schools and GED preparation.
4.2 Establish safe havens for gang members in need of a non-threatening environment.
4.3 Research viability of local community justice panels to address minor offenses.
4.4 Provide job opportunities and other assistance for youth seeking alternatives to gang life.
4.5 Improve communication and relations with the 8th District Police, the community, and other City agencies to identify and solve neighborhood crime problems.
STRATEGY 5  Increase access to comprehensive health care, including preventive, primary and mental health services, for residents of all ages regardless of income and immigration status

5.1 Assess community health care needs and implement strategies to address these needs through the Healthy Chicago Lawn initiative.
5.2 Support the expansion or creation of new community health centers.
5.3 Increase public health programs at local schools.
5.4 Increase mental health care services and resources in the community.
5.5 Provide shelter for the homeless and others in need of emergency or transition housing, including families with boys over age 13.
5.6 Expand and strengthen health screening, education and prevention programs.

STRATEGY 6  Create better recreational and social opportunities for youth

6.1 Improve Marquette Park facilities and expand youth programming.
6.2 Establish year-round, structured youth activities and programs.
6.3 Develop new recreation facilities such as a bowling alley, roller rink, tech center or skateboarding park.
6.4 Expand resources available at branch libraries in Chicago Lawn and West Lawn.

STRATEGY 7  Expand the local employment base, prepare residents for employment, and improve access to jobs

7.1 Redevelop the Rheem industrial site and vacant land at Gateway Park.
7.2 Retain Solo Cup at the former Sweetheart Cup facility and utilize adjacent parcels for expansion of jobs at this site.
7.3 Provide assistance to entrepreneurs establishing new businesses and to existing local businesses seeking to expand.
7.4 Increase employment and internship opportunities for local youth and for those re-entering the workforce by leveraging public subsidies for employers.
7.5 Create internship and job opportunities for youth through stronger relationships among high schools, employers and non-profit organizations.
7.6 Publicize and promote existing job training opportunities and certificate programs.
7.7 Pass legislation to expunge or seal the records for minor, non-violent offenses to help ex-offenders re-enter the workforce.
7.8 Increase access to college through application assistance and other programs.
7.9 Establish a Center for Working Families to increase residents’ access to employment services, financial education and other programs that increase household income.

STRATEGY 8  Improve local schools and strengthen their role in the community

8.1 Build and strengthen parents associations.
8.2 Establish and achieve annual education goals.
8.3 Partner with neighborhood schools to promote and implement the “community schools model” that opens the schools on afternoons and weekends.
8.4 Work with CPS to end the negative effects of overcrowding in our schools.
8.5 Establish new daycare and pre-school facilities.
Figure 2  Becoming a mixed-income neighborhood

Our quality of life plan builds on a number of current projects and programs.
We have decided to stay and to get to know one another. Despite the abandoned houses that dot some blocks, the gang presence and the unfamiliar faces, we are encouraged by the affordable bungalows and apartments, the possibility of finding a job nearby and the growing signs of revitalization. We are newcomers, long-time residents of Chicago Southwest and neighborhood leaders choosing to make our neighborhood a safe and vibrant place where we can raise our families, find jobs, do our shopping, practice our faith and make lifelong friends.

Located on the Southwest Side near Midway International Airport, Chicago Southwest centers on the community of Chicago Lawn and includes portions of Gage Park, West Lawn, West Elsdon and north Ashburn. Our area includes the Greater Southwest Industrial Corridor, where Tootsie Roll, Nabisco and other factories provide more than 6,000 jobs, and Marquette Park, the largest of Chicago’s great neighborhood parks created in the early 20th century. We are also known for the “green bungalow block” with its environmentally-friendly homes and our dozens of religious institutions, community-based organizations, public and Catholic schools, ethnic restaurants and businesses.

What began in 1876 as a model community on marshland outside the city evolved into a flourishing, suburb-like neighborhood by the 1930s, where working-class immigrants could buy an attractive home with a yard and find employment nearby. Once known as the Lithuanian Gold Coast, this predominantly Lithuanian, German, Irish and Polish area has become, today, a multi-racial neighborhood with a mainly African-American population to the east and south and a largely Mexican/Mexican-American and white population to the west and north. Many families of Middle Eastern descent and of the Muslim faith have joined our community, adding their food, traditions and religion to our cultural mix.

**Becoming a mixed neighborhood**

From 1990 to 2000, Chicago Lawn’s population grew by 20 percent, reaching 61,412 while many Chicago neighborhoods saw their populations shrink. The growth was the result of heavy residential turnover as the non-Hispanic white population dropped 72 percent, to 10 percent, while the African-American population doubled to 53 percent and the Latino population rose to 35.1 percent. This mix makes Chicago Lawn and its surrounding communities arguably the most culturally diverse cluster of neighborhoods on Chicago’s south side.
Figure 3  Key organizations in the planning area

A broad range of community organizations have come together to contribute to this plan.

1 Al Salam Mosque  10 Healthy Chicago Lawn Coalition
2 The Bahar Center  11 Holy Cross Hospital
3 Block Club  12 IMAN Center
4 Block Club  13 Instituto del Progreso Latino
5 CeaseFire  14 Lee Elementary
6 Chicago Islamic Center  15 Maria High School
7 Church of the Open Door  16 Marquette Bank
8 Eberhart Elementary  17 Marquette Elementary
9 Greater Southwest Development Corporation  18 Metropolitan Family Services - Midway Center
19 Model Bungalow Block
20 Nativity B.V.M.
21 New Hope Ministry
22 NHS of Chicago Lawn/Gage Park
23 Queen of the Universe
24 Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse
25 Southwest Organizing Project
26 Southwest Women Working Together
27 Southwest Youth Collaborative
28 St. Adrian
29 St. Clare of Montefalco
30 St. Gall
31 St. Mary Star of the Sea
32 St. Nicholas of Tolentine
33 St. Rita of Cascia
34 St. Turibius
This change did not come without struggle. In the 1960s and ’70s, racial violence erupted over the demand for open housing and the racial integration of nearby Gage Park High School. Fear and unease intensified in the 1980s as many whites moved away. Some organizations sprang up to stop racial integration and, in response, others came together to promote racial harmony and neighborhood stability. Meanwhile, businesses and banks began to reconsider their investment in Chicago Southwest and some went elsewhere.

Chicago Southwest could have gone the way of similar urban areas, falling into a cycle of disinvestment and population loss. But we did not.

Since the ’80s, local organizations and committed residents have worked to foster cross-cultural understanding and to address the challenges facing the area. We have lessened the impact of “white flight” and disinvestment by promoting and creating affordable housing while spurring industrial and economic development. We have organized and advocated around immigration, education, violence, youth concerns and predatory lending. Leaders have formed new organizations to address the needs of our changing population. And in the last year, through the New Communities Program planning process, we have created additional opportunities for residents, businesses and community leaders to look beyond, race, class, religion and language to focus on improving our community.

**Challenges to face**

After years of economic and demographic change, we are struck by a lack of connectedness in our neighborhood. We recognize the need to build new relationships with one another and with the organizations and institutions that help keep Chicago Southwest viable.

This Quality-of-Life Plan was developed with participation of more than 300 residents and dozens of institutions. We believe successful transformation of Chicago Southwest into a new community hinges on the continued commitment, engagement and vision of our residents and institutions, on our ability to connect and build positive relationships, and on our capacity to cultivate new leaders who are representative of the new stakeholders in our neighborhood. We are up for the challenge.

Notwithstanding the progress we have made, Chicago Southwest faces challenges including unemployment, overcrowded schools, racial tensions, violence and gangs, a fragile housing market, limited access to health care, lack of immigrants’ rights and a shortage of social and recreational opportunities for our youth.

**Housing, our best kept secret, is threatened.**

The handsome, well-constructed bungalows built in the 1920s remain part of Chicago Southwest’s appeal, along with new senior housing and other affordable rental units. Until recently, while property values in other parts of the city skyrocketed, Chicago Southwest’s housing was both attractive and inexpensive. In the 1990s, we gained 664 housing units, but owner-occupied housing experienced a dramatic drop from 80 percent to 51.6 percent. Research carried out by the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) indicates a pattern of predatory lending and investor fraud that has led to foreclosures, abandoned houses and artificially inflated sale and rental prices, putting our housing market at risk.

**We are challenged to retain and attract industrial and commercial business.**

While the Greater Southwest Industrial Corridor currently houses 62 companies, and is protected for industry by the city, it is not at capacity. The Rheem site, Gateway Park and the Sweetheart Cup facility and adjacent parcels all present opportunity to attract new industry and jobs. Our main retail district radiating from Western and 63rd Street, and the shopping center at 59th and Western, face competition from large retailers such as Target, Wal-Mart and Home Depot, which are just a few miles away in Bedford Park. Analysis by MetroEdge found that Chicago Lawn, West Lawn, Gage Park and West Elsdon residents spend $1.2 billion annually, but 44 percent of that goes outside the community. We need to recapture some of that spending.
We need to meet the needs of our children.

**We must prepare our residents to compete in the workplace.**

Our economic future is also tied to the job skills and wages of our residents. We need better connections to job training programs and employment, especially for those with limited education or skills and for marginalized residents such as ex-offenders and undocumented workers.

**We are troubled by the significant shortage of educational, social and recreational opportunities for children and youth.**

A growing population of children and lack of resources has resulted in overcrowding and low academic achievement in our schools. While many teachers, administrators and parents have found creative ways to contribute, there is no community-wide, long-term effort to improve education in our neighborhood.

And because there are few places outside of school for youth to have fun, learn new skills or just hang out, some youth find recognition and companionship in local gangs. Local non-profit agencies, churches, schools and individuals have created small youth programs, but there is no Boys and Girls Club or other major recreation center. And while Marquette Park is a large facility, it has not been meeting the social and recreational needs of our youth.

**We do not always feel safe.**

Many residents talk of the fear of shootings, drug trafficking and the presence of gangs that keep them from accessing basic resources such as stores, parks and schools. We also know that, like the rest of Chicago, physical abuse by a partner or parent is an issue in our neighborhood. Although several groups are working to reduce violence, we recognize a need for better community and police relations, more prevention efforts, assistance for victims of violence and increased alternatives to gangs.

**Staying healthy is not easy because many are uninsured or underinsured, and there is only one affordable community health center.**

Insufficient access to routine primary care has made the emergency room at Holy Cross Hospital the second busiest in the state—because it is filling in for the lack of other facilities. Our seniors have difficulty paying for prescriptions and many in our immigrant community are not eligible for Medicaid or other public health insurance. Many families do not have coverage through their jobs and cannot afford to pay for it themselves.

The NCP planning process presented us an opportunity to identify these issues, as a community, and to strategize on how to solve them. With the participation of stakeholders from a broad segment of our community, we have created a plan that is embraced by our residents and leaders, who are committed and ready to create a new community.
LEAD AGENCIES

A Partnership to Bring People Together

Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC)

Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC) was founded in 1974 as a natural outgrowth of organizing efforts to hold banks accountable for community disinvestment. Recognizing early on the powerful impact of racial change in the neighborhood, GSDC’s work as a community development corporation has always included efforts to bridge racial and cultural differences.

The mission of GSDC is to “organize to generate residential, institutional, commercial and industrial revitalization that creates local benefits resulting in an improved quality of life for Southwest Chicagoans.” GSDC works to increase the quality of homeownership and residential tenancy; the viability of local businesses and business investment, and other economic opportunities for Southwest Chicagoans. GSDC markets the community to homebuyers, investors and businesses and strives to organize and collaborate with others to thwart the negative forces that lead to community deterioration.

One of the most successful community development organizations in Chicago, GSDC has been responsible for $500 million invested or retained in the neighborhood over the last 30 years. Projects include the retention of the Nabisco Plant, which produces 22 million Oreo cookies a day; bringing in plastic-molder StyleMaster to a previously underutilized site; opening a Jewel grocery development of which GSDC is one-third owner; attracting a multiplex cinema; building senior housing including Lawn Terrace, which also houses a day care and several small businesses; developing single family rehabs and mixed-use buildings; and conducting foreclosure prevention work.

Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)

SWOP was founded in 1988 as the Southwest Catholic Cluster to promote racial integration and diversity in Chicago Lawn. It was reorganized in 1995 as the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) when other churches and institutions were invited to join. SWOP now has 29 dues-paying member institutions representing 35,000 families and individuals. SWOP works with its member organizations to engage families in public life, develop leaders and identify and strategize around issues impacting the community’s quality of life. Current work includes: organizing around such issues as predatory lending; immigrants’ rights; violence reduction; improving health care and KidCare access through United Power for Action and Justice; citizenship classes; and conducting candidates’ forums, voter registration drives and other activities to raise political awareness.
Figure 4 How community development works

Community building involves linking the resources of the community with the broader economy to create value. This approach has been applied for decades in Chicago Southwest and helped the area maintain its strengths.
PLANNING PROCESS

A Broad and Inclusive Discussion

When the New Communities Program presented the opportunity and resources to conduct comprehensive planning, GSDC and SWOP hit the ground running, gathering information from community leaders about issues and devising a strategy for reconnecting neighbors to one another and to area institutions.

In the spring and summer of 2003, GSDC and SWOP staff and Chicago Southwest leaders interviewed more than 100 community leaders using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. We learned that as the population changed over the last 15 years, many residents had become disconnected from one another and from the schools, churches and other long-standing institutions that had always served to generate neighborliness and build community. Some of these institutions did not adapt quickly enough to meet the needs of new residents.

With this in mind, GSDC made intentional relationship-building a core tenet of the planning process. To lead our NCP organizing, we partnered with SWOP, an organization with outstanding organizing expertise and deep ties to dozens of faith communities, schools and other organizations. SWOP’s ability to communicate with hundreds of residents and leaders enabled us to incorporate into the planning process the diverse voices of our multicultural population.

In November 2003, we convened our first NCP community meeting with more than 175 leaders. The group was a diverse mix of all ages, faiths and racial, economic and ethnic backgrounds. In January 2004, a second large meeting was held to identify issues and create a vision. At this meeting, a 36-member NCP Task Force was commissioned. The task force met monthly to identify issues, map community assets and create a preliminary list of 77 potential projects and programs. The task force also identified potential lead organizations that could take responsibility for completion of the projects and programs. During this time, the NCP director and organizer met individually with the potential lead organizations to gauge interest and determine appropriateness of the match, to refine the project list and develop work plans.

The preliminary set of issues and projects was presented at a third community meeting in June 2004. Participants affirmed the focus of the plan by sharing powerful testimonials about stopping violence on their block, advocating for immigrant’s rights and getting involved in neighborhood change despite many barriers. The plan was unveiled to the public on November 9, 2004 at Eberhart School, with more than 600 people in attendance.
Figure 5 Bungalow block
The 6400 block of South Fairfield was the city’s Green Bungalow Model Block, showcasing environmental improvements.
An Attractive, Safe and Inviting Place

Because we love Chicago Southwest and want to stay here, we envision a community that in five years will be one of the top 10 most desirable neighborhoods in Cook County.

Chicago Southwest will have stable homeownership and no abandoned buildings, high quality health care accessible to all residents, great parks with excellent facilities and programs, outstanding schools and a wide assortment of cultural, sports and educational after-school activities for children and youth.

It will have a thriving retail and industrial sector bringing jobs to the neighborhood and making 63rd Street among the most popular multi-ethnic dining and shopping destinations in the city.

Chicago Southwest will be an attractive, safe and inviting place to live for families of diverse racial, religious, ethnic, socio-economic and immigrant backgrounds, with something to offer individuals of all ages.

It will be a place where residents, key leaders and stakeholders from community institutions and the public and private sectors know each other and work together, holding each other accountable in keeping this community thriving.

The corner of 63rd and Western has been a commercial hub for more than 80 years.
Enhance employment through industrial and distribution business recruitment

Area-wide initiatives
Protect affordable housing market
Housing counseling and education
Anti-foreclosure, predatory lending policies
Housing connections program

Build community leadership
Leadership network
Block clubs

Neighborhood safety initiatives
Project CeaseFire
Safe haven for youth

Strengthen school community partnerships
Parent associations

Improve recreation facilities and expand youth/family programming

Expand model bungalow block initiative

New and revitalized commercial center
New mixed use commercial and housing development
New recreation center
Arts programming

Community-based supportive living program
63rd street commercial/residential revitalization and streetscape improvement

Rheem site development concept
Nearly 300 people came together from constituencies, organizations and institutions across Chicago Southwest to envision the best possible future for those who live and work here. Using input from these participants, the planning task force identified assets that might be deployed, discussed how we might best “add value” to each other and how resources can be generated, leveraged and applied to unleash the potential of Chicago Southwest.

The Greater Southwest Development Corporation and the Southwest Organizing Project will work in partnership with other organizations to implement the more than 40 projects developed to carry out these strategies.

Our Strategies:

1. **Promote** stable investment and protect our affordable housing market.
2. **Establish** an active town center by revitalizing the 63rd and Western commercial district.
3. **Strengthen** and sustain leadership and community commitment.
4. **Create** a safe neighborhood by investing in marginalized youth and young adults and building positive resident/police relations.
5. **Increase** access to comprehensive health care, including preventive, primary, and mental health services for residents of all ages regardless of income and immigration status.
6. **Create** better recreational and social opportunities for youth.
7. **Expand** the local employment base, prepare residents for employment, and improve access to jobs.
8. **Improve** local schools and strengthen their role in the community.

Figure 6  Key projects of the plan

This plan includes strategies to build the community economically, physically and socially.
STRATEGY 1

Promote stable investment and protect our affordable housing market

For more than seven decades, the sturdy brick bungalows of Chicago Southwest provided an affordable opportunity for working families seeking their first home. Record low interest rates in recent years generated a lending and refinancing boom that expanded homeownership opportunities for many, but this boom also fueled predatory lending and fraud within the mortgage industry. Chicago Southwest has been hit hard by these and other disruptive investment practices. While the homeownership rate in Chicago Lawn remains a healthy 52 percent—higher than the citywide average of 44 percent—recent research by SWOP indicates that exploitive lending to inexperienced borrowers is creating unprecedented numbers of foreclosures. In the first nine months of 2004, more than 800 foreclosures were initiated in Chicago Southwest and the potential negative impact extends far beyond the families affected.

When homes in foreclosure are purchased by investors, some make only cosmetic improvements and either rent the home to tenants with Section 8 vouchers or sell to unsophisticated buyers or other investors at inflated prices. Some investors sell to complicit buyers who have no intention of paying the mortgage but use it to generate cash through a second mortgage or home equity loan.

Federal housing subsidy policies contribute to this cycle because Section 8 pays approximately $1,200 per month for a typical Chicago Southwest family unit, far above the $750 per month which had been typical. With a guaranteed income stream, owners often fail to maintain the home, and because Section 8 pays well above market rents, investors are willing to pay inflated prices for homes. This drives up the cost of buying a home and makes it difficult for families without a Section 8 voucher to find affordable rentals.

These practices disrupt the community on multiple levels—displacing families that lose homes to foreclosure, decreasing homeownership and neighborhood stability, driving housing prices out of reach of working families, and contributing to physical deterioration of the housing stock.

GSDC, SWOP and NHS of Chicago Lawn/Gage Park have mobilized to fight predatory lending and to reach homeowners threatened by foreclosure, but as the number of foreclosures grows, it is clear that we must expand our efforts. We need to better understand the complexity of this problem—including all the factors, from improvident lending to illness and job loss, which are driving the rise in foreclosures. We must gain a better understanding of what is happening to the homes once they enter foreclosure, how they are being flipped from one absentee investor to another, and we must break this destructive cycle that threatens the stability and viability of our housing market.

1.1 Launch the New Communities Housing Connection to protect new homeowners.

This initiative will streamline counseling and educational services to potential and existing homeowners. GSDC, working with NHS of Chicago Lawn/Gage Park, will coordinate services and offer each customer an individualized plan of action. Home-buyer-education classes will be taught by a certified instructor and local properties developed by NHS will be highlighted. Pre- and post-purchase counseling will be available and mortgage review by third-year John Marshall Law School students will be offered.
1.2 **Strengthen and implement anti-foreclosure policy and assist homeowners with advice and education about financing and foreclosure risk.**
Continue to work closely with the Attorney General and other elected officials to strengthen public policies that thwart foreclosures and vacancies. Strategies include:

- Pass legislation providing foreclosure relief;
- Work with the John Marshall Law School, the Illinois Attorney General and Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Banks and Real Estate to ensure that existing anti-predatory lending laws are enforced;
- Provide direct assistance to homeowners threatened with foreclosure, explaining their legal rights and what they must do to prevent foreclosure.

1.3 **Build a network of landlords, tenants and homeowners to improve relations, and hold absentee landlords accountable.**
Through block clubs and homeowners groups being created by NHS and SWOP, organize residents so they can hold landlords accountable for proper maintenance of their properties. These organizations will also reach out to new tenants to welcome them and build connections between existing and new residents.

1.4 **Launch an initiative to reduce local rent increases that result from use of Section 8 vouchers.**
Develop the local rental market information and expertise necessary to work with the Chicago Housing Authority and other entities to establish levels for Section 8 vouchers that are consistent with market rates in Chicago Southwest.

1.5 **Provide shelter for the homeless and others in need of emergency or transition housing, including families with boys over age 13.**
Chicago Southwest currently has no family shelter that accepts boys over the age of 13. This forces families to be separated in times of crisis, or to remain on the streets. To address this and related needs:

- Work with shelter providers to create housing for families with boys 13 years or older.
- Explore options to provide emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence, as well as subsidized housing to meet long-term needs.
- Be actively involved in advocating and implementing the city’s 10-year plan to end homelessness.
- Provide childcare for children of mothers in substance-abuse treatment programs.
STRATEGY 2

Establish an active town center by revitalizing the 63rd and Western commercial district

The area around 63rd and Western is the most active shopping area in Chicago Southwest. It includes a traditional pedestrian district along 63rd Street, an auto-oriented zone along the east side of Western, and the Jewel/Sears/cinema shopping center. Strategic redevelopment of this area will establish a true town center where area residents and visitors can shop, dine and catch a movie.

As American shoppers make more purchases at major retail chains, demand for small stores lining major arterial streets has dropped dramatically. To be successful, pedestrian shopping districts must be compact and attractive. Consistent with the citywide rezoning strategy now underway, portions of Chicago Southwest’s major commercial streets—including 63rd Street west of

Figure 7 Activity zones along the 63rd Street corridor

Once lined with retail uses and some upper-floor apartments, 63rd Street today is better suited to a mix of uses including residential zones and clusters of retail stores. Adding more residential units can help support the smaller retail stores along the corridor.
Rockwell—will transition to non-retail use. While GSDC has been successful in converting retail sites to other uses—such as senior living facilities—more work is needed to decrease commercial frontage and to concentrate commercial uses near the retail hub at 63rd and Western. Streetscaping, public art, outdoor dining and other improvements outlined below can help transform the pedestrian district into a popular multi-ethnic dining and shopping destination (see Figure 8).

A second opportunity is to redevelop the shopping center at 59th and Western as a Town Center. Many in our community are currently going elsewhere to stores and restaurants for groceries, pharmaceuticals and sit-down dining. Analysis by Metro Edge found that Chicago Lawn, West Lawn, Gage Park, and West Elsdon residents have a combined annual consumer expenditure of $1.2 billion, but are spending $554 million, or 44 percent, outside the community. If we could provide more goods and services locally, the spending would support jobs and businesses in our community.

Figure 8  Town Center plaza

The Town Center community plaza will serve as the focal point and anchor for the retail center of the community.
2.1 Redevelop the Sears/Jewel/cinema shopping center as a Town Center to include a new grocery or other anchor store and additional retail and service uses. Reconfigure the site as a coordinated shopping center with shared parking, better signage and improved traffic flow. GSDC will pursue development of a sit-down restaurant where movie-goers can dine before or after a movie. If Sears closes its store or builds a new store on the site, use that opportunity to further integrate the parking and traffic flow.

2.2 Create a revitalized pedestrian-oriented district on 63rd St. from Western to Rockwell with multi-ethnic dining and shopping destinations.

- Enhance the pedestrian environment with decorative pavers, street lights and trees.
- Use new provisions of the city’s façade improvement program and work with local banks to front-fund 75 percent of the improvement cost, which would then be repaid to the funding institution by the city.
- Install diagonal parking on side streets between 63rd and the nearest alley, creating as many as 96 new spaces from Artesian to Maplewood.
- Maintain wide sidewalks on some side streets to encourage outdoor dining areas.
- Work with the 63rd Street Real Estate Committee to create murals or other public art, particularly on blocks where wide sidewalks are maintained.
- Work with Marquette Bank on redevelopment of its property with a modern drive-thru facility and façade improvements on the two bank buildings and the Payless Shoes building, which is owned by Marquette Bank.

Figure 9 Town Center phasing diagram

The new Town Center should be developed in phases as the market dictates. A key first step is the development of a new retail center along the northeast portion of the site. New uses will replace older, inefficient existing development to establish a strong, pedestrian-oriented Town Center focus.
2.3 Enhance the 63rd and Western district with compatible and coordinated developments nearby, such as:

- Live/work facilities for artists on the west side of the 6200 block of Oakley, and a recreation center/Illinois Department of Human Services facility on the east.
- Mixed-use development for business services, retail and offices on the northeast corner of 63rd and Western.
- In-fill residential uses on surrounding blocks to create additional foot traffic and buying power;
- Enhancement of the auto-oriented business uses along Western.

Figure 10 63rd & Campbell redevelopment

One way to carry out 63rd Street revitalization is illustrated here. Opportunities exist for mixed-use redevelopment through a combination of rehabilitation and redevelopment.
STRATEGY 3

Strengthen and sustain leadership and community commitment

We are a community that has long fought for social, racial and economic justice. Whether for new investment, fair and open housing, worker rights, or immigrant and civil rights—even sometimes in the face of opposition from within the community—we have been an engaged community. Our goal today is for Chicago Southwest constituencies to identify and act on common issues, and to stand with one another, even when an issue affects only one or a few constituencies. We strive to bridge the differences of race, religion and economic situation.

We will improve community awareness of civil rights and legal issues affecting immigrant families, and help protect the rights of Latino day laborers and other workers. We will create opportunities for cross-cultural understanding among racial, ethnic and religious groups. We will also be attentive to the pressures facing immigrants community, including our Muslim neighbors, in the post-September 11 world.

Recognizing that we have evolved into a multi-racial neighborhood, we will develop new leadership that is representative of our residents, and promote civic engagement especially for those facing barriers such as undocumented immigrants and formerly incarcerated individuals.

3.1 Connect leaders and organizations and provide regular forums to discuss community issues.
We envision a range of activities to build relationships and effective action:

- Neighborhood and institutional leaders will form networks that represent the community’s racial, cultural and economic diversity and meet regularly to share information and coordinate activities.
- Churches, mosques and other religious institutions will form partnerships with schools to act together on neighborhood issues.
- Neighborhood organizations will use radio, TV, print media, web tools, resource guides and fairs to inform each other and community residents of their missions and activities.
- Partnerships will be sought with universities and colleges to bring resources to our community.

3.2 Increase community participation in local, state, and Federal elections.
Increase voter turnout by conducting citizenship drives within the immigrant population, non-partisan voter registration drives and Get Out The Vote campaigns targeting new citizens and other under-represented voters.
3.3 Strengthen bonds between old and new generations of residents.
Promote youth and seniors activities that support healthy aging by creating and expanding programs like the Hand in Hand intergenerational project, which connects seniors with children at a child care center. Also create on-going support groups, housing, social services and other direct services for older adults raising children.

3.4 Champion civil rights and broader human rights through our strong tradition of community activism.
- Erect a memorial to commemorate the actions for housing justice led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The suggested location is at or near the place where Dr. King marched in Marquette Park.
- Work with immigrants to help address their special needs, refer them to available resources and advocate for immigrant rights.
- Establish a public forum where day laborers and other workers can raise complaints about employers violating workers’ rights, and can join the efforts to build a Day Workers Democratic Center.

3.5 Promote intercultural understanding and respect in our community with special importance given to building relationships with the Muslim and Middle Eastern community.
- Conduct cultural sensitivity and educational workshops at high schools, colleges and police stations.
- Community Café will host monthly or quarterly forums for people to discuss and exchange ideas. Events will feature a wide range of writers, emcees, poets, essayists, dramatists and other artists and will highlight various political and cultural issues.
STRATEGY 4

Create a safe neighborhood by investing in marginalized youth and young adults and building positive resident/police relations.

In interviews conducted by SWOP in 2003, community leaders identified crime as the number one threat to the neighborhood. Concerns about crime, violence and gang activity were also raised throughout the NCP planning process. People shared their stories of intimidation by gangs and of distrusting the police who have sometimes been too ready to criminalize our youth and who do not always respond in a timely manner to resident calls.

Recently we have had success in reducing violence through implementation of the CeaseFire model. CeaseFire focuses on reducing shootings through a partnership among gang members, community-based organizations, residents, clergy, business and civic leaders, and corporate and philanthropic organizations. CeaseFire will continue street-based outreach in Chicago Southwest to provide high-risk persons with alternatives to gang life and to counter all local shootings with rapid, coordinated and sustained responses by residents, clergy and police.

But we also need a long-term strategy to invest in educational, recreational and employment activities for in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults, including ex-offenders, to provide real alternatives to gang involvement. We must be able to show our youth a future with a decent, living-wage job.

Three primary approaches will be pursued: 1) continue direct intervention to reduce violence, 2) build more productive police and community relationships, and 3) increase opportunities for youth and young adults.

4.1 Provide alternatives to gang life through non-traditional education programs such as alternative schools and GED preparation.
Conduct a survey of “out of school” youth in Chicago Southwest to determine their education, employment and other needs. Also assess the need for an alternative high school and build partnerships with organizations to better meet the needs of gang-affiliated youth.

4.2 Establish safe havens for gang members in need of a non-threatening environment.
Establish safe havens in three churches or mosques to provide a sanctuary for gang members in need of a safe place to be as well as support in changing their lives. CeaseFire will also use the safe havens to mediate conflicts between gangs. The first site opened this year. The success of the first safe haven will be evaluated prior to establishing additional sites.

4.3 Research viability of local community justice panels to address minor offenses.
Minor legal violations by youth could be addressed by a community justice panel comprised of local leaders who work closely with law enforcement and the courts to review minor offenses and determine effective and proportionate forms of community service or other activity by the violator. The panel could work with violators to encourage participation in positive rather than criminal activity.

4.4 Provide job opportunities and other assistance for youth seeking alternatives to gang life.
Community organizations will support the CeaseFire initiative by establishing a lawn mowing, snow shoveling and neighborhood clean-up program employing youth seeking alternatives to gang life. Neighborhood institutions and schools will create and implement programs that will increase internship opportunities and connect trained adults with young people seeking or needing life-skills mentoring.

4.5 Improve communication and relations among the 8th District Police, the community and other city agencies to identify and solve crime problems.
Work with the police to identify and prioritize neighborhood problems and begin developing solutions. Establish regular meetings between the police and Chicago Southwest youth to develop collaborative initiatives.
STRATEGY 5

Increase access to comprehensive health care, including preventive, primary and mental health services for residents of all ages regardless of income and immigration status.

Chicago Lawn is home to only one community health center and does not house a Chicago Department of Public Health or Cook County Department of Public Health clinic. It lacks comprehensive mental health services and substance abuse treatment and rehab facilities. As in other low-income communities, emergency rooms have become centers for primary care, taking critical resources away from patients who need them; the emergency room at Holy Cross Hospital is the second busiest in the state.

We will explore options for opening new health and mental health centers in schools and other community locations and ensure they provide care that is affordable, accessible and culturally and age-appropriate for our population.

Given community rates of unemployment and the high immigrant population, it is likely that many residents are uninsured or underinsured. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for Medicaid, KidCare and Family Care, and Latinos, despite high levels of employment, have disproportionately low rates of private or public health insurance nationally. Local organizations have campaigned to increase access to public health insurance for families, but more needs to be done.

We will continue to advocate for policy changes that expands access to public health insurance, shelters for families, funding for mental health care and implementation of the city’s 10-year plan to end homelessness.

5.1 Assess community health needs and implement strategies to address these needs through the Healthy Chicago Lawn Initiative.

Leadership on health-related issues will be coordinated by the Healthy Chicago Lawn Coalition, a partnership that includes the New Communities Program, Chicago Southwest residents, community groups, healthcare and social service providers and the Chicago Public Health Department. Initial goals will be to assess community health care needs, identify health priorities, identify potential funding resources and develop and implement strategies to address these priorities.

5.2 Support the expansion or creation of new community health centers, including:

- Expansion of the IMAN Health Clinic, which will move to a new facility and become a comprehensive, designated Community Health Center affiliated with local hospitals while remaining rooted in the community it serves.
- Working to establish a county health clinic or other Federally Qualified Health Center.
- Ensuring that care is accessible, age- and culture-appropriate, and meets the needs of the homeless, residents with HIV/AIDS or substance addictions and others.

5.3 Increase public health programs at local schools.

Chicago Southwest schools will become more actively involved in health education, with elementary and junior high schools offering preventative programs covering nutrition and fitness, substance abuse, smoking, teen pregnancy and teen dating violence. More schools will be linked to health and nutritional programs including, but not limited to, those at universities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Chicago Public Schools.

5.4 Increase mental health care services and resources.

Establish a safe, age-appropriate, affordable and culturally sensitive mental health center that includes primary mental health service as well as substance abuse and rehab programs. Also form a coalition to advocate for a substantial increase in resources for mental health services including comprehensive case management and subsidized housing.

5.5 Expand and strengthen health screening, education and other prevention programs.

These programs will address violence prevention; comprehensive sex education and teen pregnancy prevention; health education and outreach to inform residents of resources available for their health care; substance abuse; HIV-AIDS; and nutrition and exercise.
Participants and task force members repeatedly indicated interest in expanded activities for youth that contribute to academic performance, physical and mental health, and self-esteem. Currently, youth participate in small groups and programs organized by local non-profit organizations, schools, libraries, parks and individuals who have started sports leagues or tutoring programs on their own. While these smaller programs provide organized activities, there is no major recreation center, the parks are generally viewed as inadequate and youth tell us that there is not enough to do.

Marquette Park, the largest in the community, did not provide either the quantity or quality of programs needed in recent years, despite having the potential to be a true center of neighborhood life. Under a new administration, Marquette Park has begun to reach out more effectively to youth, although they are still challenged by geographic barriers to accessing the park. The youth field house is on the west side of Kedzie, which youth from other parts of the neighborhood have a difficult time walking to. Efforts are needed to elevate the quality of programming at all neighborhood parks and finding innovative ways of bringing youth into the parks.

6.1 **Improve Marquette Park facilities and expand youth programming.**
Work with Marquette Park leadership to ensure proper maintenance of facilities (such as tennis courts and restrooms); expansion of youth programming; use by local schools of the park as a learning site for science projects; and consideration of building a pool or play fountain similar to that at 63rd Street Beach.

6.2 **Establish year-round, structured youth activities and programs:**
Establish programs that offer challenging activities including art, sports, music instruction, drama and woodshop, teach useful job skills and reflect the history and the diversity of Chicago Southwest. Initial programming will include the following:

- Expansion of the “Pillars of IMAN” Sisters and Brothers programs to include youth ages 8 to 19. The program’s focus on spirituality will empower youth to recognize their own worth and gain self esteem.
- Partnerships with “community schools” that provide activities in the evenings and on weekends for students, families and other residents (see Project 8.3).
- Attraction of a major youth and family services organization such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls Club, or expansion of an existing organization.
- Improvement of park programs and services throughout the neighborhood.

6.3 **Develop new recreation facilities.**
Analyze the feasibility of developing a recreation facility such as a bowling alley, roller skating rink (such as the Park District’s Martin Luther King center at 76th and Racine), technology center with instruction and internet access or skateboarding park.

6.4 **Expand resources available at branch libraries,** including new books and resources for school research projects; up-to-date CDs, DVDs and videos; a better selection of resources in Spanish and Arabic; and quicker turnaround on inter-library loan and transfer of materials needed for school projects.
STRATEGY 7

Expand the local employment base, prepare residents for employment, and improve access to jobs

Chicago Southwest is home to the Greater Southwest Industrial Corridor where Tootsie Roll, Stylemaster, Nabisco and other factories provide more than 6,000 jobs and draw employees from across the region. It also includes Midway Airport, which recently completed a $927 million terminal expansion. Retaining this employment base and attracting new jobs is vitally important.

Two large industrial sites present opportunities to attract more jobs: Gateway Park and the Sweetheart Cup facility and adjacent parcels. A third vacant industrial parcel, the Rheem site, could be redeveloped for new housing and/or a much needed high school as discussed in Strategy 8. The vacant Kraft facility at Rockwell and 74th will transition to residential use to reflect the surrounding area, and will generate tax revenue that should be used to help complete remediation of contaminated land at the Gateway site.

ATA, a major carrier at Midway, filed for bankruptcy in 2004, causing concern over the future of 3,200 Chicago-based ATA jobs. The Greater Southwest Development Corporation will support re-hiring of the Chicago-based ATA employees by Southwest Airlines, which has taken over some of ATA’s gates, and will work with the city to move forward with hotel, restaurant or other airport-related development at the 72nd and Cicero Avenue site that ATA had planned to develop for a pilot-training facility.

We must also make sure our residents have the education, skills and training that new jobs require, and that they have access to available jobs.

7.1 Redevelop the Rheem site and vacant land at Gateway Park.

On 38 acres west of Kedzie at 75th, the former Rheem factory site is now owned by Kraft/Nabisco, which operates the bakery to the north. The Rheem site has been remediated for commercial and/or industrial reuse and with additional remediation could be developed for residential use or a new high school. Chicago Public

Figure 11 Rheem site redevelopment options

Two alternatives for the redevelopment of the Rheem site and vacant land at Gateway Park are shown here.

Schools is considering the site for a new high school which would occupy 12 to 16 acres.

East of Kedzie, Stylemaster opened at Gateway Park in 2001 and occupies about 460,000 square feet, but because of the bankruptcy of K-Mart, Stylemaster’s largest customer, the company is using only half of its building. An additional 28 to 30 acres at Gateway are available but require $4 million for environmental remediation. The development scenarios shown (Figure 11) present alternatives for developing a high school, new industrial uses and new residential and commercial uses at these sites. GSDC will continue to market the existing space and will work with the city to seek funds to complete remediation of the land.
7.2 Retain Solo Cup at the former Sweetheart Cup facility and utilize adjacent parcels for expansion of jobs.

A major employer, Sweetheart Cup, was recently purchased by the Solo Cup Company, which had planned to build a new factory at the former US Steel site at 87th Street and Lake Michigan. Solo has indicated that it will not build the new plant, instead consolidating operations at the Sweetheart Cup plant. This provides the opportunity to redevelop vacant facilities adjacent to the site (for expansion of Solo’s operations) while retaining or expanding the job base. City plans to reconstruct 76th Street from Pulaski to Kostner in 2005 will improve access to this site. GSDC will work with Solo Cup and the city to facilitate these investments.

7.3 Provide assistance to entrepreneurs establishing new businesses and to existing local businesses seeking to expand.

Convene quarterly business forums and periodic workshops to build relationships between local business operators and to provide technical assistance on business plans and growth. Successful business operators will mentor new entrepreneurs and existing businesses seeking to expand.

7.4 Increase employment and internship opportunities for youth and for those re-entering the workforce.

Work with the city and state to leverage public subsidies (such as tax increment financing or 6b tax reductions) by encouraging local businesses to provide employment and internship opportunities for youth and for those re-entering the work force.

7.5 Create internship and job opportunities through stronger relationships among high schools, employers and non-profit organizations.

Work with the Educational Technical Coordinator (ETC) at each local high school and with companies and non-profit organizations that can provide internship programs, job shadowing and other work opportunities. An overview of each high school’s curriculum and ETC contact information will be presented to local businesses and non-profits, along with a case study highlighting a successful internship program. The high schools will work with businesses and non-profits to develop curricula that prepare students for employment. Also, industry and small businesses will be connected to the local one-stop career center at Daley College.

7.6 Publicize and promote existing job training opportunities and certificate programs.

Raise awareness in the community of training programs and other workforce resources (such as the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development Summer Program, CAPS Explorers, Chicago Fire Fighters youth programs and High School Manufacturing Technology Grant programs) as well as local organizations that offer job training assistance (including Job Corps, Southwest Women Working Together and Daley College).

7.7 Advocate to pass legislation that expunges or seals the records of non-violent offenses to help ex-offenders re-enter the workforce.

A criminal history record is one of the most significant barriers to employment for ex-offenders returning to the community. Many employers conduct criminal background checks and resist hiring persons with a criminal history. A steering committee will be formed to coordinate the efforts of community organizations working to pass legislation to expunge or seal the records of minor, non-violent offenses to help ex-prisoners support themselves and their families. This coalition will host forums to raise awareness of expungement programs; host a conference focusing on the impacts of current regulations (including the Patriot Act) as well as proposals for new legislation, and lobby legislators to pass legislation that helps those who have paid their debt to society to get a job.

7.8 Increase access to college through application assistance and other programs.

Many neighborhood families lack experience with college applications, applying for financial aid or using the community college system as a starting point for a four-year degree. To make college more accessible to high school graduates (including those without U.S. citizenship) and to those completing a GED, we will host a community College Application Fair, recruit recent college grads to serve as counselors and aides, and work in partnership with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) on policy changes that increase access for undocumented students.

7.9 Establish a Center for Working Families to increase residents’ access to employment services, financial education and other programs that increase household income.

Work with LISC/Chicago and other potential partners to determine the feasibility of opening a center that supports working families with financial education, employment referrals, access to financial products and assistance in applying for government benefit programs.
Public and Catholic schools in Chicago Southwest have long been important neighborhood institutions, educating children as well as linking families to each other and to community resources. The population surge that began in the 1990s, combined with the closing of several Catholic schools, has resulted in severe overcrowding at local public schools. More than half of the public elementary schools and two of the three high schools serving the planning area had no available capacity in 2004. Fifty-six of the 155 overcrowded elementary schools in Chicago are in the school system’s southwest region, the most overcrowded in the city. While the Board of Education has responded by building annexes and new schools, population growth is projected to exceed the capacity of these new facilities.

Community concerns also include the need to improve the quality of education, strengthen parental participation and create community schools that will be open in the evenings and on weekends so that they become hubs of community activity.

8.1 Work with CPS to end the negative effects of overcrowding.
Conduct accurate demographic analyses and establish 10-year projections for school enrollment, then develop the capacity to meet that projected enrollment. Strategies should look beyond construction of new facilities to increasing resources for existing schools and implementing innovative ways of using school facilities.

8.2 Build and strengthen parent associations so that parents can participate in setting priorities and advocating for necessary resources.
For all Chicago Southwest schools, existing parents associations will be strengthened and, where no association exists, a new parent association will be formed. Initial efforts will target Eberhart and Marquette elementary schools, and move to additional schools as interest is developed. Parent associations will work with Local School Councils, administrators, teachers and students to identify, prioritize and achieve annual educational goals for the school by participating in development of the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA). The effort will be evaluated at the end of each school year.

8.3 Partner with neighborhood schools to promote and implement the “community schools” model.
Parent associations and community organizations will work with local schools to make Chicago Southwest schools focal points for community information and activity by:

- Exploring partnerships between community-based organizations and public schools to apply for “Community School” designation and funding provided by the Illinois Board of Education and Chicago Public Schools.
- Providing after-hours educational and recreational programs such as English as a Second Language, tutoring and sports.
- Hosting open houses for families of school children and other residents.
- Serving as sites for community forums, art fairs and other cultural events.
- Hosting forums and resource fairs where information on public safety programs such as block clubs, CeaseFire and other programs can be presented and discussed.
- Establishing new ways of providing information in Spanish and Arabic, where appropriate.

8.4 Establish new child care and pre-school facilities.
A working group that includes local public schools, Metropolitan Family Services and other organizations will identify new child care sites, find funding and establish new neighborhood facilities.
Key to Participating Organizations

Many organizations have pledged to implement the projects in our quality-of-life plan. They include (but are not limited to):

CeaseFire Southwest Side
Eberhart School EBER
Greater Southwest Development Corp. GSDC
Healthy Chicago Lawn Coalition HCLC
Inner-City Muslim Action Network IMAN
Instituto del Progreso Latino IPL
Maria High School
Marquette Bank
Marquette Park
Marquette School MARQ
Metropolitan Family Services MFS
Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago Lawn/Gage Park NHS
63rd Street Growth Commission
Southwest Organizing Project SWOP
Southwest Women Working Together SWWT
Southwest Youth Collaborative SWYC
Schedule and Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PROMOTE STABLE INVESTMENT AND PROTECT OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING MARKET</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Launch the New Communities Housing Connection to protect new homeowners.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>GSDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Strengthen and implement anti-foreclosure policy and assist homeowners with advice and education about financing and foreclosure risk.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>GSDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Build a new network of landlords, tenants and homeowners to improve relations and hold absentee landlords accountable.</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>NHS, SWOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Launch an initiative to reduce local rent increases that result from use of Section 8 vouchers.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NHS, SWOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ESTABLISH AN ACTIVE TOWN CENTER BY REVITALIZING THE 63RD STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1 Redevelop the Sears/Jewel/cinema shopping center as a Town Center.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GSDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Create a revitalized pedestrian-oriented district on 63rd St. from Western to Rockwell.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GSDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 Enhance the 63rd and Western district with compatible and coordinated developments nearby, such as artist live/work facilities, mixed-use development and in-fill housing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>63rd Street, Growth Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY COMMITMENT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 Connect leaders and organizations and provide regular forums to discuss community issues.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>SWOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Increase community participation in local, State, and Federal elections.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SWOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Strengthen bonds between old and new generations of Chicago residents.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>GSDC, MFS, SWOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 Champion civil rights and broader human rights through our strong tradition of community activism.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>SWOP, IMAN, IPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5 Promote intercultural understanding and respect in our community with special importance given to building relationship with the Muslim and Middle Eastern community.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>IMAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. Create a Safe Neighborhood by Investing in Marginalized Youth and Young Adults and Building Positive Resident/Police Relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Provide alternatives to gang life through non-traditional education programs such as alternative schools and GED preparation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Establish safe havens for gang members in need of a non-threatening environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Research viability of local community justice panels to address minor offenses.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Provide job opportunities and other assistance for youth seeking alternatives to gang life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Improve communication and relations with the 8th District Police, the community, and other City agencies to identify and solve neighborhood crime problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5. Increase Access to Comprehensive Health Care, Including Preventive, Primary and Mental Health Services, for Residents of All Ages Regardless of Income and Immigration Status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Assess community health care needs and implement strategies to address these needs through the Healthy Chicago Lawn initiative.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Support the expansion or creation of new community health centers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Increase public health programs at local schools.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Increase mental health care services and resources in the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Provide shelter for the homeless and others in need of emergency or transition housing, including families with boys over age 13.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Expand and strengthen health screening, education and prevention programs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. Create Better Recreational and Social Opportunities for Youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Improve Marquette Park facilities and expand youth programming.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Establish year-round, structured youth activities and programs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Develop new recreation facilities such as a bowling alley, roller rink, tech center or skateboarding park.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Expand resources available at branch libraries in Chicago Lawn and West Lawn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>TIMEFRAME (YEARS)</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. EXPAND THE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT BASE, PREPARE RESIDENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT, AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO JOBS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Redevelop the Rheem industrial site and vacant land at Gateway Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Retain Solo Cup at the former Sweetheart Cup facility and utilize adjacent parcels for expansion of jobs at this site.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Provide assistance to entrepreneurs establishing new businesses and to existing local businesses seeking to expand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Increase employment and internship opportunities for local youth and for those re-entering the workforce by leveraging public subsidies for employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Create internship and job opportunities for youth through stronger relationships among high schools, employers and non-profit organizations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Publicize and promote existing job training opportunities and certificate programs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Pass legislation to expunge or seal the records for minor, non-violent offenses to help ex-offenders re-enter the workforce.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 Increase access to college through application assistance and other programs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 Establish a Center for Working Families to increase residents’ access to employment services, financial education and other programs that increase household income.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. IMPROVE LOCAL SCHOOLS AND STRENGTHEN THEIR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Build and strengthen parents associations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Establish and achieve annual education goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Partner with neighborhood schools to promote and implement the “community schools model” that opens the schools on afternoons and weekends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Work with CPS to end the negative effects of overcrowding in our schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Establish new daycare and pre-school facilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

Jim Capraro Executive Director
Donna Stites NCP Director
Greater Southwest
Development Corp.
2601 W. 63rd St.
Chicago, IL 60629
(773) 436-1000 phone
(773) 471-8206 fax
d.stites@greatersouthwest.org
www.greatersouthwest.org

David McDowell NCP Organizer
Southwest Organizing Project
2609 W. 63rd St.
Chicago, IL 60629
773-471-8208
david.organizing@sbcglobal.net

Susana Vasquez Deputy Director,
New Communities Program
LISC/Chicago
1 N. LaSalle St., 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602
312-697-6102
www.newcommunities.org
www.lisc-chicago.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
Beatriz Ponce de León Scribe

Camiros Ltd.
Leslie S. Pollock Principal Planner
Eileen Figel Project Planner
Jose Magan Urban Designer
Jing Cui Urban Designer
Dena Hicks Landscape Architect
Denise Lea Planner

Kym Abrams Design, Inc.
Kym Abrams Creative Director
Kelly Komp Design Manager
Andy Eltzroth Designer

Illustration and Photo Credits

Steven Mach Illustration, page 16
Historic Chicago Bungalow Initiative, page 14
Patrick Barry, page 3, 13
Beatriz Ponce de León, page 10, 25
Bob Nick, page 7
Jose Magan, page 15
Harry Meyer, page 19
The New Communities Program (NCP) is supported by a major grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Living Cities, Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, Nationwide Insurance, Partnership for New Communities, Polk Bros. Foundation and Surdna Foundation.

www.lisc-chicago.org
www.newcommunities.org