



6 COMMUNITY

The West Haven Planning Committee
Rising Like the Phoenix

15 VISION

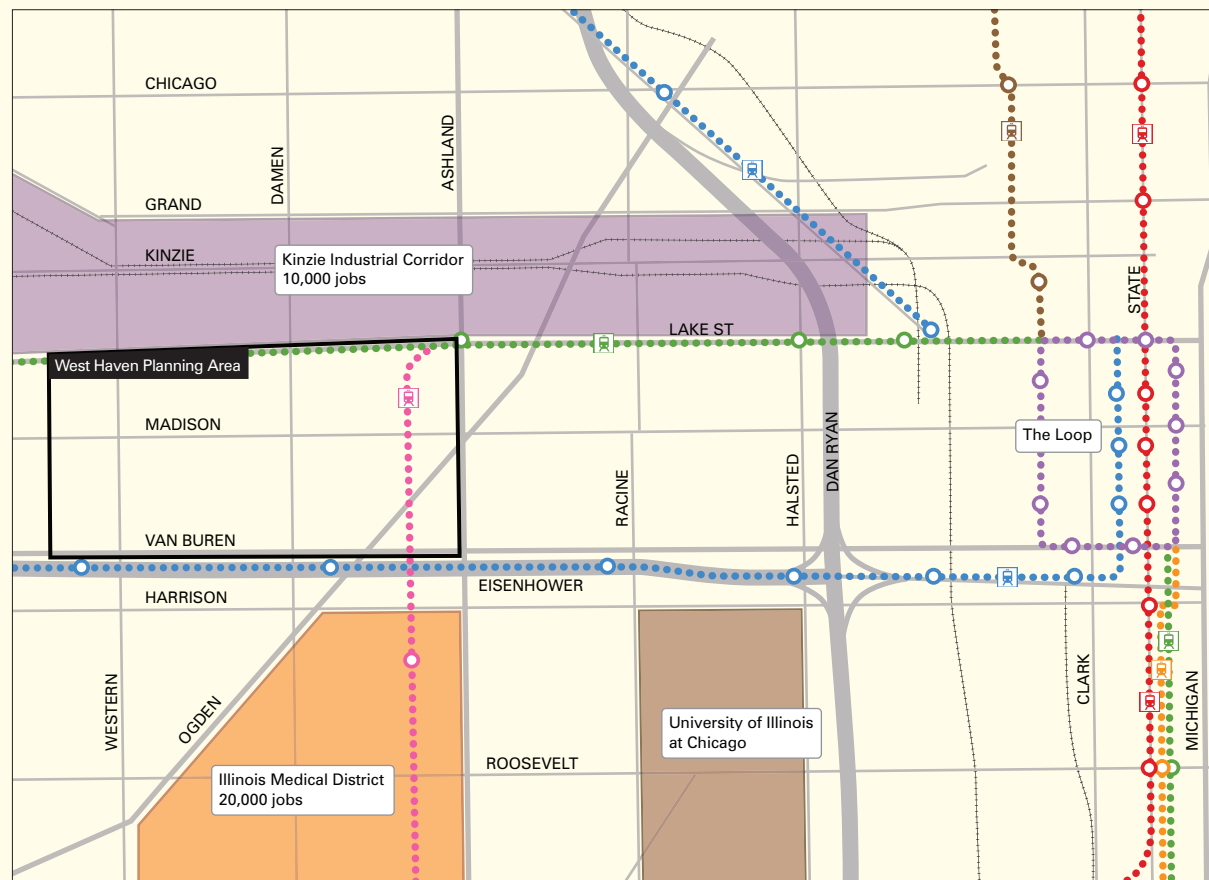
Create a Complete Neighborhood

17 STRATEGIES

Five Approaches to a Diverse and
Tight-Knit West Haven

36 WORK PROGRAM

Schedule and Lead Organizations



Close to downtown and transportation links

The West Haven planning area is two miles due west of the Loop, with close connections to highways, buses and rail lines.

West Haven Planning Committee

The West Haven Planning Committee was convened in 2006 by the Near West Side Community Development Corporation. The Committee began meeting monthly in August 2006 and continued through May 2007. Throughout the planning process, members invited participation from other leaders, which resulted in broad representation from West Haven organizations and residents, and an open and vigorous discussion of the neighborhood's future.

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 Eddie Winters
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This list was compiled from sign-in sheets for planning meetings and related activities and may not include all participants. Our apologies for any misspellings or omissions.

West Haven Rising Like the Phoenix



Stately rowhouses reflect the neighborhood's 19th Century beginnings.

Our 150-year-old community thrived for more than a century, with a lively central business district along Madison Street, an enviable supply of living-wage jobs at the nearby Kinzie Industrial Corridor and elsewhere, and a solid, attractive housing stock with many greystones and apartment buildings.

Although never a wealthy community, our one-square-mile neighborhood just west of downtown Chicago—bounded by Ashland, Talman, Van Buren and Lake Street—enjoyed a solid, working-class prosperity. But that prosperity has been interrupted for the past few decades, in the wake of two blows from which less hardy folk might never have recovered.

In the late 1950s, the Chicago Housing Authority razed 12 blocks between Washington and Lake Streets to build the 1,800-unit Henry Horner Homes. The public housing project never lived up to its promise of safe and decent homes for the poor; instead, it devolved into a poorly managed community teeming with drugs and gang activity.

Then, in 1968, came the second part of the one-two punch: Riots and fires following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. destroyed many storefronts along Madison Street between Ashland and California. Many of

the businesses that survived withered during the years that followed, and before long the stretch between Damen and Western had only four active stores. Systematic disinvestment and redlining followed, snuffing out hope of an economic rebound.

The retail flight forced us to shop elsewhere, and while some longtime homeowners continued to improve their properties, other homes suffered from the ravages of arson, scavengers and neglect by absentee landlords. This devastated the housing market and pockmarked our community with vacant lots.

The stadium campaign

But like the proverbial phoenix, West Haven—a name chosen by residents in the early 1990s, in a show of self-determination—has begun to rise from the ashes. The turnaround began in 1987 when older residents organized to oppose a proposed Chicago Bears stadium that would have resulted in the demolition of homes and displacement of about 1,500 families.

Under the leadership of the Central West Community Organization, which represented our homeowners, and the Interfaith Organizing Project, a coalition of churches, we met weekly to figure out how to stop the stadium. We knew that prior to the 1968 riots, West Haven had had a strong coalition of churches and equally strong schools, among many other assets, and we were determined to rebuild our neighborhood our way.

Among our more creative and dramatic tactics in this gridiron showdown was the well-attended flag football game that we played on the street in front of the home of Bears owner Michael McCaskey, in leafy north-suburban Winnetka. Neighbors got a taste of the siege our neighborhood would have been faced with on game day—and when one lady complained that she couldn’t get out of her garage, the Winnetka police correctly answered: “That’s their point. That’s why they’re here.”

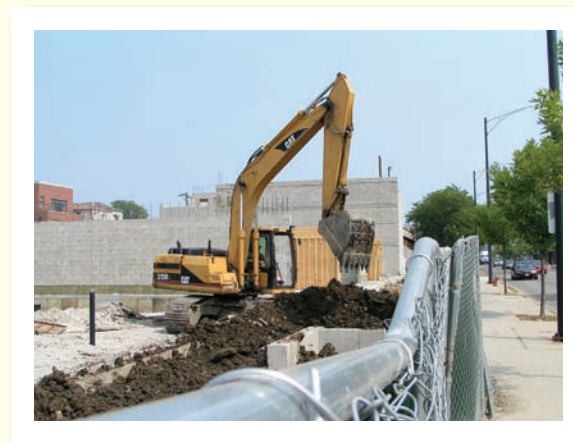
The Rev. Albert D. Tyson III, pastor of St. Stephens AME Church since 1985 and an Interfaith Organizing Project member, recently reminded our older residents and schooled our newer residents about all that. Unimpressed by the Bears’ vague, oral promises to replace the housing

of those displaced, he said, “The community rose up and said, ‘No, you’re not going to do that.’” The Bears management “never consulted with those who lived, worked and worshipped in the community.”

Instead, we put forth “The Better Alternative,” a development plan of our own that focused on building affordable housing and creating new resources like a library, park and community center for youth. That organizing process not only sacked the Bears proposal but, a few years later, helped the community achieve many of its goals when the Chicago Bulls wanted to build what later became the United Center.

Using “The Better Alternative” as our playbook, we worked with the stadium’s owners and the city to build replacement housing for those displaced by the United Center, set aside other land for affordable housing, added on to the existing Touhy Herbert Park, and built both the Mabel Manning public library (named after a neighborhood leader) and the James Jordan Boys & Girls Club and Family Life Center.

“The beauty of everything that previously occurred is that the people all managed to come together,” the Rev. Tyson said recently, during a meeting of our quality-of-life planning process task force. “Now you have an opportunity again to shape what this community will look like.”



New construction is filling in most of the area’s once-empty lots.



Alongside new housing, there are beautiful reminders of the past.

Neighborhood revival

The Central West Community Organization and the Near West Side CDC, founded in 1988, continue to lead our neighborhood's revival efforts. Central West meets with residents, churches, other community groups and government officials to put ideas on the table and advocate policies that will improve West Haven for the benefit of all.

Near West CDC implements managed development aimed primarily at our existing residents. Its strategy—one that the community has adopted as its own—recognizes that gentrification is coming given our prime location west of the Loop. We are determined, however, that our neighborhood's revival should continue to find a place for—and not displace—those who have weathered the lean years.

Our neighborhood has enjoyed numerous encouraging signs during the past decade. The two-part redevelopment of Henry Horner Homes—a piece of the Chicago Housing Authority's "Transformation Plan" that's been named West Haven Park—has resulted in the 200-unit Villages of West Haven, low-rise red brick townhouses; and a 544-unit, mixed-income project that blends public housing apartments, affordable for-sale homes and rentals, and market-rate units. The redevelopment of Rockwell Gardens to the west, into the 750-unit, mixed-income West End community, with 500 units on site and 250 nearby, has extended our geographic focus west of Western Avenue.

This new housing has been complemented with affordable housing developed by Near West CDC, which has built 70 single-family and two-flat units through the New Homes for Chicago program and co-developed 150 scattered units of replacement housing for Horner. More recently, market rate developers have built two 34-unit condominium projects, one on Adams east of Western and another at Madison and Leavitt, and several similar projects are on the way.

The retail sector has begun to revive as well. A new bank branch, dental office and Walgreen store have opened on Madison Street, co-developed by Near West CDC, and we look forward to opening the new Haven Square Shopping Center on Western Avenue anchored by a full-service grocery store. The 52,000-square-foot development, which Near West CDC helped to develop, will create dozens of new jobs and is expected to contain a second anchor store and nine smaller ones.

Near West CDC also has taken the lead on social service projects, such as creating childcare connections. The Home Repairs for Accessible and Independent Living program provides accessible ramps to our seniors so they can stay in their homes. The Home Visitors Program, the city's first "service connector" model, has helped hundreds of our public housing tenants make the transition to mixed-income developments.

In 2006, Near West CDC opened a Center for Working Families, co-located with the Home Visitors Program, part of a citywide effort that bundles tax preparation, public benefits screening, job placement and training, and professional financial planning to help people lift themselves out of poverty. In 2007, our site assisted 533 taxpayers file for \$835,468 in federal tax returns and Earned Income Credits.

We enjoy close proximity to major transportation arteries including the Eisenhower Expressway, Western Avenue, and the CTA's Green, Pink and Blue lines. We have three parks, eight local schools and Malcolm X College, not to mention the proverbial "House that Jordan Built"—the United Center.

The broader Near West Side community boasts great and growing diversity: According to 2005 Census estimates, the community area had a population of 48,004, of whom 51.7 percent were African American, 24.7 percent were white, 11.1 percent were Hispanic (a 20.2 percent increase since 2000), and 11.8 percent were Asian (a 13.1 percent rise).

The community area has nearly as many people with at least a bachelor's degree (11,550) as have a high school diploma or less (11,672). Our unemployment rate stands at 16.3 percent, which is not as low as we would like, but it's down substantially (12.3 percent among men, 4.6 percent among women) since 2000.

The smaller West Haven area remains predominantly African American and has a median household income of \$22,500, according to a 2007 study by LISC MetroEdge. Buying power in the West Haven trade area is \$91 million per square mile, compared to \$81 million per square mile for all of Cook County.

Second round of planning

Our community first participated in LISC's quality-of-life planning process during its pilot New Communities Initiative in 2001-02. Along with Pilsen and South Chicago, we helped LISC test a more comprehensive approach to community development, which started by convening various stakeholders—residents, businesses, political leaders, social service agencies—to brainstorm, strategize and ultimately implement projects.

Near West CDC served as lead agency for that seven-month process, involving more than 100 residents in creation of a plan for our neighborhood—because, in the words of longtime community activist Wilma Ward, "If we don't, someone else will."

We took home maps of the community and drew in our own ideas, where developers might have wanted high-priced housing and high-end retail. "We have to think about the balance," said Michael Cunningham, a new homeowner. "What do we want the neighborhood to look like and feel like?"



Private developers have built hundreds of units of mixed-income housing.



Building bridges between old and new residents—and income levels—remains a primary challenge.

Among the more ambitious goals stated in that vision was this one: “Old dividing lines will blur as long-time residents and newcomers rebuild connections.” That goal has become even more pertinent five years later, when many of the same people—along with a smattering of new folks—reconvened to update the previous plan. Among other drivers, the CHA’s Plan for Transformation had begun creating new communities where people of different socioeconomic classes and ethnicities mixed in close proximity.

Old and new residents seemed to be on a collision course at the outset of our 2006 quality-of-life update, with the planned grocery store—a smaller Aldi store rather than the Jewel or Dominick’s some of us had wanted—a particularly hot issue. “If that’s all you can get right now, why not wait six months or a year and try it again?” asked one new resident. But another said, “Maybe something else will come here another day. There are some people in this room who shop at Aldi now.”

Although it is Aldi that will come here now—and West Haven needs to move forward with this project, given its undeniable status as a “food desert” with no options to purchase fresh food such as meats and produce—Near West heard the other voices in the room and hopes to attract a larger store to the community in the years ahead. The grocery store debate prompted Gates to remind us of the need to work together, across racial and class boundaries. “We need a mechanism to resolve tensions before the line in the sand becomes firm,” he said. “There needs to be some mechanism to move this toward a more cohesive community [that can] air different perspectives without animosity.”

Urban planning consultants from Camiros Ltd. led us through an exercise that demonstrated both new and old residents wanted many of the same things, such as safer streets, higher-performing schools and newly developed retail. They also pointed out the progress that had taken place on the previous plan, which contained 10 strategies and 50 projects.

The task force met several times as a full body and numerous times divided into subcommittees after that initial tense but productive meeting in August 2006. We brainstormed our community’s strengths and deficits and put forth a vision. Our subcommittees reported back on their sessions on community building, education, housing, retail and commercial development, parks and open space, and arts and culture. We focused particularly closely on retail development, with a lengthy full-group session followed a few weeks later with a bus tour of retail-rich communities to gather ideas on what we wanted—and didn’t want.

Finally, we delved into the details of strategies and projects, talking about which projects already had been completed or were underway, which needed to be done, and which did not need to be included—and, perhaps most importantly, who planned to do what. Over a year-long period, we not only produced this plan but hashed through our differences. Our divides had narrowed considerably—and our common ground had begun to form.

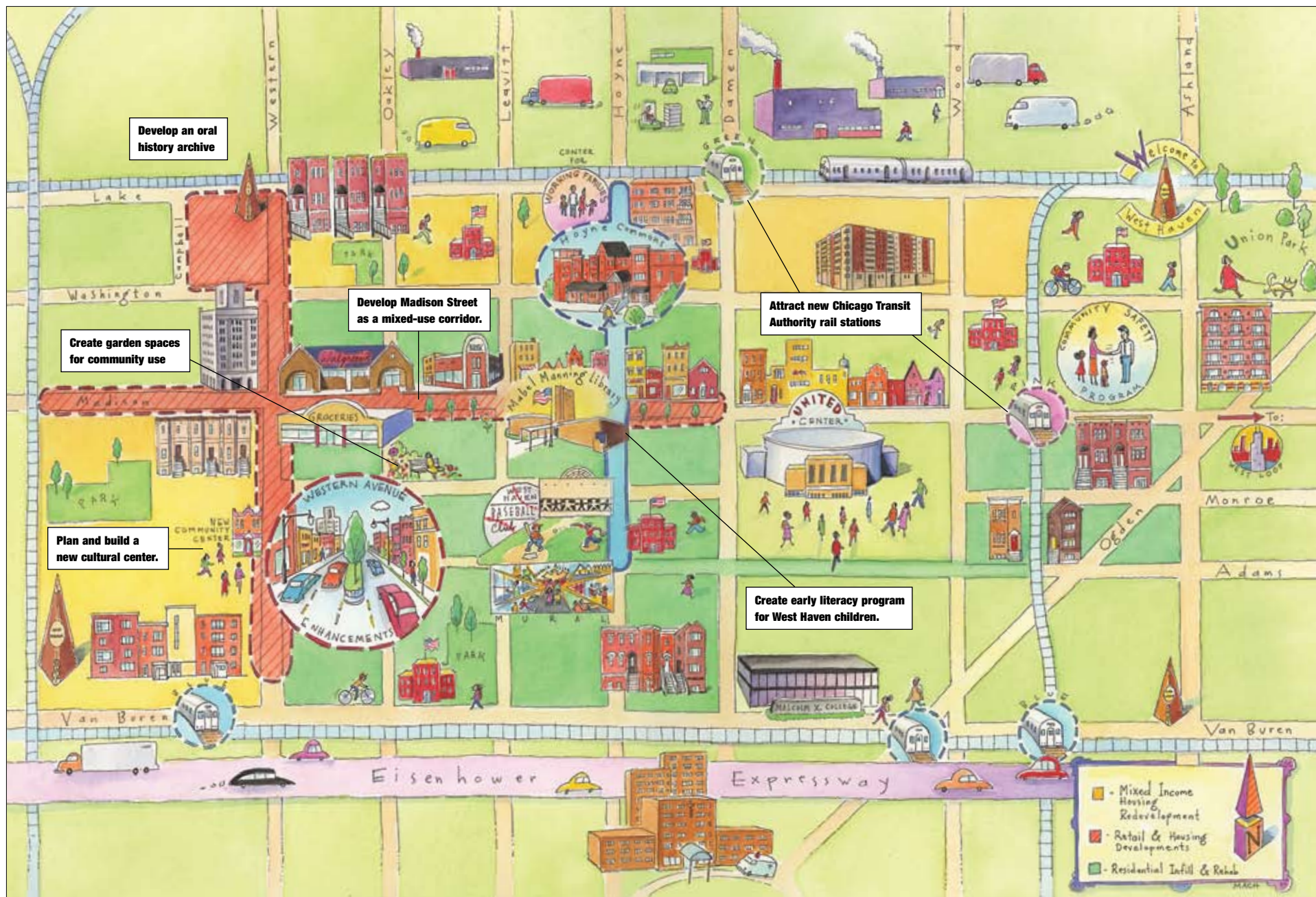


Figure 3 Key projects of the plan

Priorities for West Haven's future include two new CTA stations, a safer neighborhood, a community center and stronger education programs.

Create a Complete Neighborhood



Community events are a way to bring residents together.

We will build on our recent physical growth by supporting it with improved community connections, amenities, services and programs. Taking this next step in the transformation of West Haven will make it a complete neighborhood.

West Haven will continue to evolve as a more racially and economically diverse community of supportive neighbors. Here in West Haven we will have the best of both worlds: close to downtown and other major city attractions, but remaining an identifiable, safe neighborhood offering housing choices, a short walk to shopping and quality schools in a well-designed and -maintained physical setting.

We will build our community by encouraging new and old residents to work together—and play together—in West Haven. We will work to increase public safety, offer community activities for all ages (especially youth) and ensure that new development and its residents become a part of the community.

We will beautify our community by improving the physical identity of West Haven, continuing to maintain public areas, providing locations for additional open space activities and cultivating the arts and culture.

We will better educate our citizens by making the schools more neighborhood-based, improving overall quality and providing education for all ages.

We will maintain a mix of housing choice and affordability.

We will stimulate retail and commercial development by attracting more shopping opportunities and creating neighborhood commercial centers, which we will work to make a source of new local jobs.

And we will build closer relationships with the police and remain vigilant within our block clubs and through CAPS to create a safer street environment both day and night.

Our strategies:

1. **Rebuild** our social infrastructure.
2. **Improve** the physical and aesthetic identity of West Haven.
3. **Improve** education for people of all ages.
4. **Increase** the quantity of West Haven's housing stock, while maintaining a commitment to quality affordable housing.
5. **Attract** more and better retail services—and jobs.



Creating a safer environment begins with organized activities around the neighborhood.

STRATEGY 1

Rebuild our social infrastructure



Picnics, ball games and a Winter Social help build relationships.

Our vision is to rebuild the social infrastructure of West Haven, strengthening interpersonal connections across all ages, ethnicities and walks of life. We will offer community activities and events that bring together longtime residents and newcomers, seniors and youths.

Our community profile has changed significantly during the past several years. Although still 95 percent African-American with three-quarters of households under \$35,000 in income per year, according to 2005 Census estimates—our neighborhood has begun to attract newcomers of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds. In the larger Near West Side community area, average household income rose from \$30,966 to \$35,452 from 2000 to 2005, according to the U.S. Census, and more-serious “index” crimes tumbled from more than 8,500 to less than 6,500 from 1999 to 2004. Yet keeping our streets safe remains an issue for seniors, children and families.

A central challenge we face will be finding new ways to bring together old-timers and newcomers, and we have many ideas on how to do so that we look forward to implementing. “It’s not a black and white issue,” longtime resident Victor Warren told the *Chicago Journal*. “It’s a change issue.”

1.1 Coordinate and sponsor regular community events.

To encourage older and newer residents to participate and engage in the social life of West Haven, we will hold events such as block club parties, art shows, holiday celebrations and back-to-school and end-of-school-year parties. We will establish a community calendar with regular gatherings such as a summertime “Celebrate West Haven” festival and a Winter Social.

1.2 Develop a neighborhood education program.

We will welcome newcomers into the community with a welcome packet about community history, culture and expectations. Then we will begin a dialogue between them and long-time residents that will inform old and new residents alike about the neighborhood’s historic character and current revitalization. We will also work to make our neighborhood’s schools more community-oriented.

1.3 Develop an oral history archive of West Haven.

We will establish a program that employs local youth to interview local seniors and archive their thoughts on West Haven’s past, present and future. In doing so, we will preserve our history, encourage cross-generational ties and educate newer residents about the heritage of our community.

1.4 Increase public safety in West Haven.

We will continue to support groups working on public safety activities in West Haven—such as CAPS, CLEARpath and the West Haven Security Working Group—so that seniors, families with young children and everyone in between can walk the streets without fear. We will organize quarterly combined beat meetings for the 12th and 13th police districts, and we will encourage the Chicago Police Department to strictly enforce curfew laws.

1.5 Support and expand block clubs and homeowner associations.

We will identify organizing tasks for residents that will lead to the development of block clubs. These could include “check-in” programs for seniors and volunteer neighborhood cleanup programs. As we develop block club activities, we will disseminate news about them through the West Haven newsletter (see 1.7).

1.6 Create opportunities for leadership development.

We will increase opportunities for residents to assume leadership roles in coordinating community events, and will nurture their ability to do so. This initiative will help us carry forward many of the projects in this plan.

1.7 Develop a West Haven newsletter or newspaper.

We will create a free newsletter or newspaper that will be distributed at locations around the neighborhood, providing information about community events and services. This will keep residents, business owners and others better informed and help to stitch together the fabric of our community.

1.8 Continue the Home Visitors Program.

We will continue to offer this city “service connector” program that helps our public housing residents transition to mixed-income communities.

1.9 Build a healthy community.

We will establish partnerships with nearby hospitals and health providers to promote healthy living through preventative campaigns, nutrition information and exercise opportunities.



The West Haven Baseball Club offers year-round activities for youth.

STRATEGY 2

Improve the physical and aesthetic identity of West Haven



Beautification and new green spaces are a priority.

Our vision is to improve the physical identity of West Haven, maintaining and upgrading our parks, streetscapes and other public areas, and cultivating the arts and culture.

West Haven does not lack open space, but too much of what we have is underutilized and scruffy looking. Touhy-Herbert Park, a major success of our earlier quality-of-life plan, is one we plan to build upon. We will beautify our public spaces through volunteer efforts, encourage city investment in streetscapes and leverage public infrastructure improvements as part of private developments.

We also envision arts and culture programming as an important way to both beautify and connect our changing community. In our schools, park programs and other public venues, we plan to color in this element of West Haven.

2.1 Continue to maintain public areas in West Haven.

We will coordinate streetscape and landscape upgrades to establish a quality neighborhood image. In particular, we will focus on certain very visible places, such as Western Avenue and Madison Street, and upgrade them with new paving, sidewalks, lighting, street furniture and landscaping. In doing so, we will develop a consistent theme to articulate our community image.

2.2 Improve accessibility of open-space sites for residents.

We will re-think and implement new ideas with regard to park design—both aesthetic appearance and functionality—as well as programming to encourage residents to use West Haven’s parks more often. To support this effort, we will re-establish the presence of local park advisory councils and expand the community presence within Gates Starr Park.

2.3 Organize neighborhood and parks cleanup days.

We will work through existing organizations—and develop new ones—to organize residents for activities such as trash pickup on our sidewalks and streets, and in vacant lots and neighborhood parks. As part of this effort, we will investigate initiating a pilot program for a mini street sweeper.

2.4 Support creation and programming of new park.

We will link this new park within the Horner site, at 1936 W. Washington, to development to the broader community.

2.5 Design and plan the Mabel Manning Library green space.

This will further spruce up both the aesthetic appearance and functionality of existing open spaces in West Haven.

2.6 Develop Hoyne Commons as a bridge between the north and south ends of West Haven.

We will undertake streetscaping and coordinated development along Hoyne Avenue that visually and physically links Touhy-Herbert Park, the Jordan Center and the library on the south end of Hoyne with the West Haven Park residential developments on the north end. We will need to follow up with the city on this project as it will require capital expenditure.

2.7 Create West Haven “pyramid” markers.

These markers at key locations will help to define and identify the West Haven community. We will work with the city’s Department of Transportation to bring this about.

2.8 Plan and build a new cultural center.

We will develop a multi-purpose center that includes space for arts programming, banquet facilities, a senior activity room and even a recording studio. This will enrich the lives of residents of all ages, both through its programming and because it will provide another common gathering space for West Haven.

2.9 Provide a tighter community and cultural focus within West Haven.

We will encourage and support programs in existing locations to share all facets of neighborhood culture with our young people, handing down oral history across generations and establishing pride in our community.

2.10 Create a West Haven “Rap-Off.”

This inter-school competition will encourage youth to use and enhance their writing and verbal communication skills for educational purposes. The “Rap-Off” will give youth a positive outlet and help deter them from getting caught up in gang violence and drug sales.



A mural honoring local seniors and families graces a wall at Touhy Herbert Park.

STRATEGY 3

Improve education for people of all ages



The Mabel Manning Library is centrally located and well-used by community residents.

Our vision is to improve education for people of all ages in West Haven, making schools more accountable for academic achievement and cultural relevance, bolstering core programs from early literacy to job training and college preparation, and fleshing out after-school and weekend programs to round out our youth.

Test scores for both elementary and high schools within West Haven underscore the need for improved education in our community. Students in every elementary school in West Haven scored below the 40th percentile in both reading and math in the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Best Practice High School students reached 28th percentile in the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, while Crane Technical High students were at the 41st percentile.

This lack of achievement haunts our residents into adulthood. About half of West Haven's population over age 25 did not have a high school diploma in the year 2000, according to Census figures, and only one fourth continued their education beyond high school. Less than 10 percent received a college degree. Our unemployment rate was 32.2 percent among residents 16 and older in the 2005 Census estimates.

We see the need to improve education both for K-12 students and throughout the life cycle. Young families choose their communities based heavily on the quality of local schools, and our goal is to make West Haven a magnet for such discerning parents.

3.1 Develop a comprehensive school-parent communication system for all West Haven schools, providing opportunities for parents to participate in their child's education.

The Local School Council website could provide information access for parents who could not attend meetings. We also could facilitate e-mail or cell phone alerts about important topics or provide briefings through our community newsletter or newspaper. And we could encourage alternative meeting dates for LSCs that do not consistently attract participation.

3.2 Continue the school/principal network.

This project, arising from our previous plan, gives principals and other school personnel a regular meeting space in which to share best practices as well as ideas on how to meet their challenges.

3.3 Create an early literacy program for West Haven children.

This could be modeled on the LaSalle Bank pilot program on early literacy at Victor Herbert Elementary School. We will attempt to establish collaborations with other banks and educational providers to expand the program throughout West Haven's network of elementary and pre-K programs. We will encourage teachers to get parents involved in early literacy if there are problems with their children.

3.4 Establish an adult-to-youth mentoring program.

We will develop an emerging leadership program that engages West Haven adults with youth, who will learn about both professional trades and entrepreneurial small-business development. Our directory of adult mentors will supplement and enhance the work of educators to help all young people succeed.

3.5 Develop a support network for college-bound students.

We will support organizations that assist college-bound students with school applications and financial aid documents. Through our network, we also will provide information about the ins and outs of different schools to help them make the decision on which would be most appropriate for them to attend.

3.6 Increase school-based extra-curricular activities.

We will support and expand existing efforts at local schools to broaden the range of after-school and weekend activities for children and teenagers.



Schools will benefit from stronger early literacy programs—and a support network for college-bound students.

STRATEGY 4

Increase the quantity of West Haven's housing stock, while maintaining a commitment to quality affordable housing



High-quality affordable housing provides housing options for local residents.

Our vision is to increase the quantity of West Haven's housing stock, while maintaining a commitment to affordable, quality housing options that accommodate the needs of current residents and a socio-economically diverse population. We face a delicate balancing act in welcoming our incoming residents, who would like new or recent construction with all its bells and whistles, while at the same time ensuring that those who have lived in West Haven for decades are not chased out by skyrocketing rents and property taxes.

Housing affordability has become an increasingly pressing issue in our neighborhood since earlier this decade. The median home value has risen from \$160,938 in the 2000 Census to \$224,820 in the 2005 estimates, and it is projected to reach \$294,345 by 2010. The character of new development is another pressing issue, as we face proposals for developments that would be grossly out of scale for our community. Among them is a plan for an eight-story, 136-unit condominium building on what's now a grass lot at 2147 W. Madison, which would contain 9,000 square feet of retail.

Henry Horner Homes has been torn down as part of the Chicago Housing Authority's "Plan for Transformation," and replaced with the mixed-income, 744-unit Westhaven Park project that contains public housing apartments, affordable for-sale homes and rental apartments, and market-rate units costing more than \$400,000. Rockwell Gardens is being transformed into the 750-unit, mixed-

income West End. Hundreds of private-market units have gone on the market during the past several years, such as the West Village Homes at 2112 W. Madison, where single-family homes start in the \$390,000 range—far beyond the reach of many of our current residents.

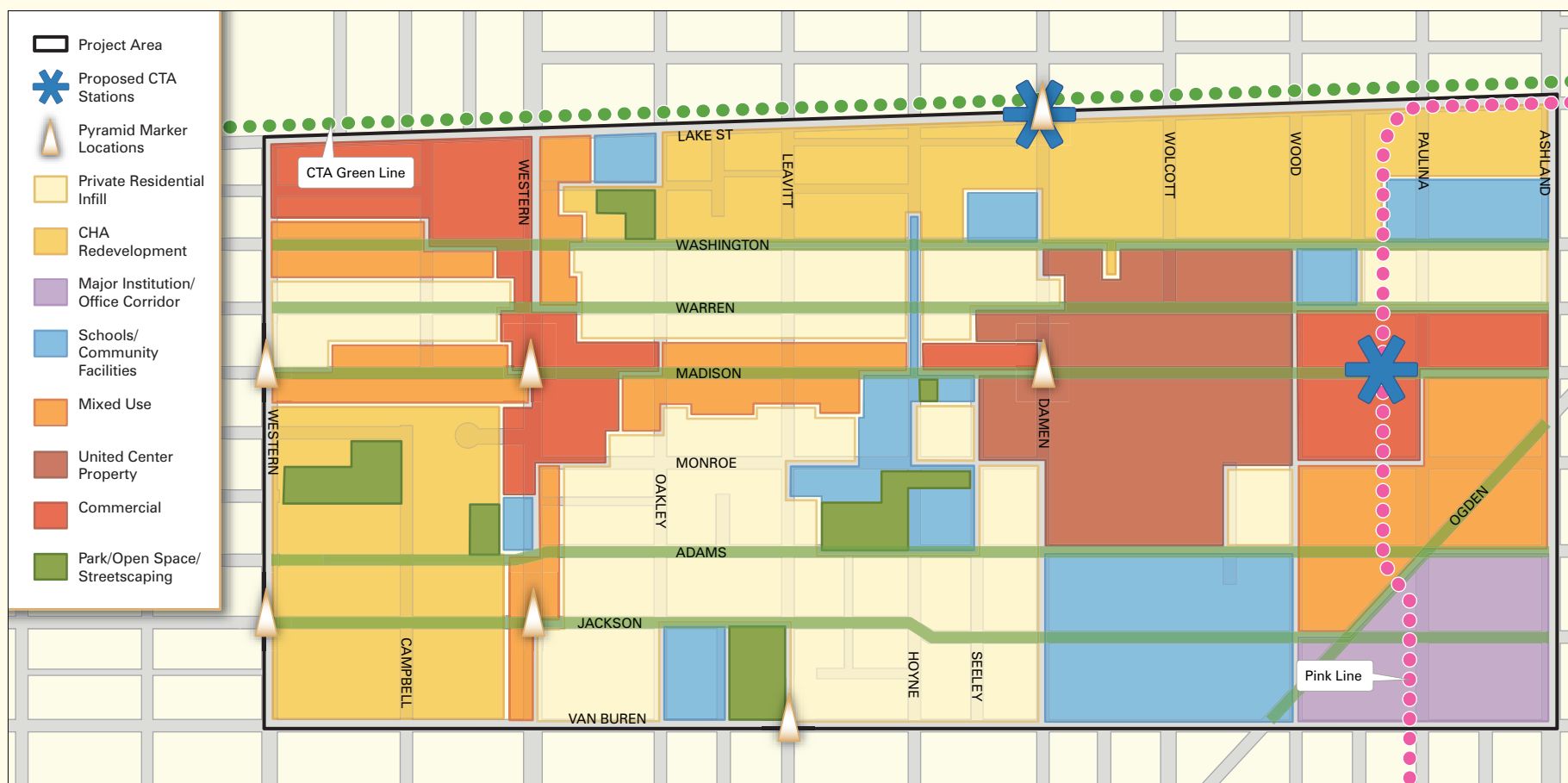
4.1 Create a neighborhood association that will advise, oversee and approve all future development projects.

We will identify community leadership to participate in a panel that will work with the city, developers and community residents to promote quality rehab and in-fill housing. This panel will:

- establish and implement design standards so that rehabilitation and new construction will respect the historic character of West Haven;
- encourage rehab of all viable housing stock to preserve the quality and character of the community; and,
- preserve existing zoning to reflect the proposed land-use framework and prevent significant increases in density.

4.2 Maintain viable housing options to support seniors, renters and others who need affordable housing.

To accommodate those who choose to remain in the community, we will preserve the presence of affordable rental housing such as St. Stephens Terrace, Damen Courts and Van Buren Park. We will address management issues in subsidized apartments, identify tenant leadership and inform residents of their options.



4.3 Identify negligent landowners and encourage them to make necessary physical and aesthetic improvements.

Although we are concerned about buildings that have been allowed to deteriorate, we plan to place special emphasis on the owners of vacant lots who fail to maintain their properties.

4.4 Establish housing-related resources for homeowners and renters.

We will address the needs of homeowners and renters with an array of services including homebuyer counseling, home repair programs, foreclosure prevention, rehabilitation loans and educational workshops.

Figure 7 Land-use framework

The planning task force recommends a mix of residential, commercial and community-oriented uses that will stitch together a stronger, more diverse West Haven.

STRATEGY 5

Attract more and better retail services—and jobs



The Walgreens store marked the beginning of the area's retail revival. More stores are on the way.

Our vision is to bring more and better retail services to West Haven, mapping out key corridors and nodes along transit and attracting a healthy mix of shops, restaurants and other businesses that will provide products, services—and jobs.

A MetroEdge analysis conducted in 2005 showed that the 56 retail and food-and-drink establishments in the area earned \$91.5 million, compared with \$46.6 million spent by residents. Although that might sound like our community is well stocked with businesses, the study's breakdown showed that most residents' spending went outside the neighborhood in categories like full-service restaurants, grocery stores, specialty food stores and auto parts and accessories.

We did not need a study to tell us that segments of our retail sector are hurting—and have been for decades. The once-teeming Madison Street corridor supports few businesses, and other nearby commercial areas continue to be vacant. But we remain encouraged by the prospects of the retail center planned for the corner of Madison and Western. And we believe the influx of new, higher-income residents, newly strengthened chambers of commerce and a renewed determination to attract retailers to serve all socioeconomic groups will begin to re-seed our commercial sector—and provide jobs for our people.

5.1 Establish neighborhood-oriented commercial corridors along Madison Street and Damen Avenue.

We will concentrate convenience-oriented uses—such as coffee shops, cleaners and professional offices—on Madison Street between Western and Damen. We will develop such uses as part of mixed-use developments, with first-floor retail and upper-floor residences. And we will actively pursue retailers to locate within commercial spaces on both Madison and Damen.

5.2 Establish a community-oriented commercial corridor along Western Avenue.

We will attempt to concentrate retail and services—such as clothing stores and restaurants—on Western between the Eisenhower Expressway and Lake Street. As part of the overall mix, we will advocate for a larger-scale retail development on the southwest corner of Lake and Western.

5.3 Recruit an array of retailers to West Haven.

We will continue our ongoing efforts to meet with retailers to highlight the positives of locating throughout West Haven. To tell our story, we will develop a marketing tool that will both identify available locations and spotlight specific characteristics retailers look toward when considering development in new areas.



Western Avenue enhancements

The neighborhood's busiest north-south corridor is being reshaped into an attractive mixed-use area that combines housing and stores.



The corner of Madison and Western is returning to its earlier role as a commercial hub.

5.4 Target new commercial development as a source of local jobs for residents.

We will develop a method for setting aside a certain number of retail and service positions for local residents.

5.5 Create internships and jobs for youth.

We will work with local businesses to create opportunities for youth, to build their experience and skills and to increase job readiness for the future.

5.6 Upgrade existing businesses in West Haven.

We will work with existing businesses to support and improve their presence in the community, and we will identify and attempt to help them meet their needs to stay in West Haven.

5.7 Attract new Chicago Transit Authority rail stations.

We will improve transit access for West Haven residents—and the city overall—with new CTA stations on the Green Line at Lake Street/Damen Avenue, and on the recently opened Pink Line at Madison Street/Paulina Avenue, serving United Center. The area around the new Madison Street station should include retail stores to serve residents and United Center visitors.

5.8 Continue to support our Center for Working Families.

This central, critical project will ensure that reconnecting adults and connecting youth to the workforce will translate to a steady, upward financial pathway, through wrap-around services that include tax preparation assistance, government benefits access and holistic, long-term financial coaching.

Key to Participating Organizations

The following organizations have committed to participate in implementation of the plan. More groups are expected to participate.

ASM After School Matters
BC Block Clubs
BD Brinshore Development
B Businesses
CWF Centers for Working Families
CDOT Chicago Department of Transportation
CHA Chicago Housing Authority
PARK Chicago Park District
CPD Chicago Police Department
CPL Chicago Public Library
CPS Chicago Public Schools
CRN Chicago Rehab Network
CP ClearPath
CG Community Groups
GPCA Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance
GGCC Greater Garfield Chamber of Commerce

HA Homeowners Associations
HOW Homeowners of Westtown
IFF Illinois Facilities Fund
JJ James Jordan Boys and Girls Club and Family Life Center
ROADMAP Madison Street ROADMAP
MWCC Madison/Western Chamber of Commerce
MD Michaels Development
MS Miles Square
NWCDC Near West Side Community Development Corp.
PD Private Developers
PM Project Match – Pathways to Rewards
TA Tenant Associations
311 311 City Services
WHSN West Haven Schools Network

Schedule and Priorities

STRATEGY	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)			ORGANIZATIONS	
	1	2-3	4-5	PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS	ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR PLANS OR PROGRAMS
1. REBUILD OUR SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE					
1.1 Coordinate and sponsor regular community events	■	■	■	NWCDC, HOW	NWCDC, PM, HOW
1.2 Develop a neighborhood education program	■	■	■	CG, PD	BC, HOW
1.3 Develop an oral history archive of West Haven		■	■	NWCDC	
1.4 Increase public safety in West Haven	■	■	■	CF, CP	
1.5 Support and expand block clubs and homeowner associations		■	■	CG	
1.6 Create opportunities for leadership development		■	■	NWCDC	
1.7 Develop a West Haven newsletter or newspaper			■	NWCDC	
1.8 Continue the Home Visitors Program	■	■	■	NWCDC	
1.9 Build a healthy community	■	■	■	NWCDC, MS, JJ	CG
2. IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL AND AESTHETIC IDENTITY OF WEST HAVEN					
2.1 Continue to maintain public areas in West Haven	■	■	■	CDOT, Alderman	
2.2 Improve accessibility of open-space sites for residents		■	■	PARK	
2.3 Organize neighborhood and parks cleanup days	■	■	■	NWCDC, HOW	
2.4 Support creation and programming of new park		■		PARK, CHA, BD, MD	
2.5 Design and plan the Mabel Manning Library green space	■			CG	
2.6 Develop Hoyne Commons as a bridge between the north and south ends of West Haven		■		City of Chicago	
2.7 Create West Haven “pyramid” markers		■		CDOT, Alderman, PD, B	
2.8 Plan and build a new cultural center			■	NWCDC	IFF
2.9 Provide a tighter community and cultural focus within West Haven		■	■	NWCDC, CG	
2.10 Create a West Haven “Rap-Off”		■	■	NWCDC, HOW, CG	

STRATEGY	TIMEFRAME (YEARS)			ORGANIZATIONS	
	1	2-3	4-5	PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS	ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR PLANS OR PROGRAMS
3. IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN WEST HAVEN					
3.1 Develop a comprehensive school-parent communication system for all West Haven schools	■	■	■	CG	
3.2 Continue the school/principal network	■	■	■	CPS	
3.3 Create an early literacy program for West Haven children	■	■	■	NWCDC, WHSN, CPL	
3.4 Establish an adult-to-youth mentoring program	■	■	■	CG, NWCDC	
3.5 Develop a support network for college-bound students	■	■	■	NWCDC	
3.6 Increase school-based extra-curricular activities	■	■	■	NWCDC, ASM, CPS	
4. INCREASE THE QUANTITY OF WEST HAVEN'S HOUSING STOCK, WHILE MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING					
4.1 Create a neighborhood association that will advise, oversee and approve all future development projects in West Haven	■	■	■	HOW, NWCDC, Alderman, CG	
4.2 Maintain viable housing options to support seniors, renters and others who need affordable housing	■	■	■	TA, NWCDC	CRN
4.3 Identify negligent landowners, and encourage them to make necessary physical and aesthetic improvements	■	■	■	NWCDC, HOW, CG, 311	
4.4 Establish housing-related resources for homeowners and renters	■	■	■	CG, NWCDC, Alderman	HA, BC

STRATEGY

TIMEFRAME (YEARS)

ORGANIZATIONS

	1	2-3	4-5	PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS	ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR PLANS OR PROGRAMS
5. ATTRACT MORE AND BETTER RETAIL SERVICES—AND JOBS					
5.1 Establish neighborhood-oriented commercial corridors along Madison Street and Damen Avenue	■	■	■	NWCDC, GGCC, MWCC, GPCA	
5.2 Establish a community-oriented commercial corridor along Western Avenue	■	■	■	NWCDC	
5.3 Recruit an array of retailers to West Haven	■	■	■	NWCDC	
5.4 Target new commercial development as a source of local jobs for residents	■	■	■	CWF, NWCDC	
5.5 Create internships and jobs for youth		■	■	NWCDC, CG	B
5.6 Upgrade existing businesses in West Haven	■	■	■	MWCC, ROADMAP	
5.7 Attract new Chicago Transit Authority rail stations			■	NWCDC	
5.8 Continue to support our Centers for Working Families	■	■	■	NWCDC	

New Communities Program

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

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

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

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

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