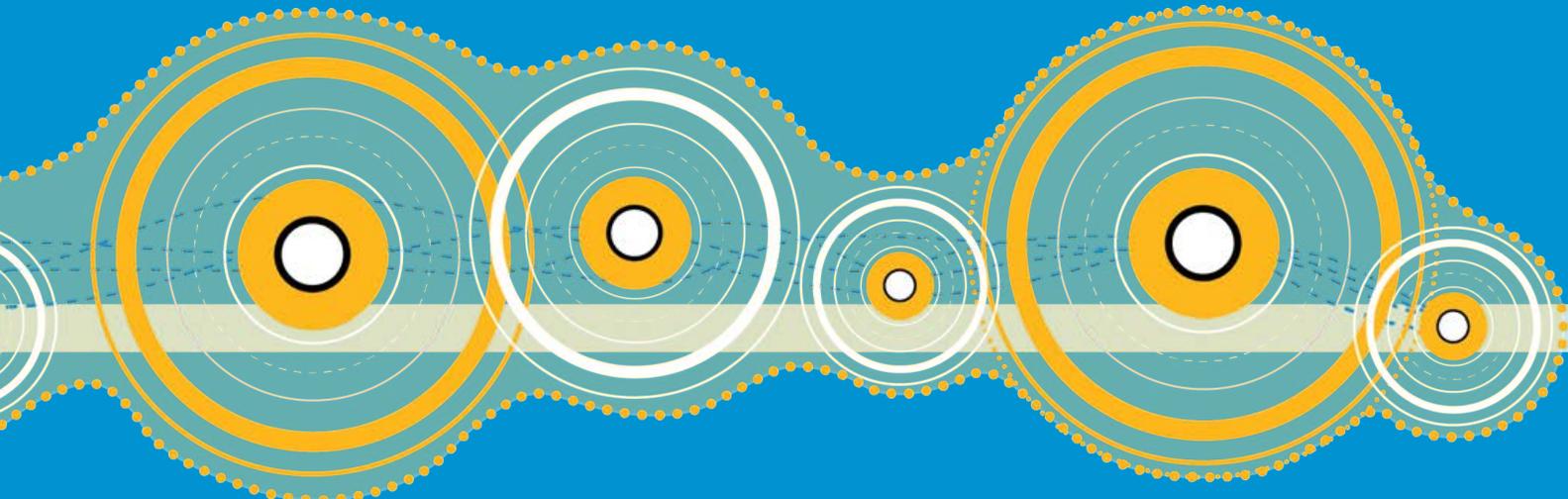


# THE SOUL CITY CORRIDOR

Development Framework:  
Chicago Avenue in Austin



August 14, 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Involvement of Chicago Central Area Committee (CCAC) Member Firms

The Chicago Central Area Committee (CCAC), a member-based civic non-profit organization dedicated to improving Chicago since its founding in 1956, is providing pro-bono professional services to the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development and Sister Agencies. Services include real estate analysis, urban design recommendations, architectural concepts, and transportation planning services. Technical assistance and relationship-building with local developers and contractors is also part of this involvement.

To ensure protection against conflict-of-interest, participating CCAC member firms are not permitted to pursue implementation work with developers or contractors on the Chicago Avenue Corridor in Austin.

Separate studies are underway in the Auburn-Gresham Neighborhood and Englewood Neighborhood with separate CCAC Member Firms assisting those communities under the same non-compete agreement.

## Community Stakeholders

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Andrea Smith	Margaret Garner
Audrey Woodley, Changing Oasis	Melody Lewis, Austin Chamber of Commerce
Darnell Shields, Austin Coming Together	Melvin Bailey
Flavian Prince, Inquiry Bridge	Morris Reed, West Side Health Authority
Grady Norwood Jr, BCCI	Rufus Pulphus, BOWA Construction
Letrusia May, L May Creations & AAABNA	Shirley Fields
Dr. Liz Lockhart, Lockhart Resource Institute	Tenisha Jones, West Side United
Malcolm Crawford, AAABNA	Vanessa Stokes, SSA 72 Manager

## City of Chicago

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Alderman Mitts	Chicago Department of Planning and Development
Alderman Taliaferro	Chicago Department of Transportation
Chicago Department of Housing	

## Chicago Central Area Committee

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Kelly O'Brien - Executive Director	Greg Hummel - Board Chair
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## Chicago Central Area Committee Member Firms

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Perkins and Will - Team Lead	Lamar Johnson Collaborative - Team Member
Compass Realty - Team Member	Lendlease - Team Member
d'Escoto Inc - Team Member	Sam Schwartz - Team Member
Integra - Team Member	SB Friedman Development Advisors - Team Member

## WHAT IS THIS PLAN?

The Soul City Corridor—Chicago Avenue in the Austin Neighborhood—focuses on guiding development of underutilized land with the goal of promoting Black culture, arts, entertainment, and seeking economic development, job creation, and new development that serves neighborhood residents. Under the City’s Invest South/West Initiative, the plan is a framework to help guide both public and private investment; a roadmap for neighborhood stakeholders, residents, City officials, and developers to follow. It identifies sites of interest that are susceptible to change/redevelop, and it applies both real estate market research and neighborhood input to form highest- and-best use recommendations for three key sites amongst others along the corridor.

The plan casts a big picture vision for reinvestment and economic development on the corridor to serve neighborhood needs and ambitions. Quality-of-life is at the forefront of this plan as it includes everyday neighborhood serving retail, provision of community services, affordable and market-rate housing, and addressing ‘eyes-on-the-street’ crime prevention through an infill development strategy. Design Excellence, a City of Chicago initiative to extend quality design to the neighborhoods, is prioritized in this plan.

It focuses on guiding development of underutilized land along Chicago Avenue between Austin Avenue (the western City Limits) and Cicero Avenue. In total, the corridor is 1.6 miles in length, includes three Aldermanic Wards, and is a central commercial corridor serving the Austin neighborhood.

However, this plan has limits. It is not a comprehensive vision for the entire Austin neighborhood (that is best recognized in Austin

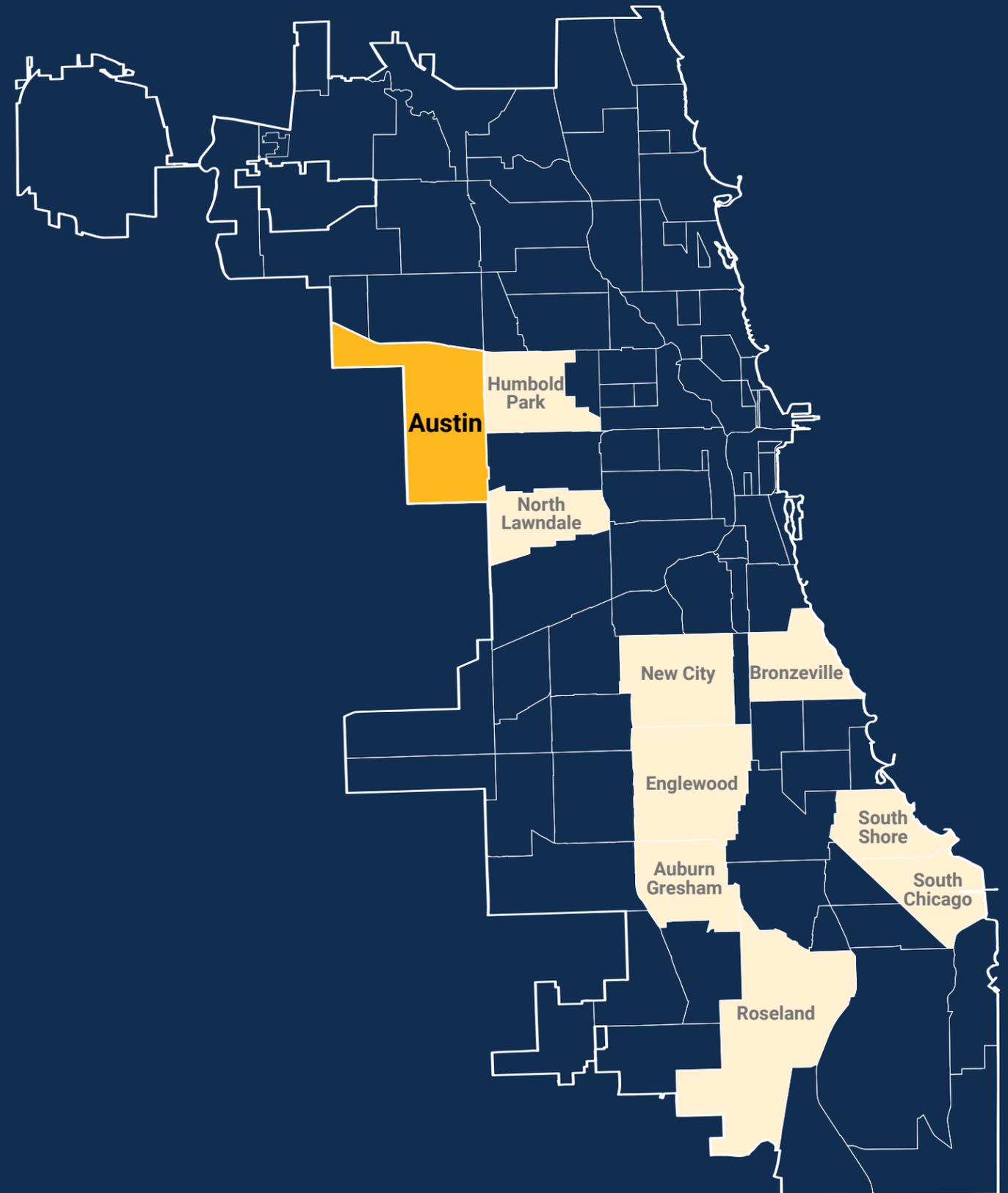
Forward Together—a LISC led quality-of-life plan completed in 2018). Nor is this plan a mandate to follow the exact recommendations focusing on Chicago Avenue. Additionally, this plan does not dedicate funding to public realm improvements.

### Related Concerns

This plan acknowledges additional challenges on the corridor, in the Austin neighborhood, and across the city including racial injustice, public health disparities, economic inequality, gun violence, climate change, and re-opening during the global COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns are inter-related and unequally impact communities of color and communities of concentrated poverty. While this plan recognizes the severity of these issues, it is not a universal cure to solve all challenges impacting quality-of-life. The Austin Forward Together plan does a much more comprehensive and thoughtful job of addressing quality-of-life in a holistic manner for the neighborhood and the Metropolitan Planning Council’s “The Cost of Segregation” and companion report “Our Equitable Future” address social and economic disparities negatively impacting our region and city.

### Policy Aspects

New investment will improve the corridor and could potentially lead to increased property values. Issues of displacement or gentrification should be addressed through policy prescriptions including maintaining long term affordable housing.



City of Chicago Invest South/West Community Areas

# 01 EXISTING COMMUNITY

Acknowledgment of the foundation that the community of Austin has built.



## BUILDING FROM A FOUNDATION

This plan was not created in isolation. Rather, it is one component of larger neighborhood and city efforts.

The process for creating this plan builds on the engagement the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development started with the launch of Invest South/West in the fall of 2019. The Austin neighborhood, one of ten community areas of focus, is included in the City's process in a meaningful way to build consensus around a shared vision for the neighborhood's future.

Neighborhood input was gathered via the City's monthly community "roundtable" discussions in June and July, amongst Department of Planning and Development leaders and neighborhood stakeholders (see the Acknowledgement page for a complete list), and one community visioning workshop involving the same stakeholders plus the CCAC Member Firms in an open discussion about potential development scenarios.

### Alignment under Invest South/West

The genesis of this plan is the City of Chicago's Invest South/West Initiative, which seeks to coordinate and invest \$750 million in public subsidy into the city's South and West Sides to address inequality, entice private investment, foster economic development for neighborhood residents, and make positive, lasting change in ten specific Community Areas.

Chicago Avenue is the priority corridor in the Invest South/West initiative as it is a historic, commercial street with opportunity for future redevelopment within the Austin neighborhood. It also has several overlapping public incentives including:

- Austin Commercial Tax Increment Finance District
- City of Chicago Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Retail Thrive Zone, and Small Business Improvement Fund eligibility
- City of Chicago Micro-Market Recovery Program Zone
- Federal Opportunity Zone (between Central and Cicero on the south side of Chicago Avenue)
- Artist in Residence Program

### Previous Planning in Austin

This plan builds off of and incorporates community-based plans including Austin Forward Together (completed by Austin Coming Together with support from LISC in 2018) and the Soul City Corridor Commercial Development Study (completed by the Austin African American Business Networking Association with support from Chicago Central Area Committee and World Business Chicago).

### Additional City of Chicago Housing Efforts

- Affordable Requirements Ordinance
- Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance
- Department of Housing "One Chicago" Five Year Plan

Austin Coming Together | LISC Chicago New Communities Network | QUALITY-OF-LIFE PLAN 2018

**AUSTIN**  
FORWARD. TOGETHER.



“Chicago Avenue is one of Austin’s primary thoroughfares that can once again become a main shopping district in our community and a draw for residents and visitors. Streetscape enhancements and other public and private investments can develop a vibrant, sustainable and safe business corridor.”

- Austin Forward Together

# COMMUNITY ASSETS

Development on Chicago Avenue must supplement existing community assets along the corridor and within the neighborhood. The process must involve the People, the institutions and the places that already exist in Austin.



Austin Community Family Center



Chicago Public Library - West Chicago Avenue Branch



Austin Town Hall



By the Hand Club for Kids



# CHICAGO AVENUE CORRIDOR OBSERVATIONS

The Chicago Avenue Corridor extends from Austin to Cicero, within the heart of the Austin neighborhood, on the western edge of Chicago. It is a primary transit corridor into the center of Chicago mainly through the CTA's route 66 bus. Residential districts flank the corridor to the north and south and complement a solid urban fabric on the Avenue. This plan identifies all potential infill sites to promote streetwall continuity. The highlighted parcels identify publicly-owned land ready for redevelopment or privately held parcels with collaborative landowner, which could potentially be developed in the future.



Existing Small Business



Streetscape Variations



Underutilized Land



Historic Landmark



Cultural Identity



# COMMUNITY NEEDS

Future development on Chicago Avenue is focused on meeting community needs and activating the ground floor, which will enliven the corridor. Community needs include traditional retail such as restaurants, bars, merchandise stores, and everyday neighborhood serving uses including grocery and pharmacy stores. Given the changing demand for retail and changing consumer pattern, the entirety of the corridor cannot be redeveloped with only traditional retail. Other non-retail uses that also meet the needs of neighborhood residents include wellness, economic and workforce development, services, and cultural and civic anchors.



## TRADITIONAL RETAIL

- Food & Beverage
  - Restaurants
  - Bars
- Neighborhood Serving
  - Grocery Store
  - Pharmacy
  - Boutiques
  - Merchandise Retail

## WELLNESS

- Clinic
- Medical Office (including mental health)
- Fitness
- Fresh, Healthy Food

## ECONOMIC/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Building Trades
- Manufacturing Training
- Entrepreneurship
- Small Business Scale-Up
- Career Counseling

## SERVICES

- Professional
- Childcare
- Social
- Government

## CULTURAL AND CIVIC

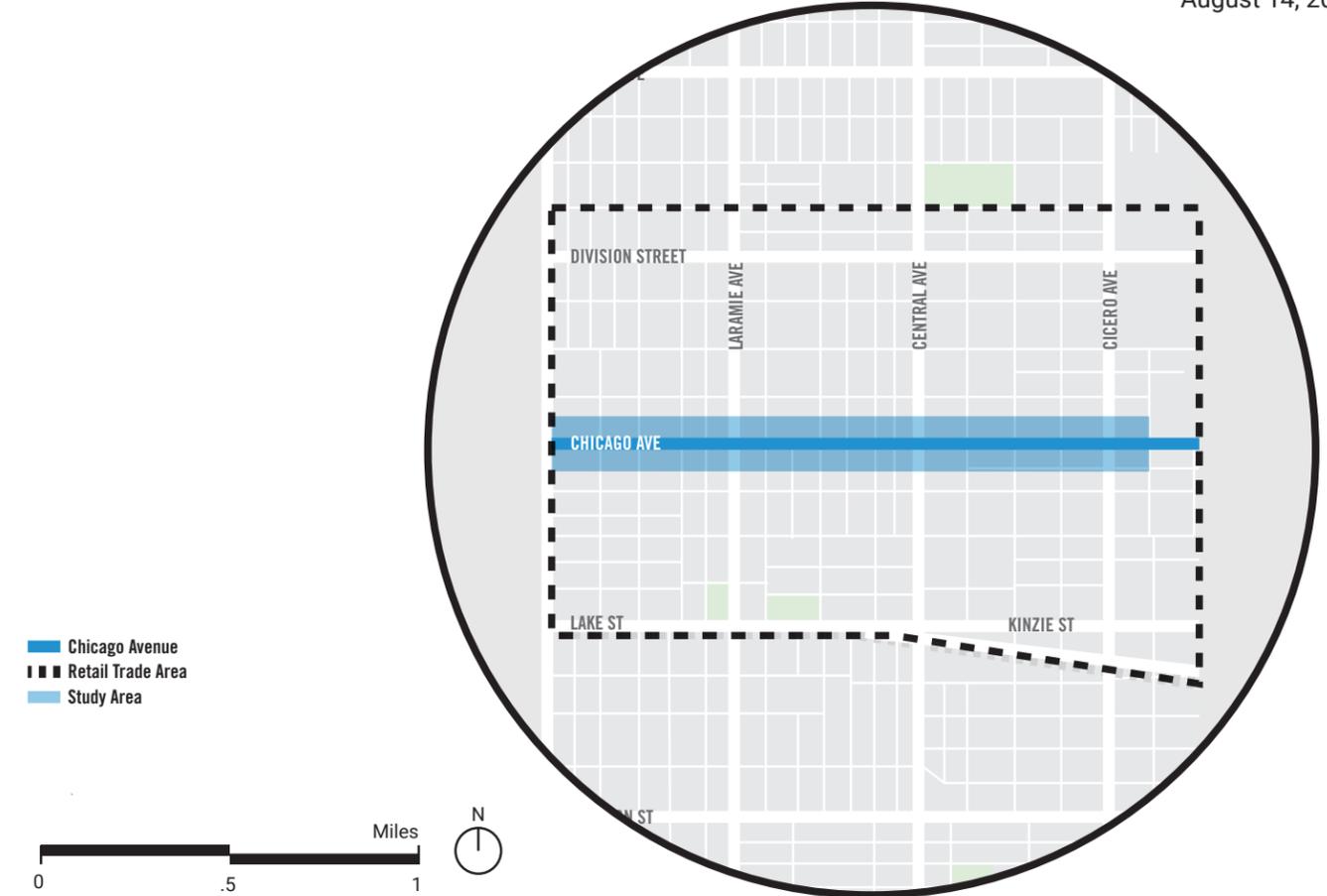
- Arts
- Music
- Museum
- Library

# MARKET ANALYSIS

“We would shop here if we had more options” is a common refrain we heard from neighborhood residents. The amount of spending leakage—dollars being spent by Austin residents in places outside of the neighborhood for retail and dining—is nearly \$160 million. Reversing that trend by improving the offerings, safety, and vibrance of the corridor is a focal point for this plan.

The strengths of the corridor include population density, significant traffic along the corridor, public transit access, recent leasing and sales activity at key nodes, and the proliferation of existing community anchors/assets along the corridor. There are clear opportunities for grocery and pharmacy uses given limited competition in the area, and there is opportunity for mixed-income residential development.

The corridor has challenges that will need public subsidy to overcome. This includes commercial and residential rents that are below the cost of new construction, untested demand for multifamily housing, and some difficulty in leasing small-scale, first floor, traditional retail.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Study Area	Chicago
<b>9,516</b> Households (HH)	
<b>3.01</b> People/HH	2.49
<b>\$32,657</b> Median HH Income	\$55,222
<b>17.7%</b> Vacancy	12%
<b>29.8%</b> Owners	37%
<b>52.5%</b> Renters	51%

## RESIDENTIAL

**Market Observation**

- The residential rental market is soft in terms of rent and demand.
- Lack of new construction option.
- Lack of apartment options on Chicago Avenue.
- The biggest stock of residential units available are single family or 2/3 flats.

**Market Conclusion**

- Summary of target marketing focusing on 80% and 60% Average Median Income brackets
- Assume a 5% capture rate is possible resulting in 132 housing units demand along the corridor
- Current market rent demand indicates an approximate 50% gap in current market rents and rents needed for new construction thus public subsidy will be required

## RETAIL LEAKAGE

**\$159.50M** Total retail leakage in Austin  
Source: Austin Forward Together (2018)

**\$ 8.80M** Grocery store spending leakage

**\$ 8.25M** Health and personal care spending leakage

## SMALL RETAIL RENTS

**\$ 15/NSF** New Retail

**\$10-12/NSF** Relets

## COMMERCIAL

**Market Observation**

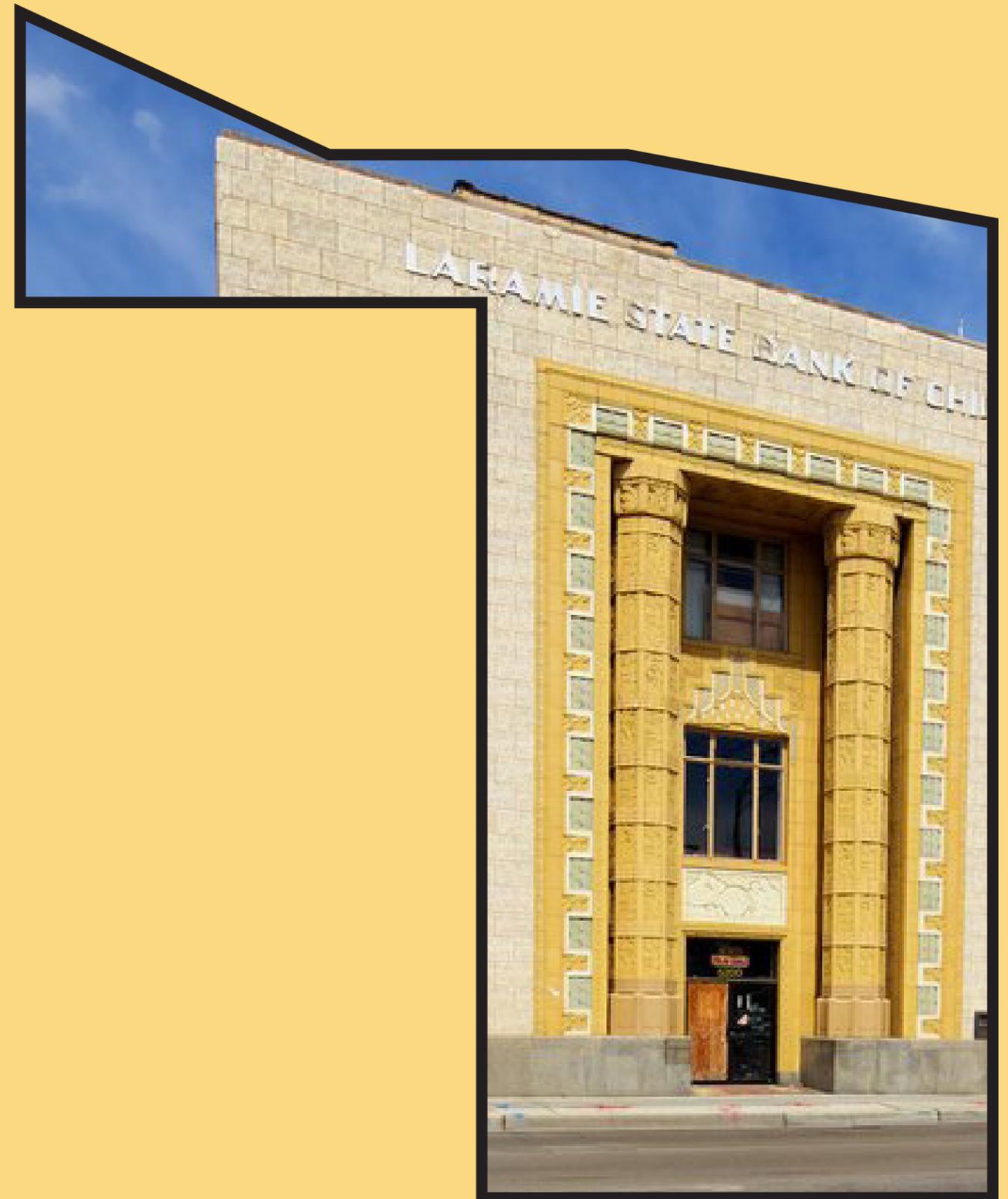
- High vacancy in small retail along the corridor.
- The commercial retail market is soft in terms of rent and demand.
- Lack of density to support a greater diversity of retail.
- Lack of demand to support retail that drives walkability (restaurants, bars, personal services).
- Lack of food/ drug options within a walk distance.

**Market Conclusion**

- Category of potential users include not for profits, professional services, restaurants, and personal services.

# 02 COMMUNITY VISION

Our entire community coming together to realize Austin's Chicago Avenue Corridor at its best.



## WHY “SOUL CITY”?

Rooted in a distinct cultural identity of Black art, music, food, and entertainment, “Soul City” is a new identity for the Chicago Avenue Corridor that sets the tone and expectation for vibrancy and experience. It is a unifying theme for future economic development and supports existing business owners. Importantly, it recognizes the corridor as a gateway to Chicago. While the brand concept is a new idea, it has both historical roots on the West Side and celebrates the existing arts and culture scene in Austin.

The genesis of Soul City stems from local neighborhood leaders especially the Austin African American Business Networking Association, which started using the term in 2015 as a theme for creating an enclave for Black culture and economic development. Over the past five years, popularity of the term grew to other neighborhood organizations, faith-based organizations, and civic leaders as a unifying theme for the corridor. This plan recognizes the potential of Soul City as an economic and cultural driver for Chicago Avenue.



“We talked for years about how Chicago is known for its rich cultural enclaves like Greektown, Chinatown, and Boystown that are economic drivers. There should be a place in the city that functions as a cultural enclave for African Americans. Soul City is it.”

- Malcolm Crawford  
Executive Director, Austin African American Business Networking Association

# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Community resilience creates a strong and healthy neighborhood. It is created by establishing a foundation built on economic resilience, social resilience, and environmental resilience.

## Economic Resilience

- Preserve and promote existing assets on the corridor
- Increase commercial offerings to expand the existing shopping district
- Create jobs for local residents

## Environmental Resilience

- Ensure design excellence through thoughtful architectural massing, high-quality materials, and innovative integration with the site.
- Prioritize a pedestrian-oriented public realm including buildings that address the street, high-quality streetscapes, and accessible open spaces
- Improve neighborhood safety by activating eyes-on-the-street generating activity

## Social Resilience

- Include and build trust with neighborhood stakeholders throughout the implementation process
- Create a distinct center for cultural arts, entertainment, and music expression focused on Black Culture



The future of Chicago Avenue in Austin is a future that underscores economic development for Black wealth-building, cultural celebration, and promoting a safe and accessible neighborhood for all residents and visitors.

# DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Activating the Soul City Corridor is a long-term endeavor. The first phase of activation, reflective of current market conditions, is to focus development at three catalytic sites on the east, center and west of the corridor.

## Increase Density

Increasing density is crucial for sustaining activity on the corridor. Market conditions demands for very targeted interventions that will allow for market supportable uses. Identifying the nodes where developments should take place and focusing the residential and retail density will help create momentum that will lead to increased demand for smaller retail. Density increase should be done tactfully while promoting active and continuous street frontage and uses. This will contribute to increased safety and accessibility on the corridor.

## Improve Walkability

Walkability along the corridor is crucial to the success of businesses and is focused around three anchor nodes. Transitioning the corridor from car-focused to pedestrian-oriented will drive foot traffic to retailers and increase demand for small retail. This will create activity and diversity, and it will complement the CDOT safety project that is underway. Refer to the Guiding Principles section for strategies to improve walkability including eyes on the streets, flexible public spaces, landscaping, and street frontage.

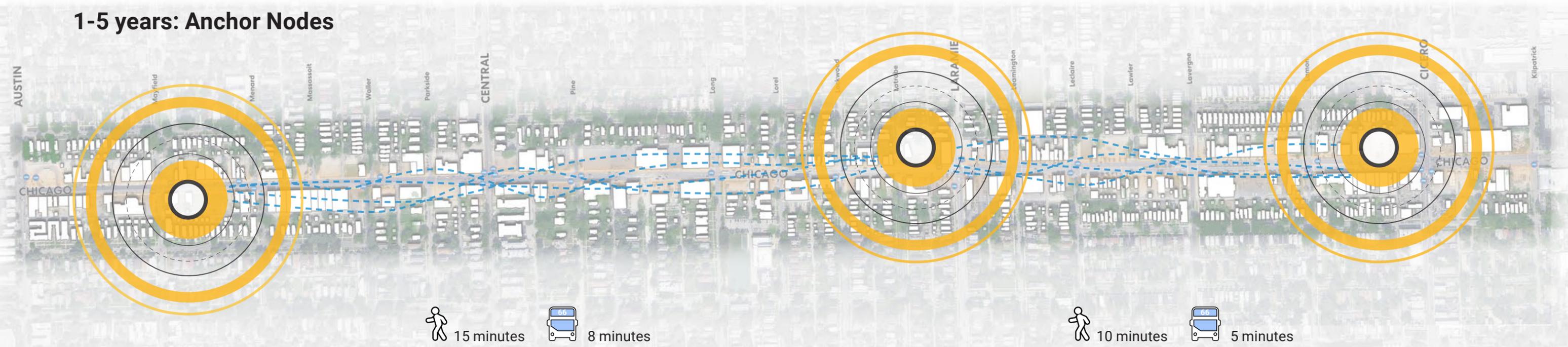
## Create Retail Diversity

To successfully promote an active ground floor a mix of uses along the corridor is imperative. The mix of ground floor uses should consider both traditional retail (food and beverage, grocery, pharmacy, etc.) and other active programs that directly cater to community's needs such as wellness, economic/workforce development, services, or cultural and civic uses. The wide range of uses will strengthen the corridor's resiliency and adaptability.

## Nodes of Development

Focusing development on targeted sites should be prioritized due to the market conditions. Creating three large activity centers at the east, center and west of Chicago Avenue will avoid diluting the revitalization efforts and focus investment around those nodes once pedestrian traffic has been established. The three distinct nodes will become recognized assets for Austin residents and serve as catalysts for successful redevelopment of Chicago Avenue over time.

### 1-5 years: Anchor Nodes



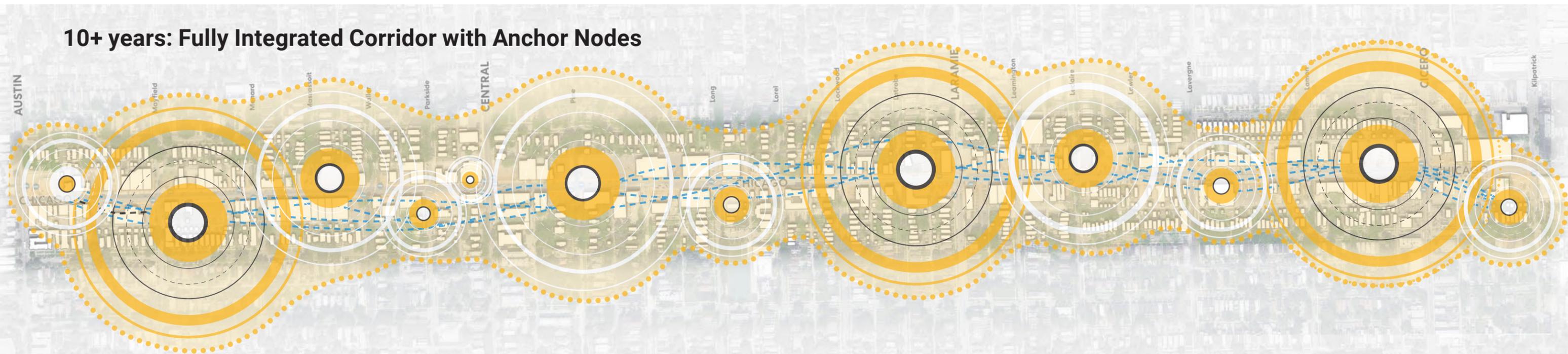
# DEVELOPMENT VISION

Successful development of the three initial nodes should attract investment in and around those areas in the east, center and west of the Soul City Corridor. Future development should cluster in districts to capitalize on the momentum created, eventually creating strong pockets of activity that will link together in the future.

## 5-10 years: Clustered District

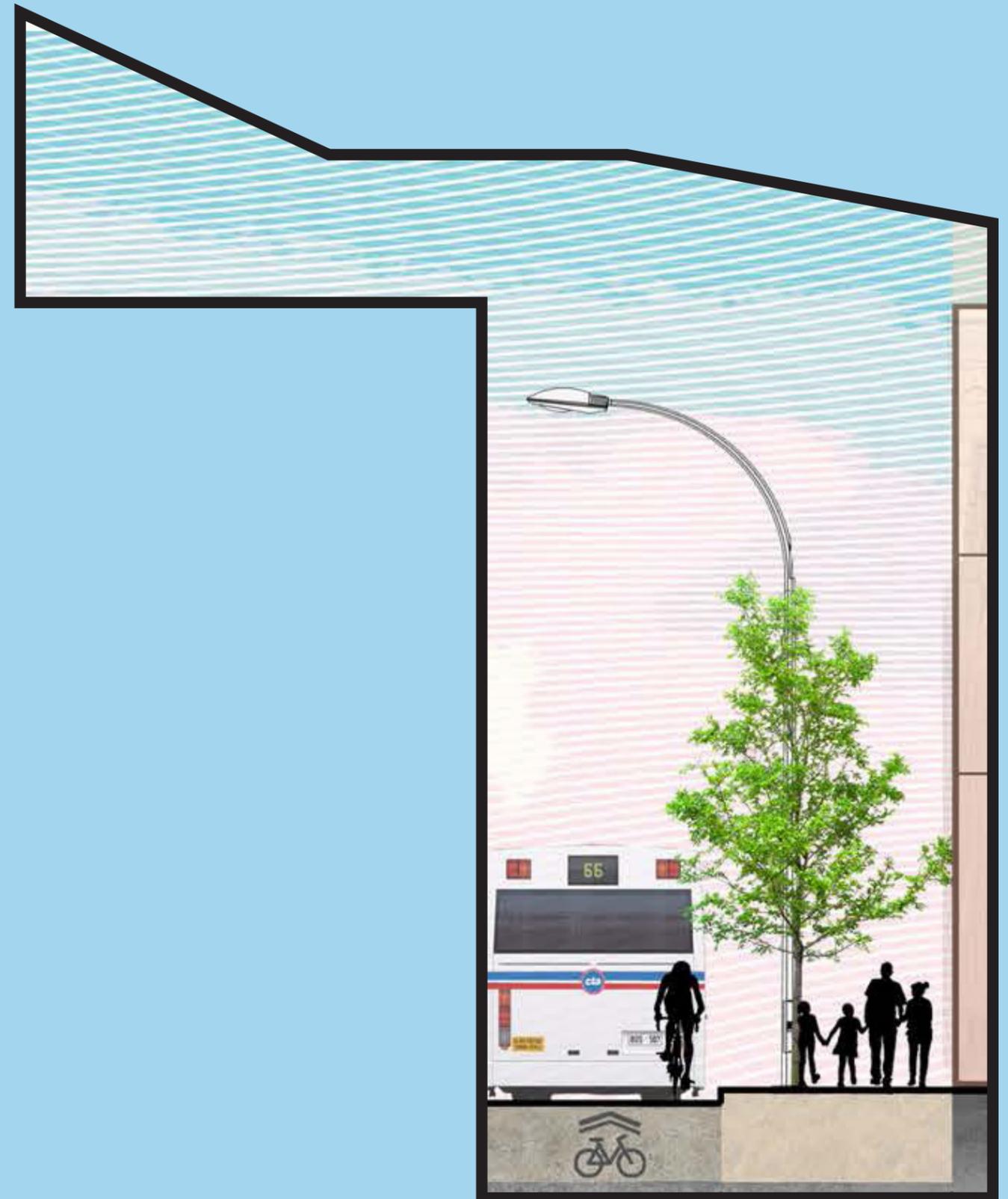


## 10+ years: Fully Integrated Corridor with Anchor Nodes



# 03 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Advancing design quality on the corridor.



# DESIGN EXCELLENCE PRINCIPLES

The City of Chicago developed the Design Excellence Principles to define what Design Excellence means for Chicago. The central tenet in the development of the guidelines was that they answer the following question: How do we engender a culture that values design excellence in everyday life?

The Design Excellence Principles will help meet the needs of residents along the Soul City Corridor by providing inclusivity in the design process, foster innovation, promote the creation of a sense of place, push the envelope of sustainability best practices, and encourage collaboration and engagement with the public and other city departments and agencies.



## Equity and Inclusion

- 01** Prioritize inclusive design processes to foster equitable development.
- 02** Revitalize Chicago's neighborhoods while celebrating their authenticity and singularity
- 03** Leverage the economic benefits of good design



## Innovation

- 04** Encourage diverse design approaches in order to inspire innovation and design excellence
- 05** Honor Chicago's Legacy of Architectural Innovation by promoting contemporary design



## Sense of Place

- 06** Strive to enhance the public realm. Focus on the pedestrian experience.
- 07** Immerse yourself in the places, people, and cultures of the city



## Sustainability

- 08** Develop a healthier, more resilient, and beautiful city



## Communication

- 09** Communicate the value of design excellence to the public
- 10** Support design excellence within city departments and sister agencies

# SAFE AND ACTIVE STREETS RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvements to the streets and public spaces on the Soul City Corridor should convey the energy, vitality and resiliency of the Austin community. Public realm elements along the corridor should provide opportunities for public art, informal improvisation, and performance. The spaces should provide flexibility for individual expression and continual change and evolution. A public space framework will complement and attract development as Chicago Avenue evolves over time. Three main objectives in defining the vision to achieving safe and active streets:

- Brand the corridor as Soul City
- Activate the street using a hierarchy of public and private spaces, from dynamic plazas to parklets and widened sidewalk areas
- Prioritize pedestrian comfort and safety and build on the transit-oriented potential of the corridor



## Streetscape

Brand the corridor as Soul City and activate the street to be an inviting place to walk, bike, and spend time. Elements may include wider sidewalks, planters, bicycle racks, landscaping, street lighting, paving, public art, or decorative fencing.



## Plazas, Parklets, & Gathering

Create a strong network of public or quasi-public spaces for gathering such as widened sidewalks and open plaza space adjacent to Laramie State Bank. Wider sidewalks introduce visual activity to the street, positively cautioning and slowing drivers, and providing more space for people and amenities and accommodating micromobility devices.



## Street Reconfiguration

Calm traffic and accommodating all modes of travel by narrowing travel lanes, better defining parking and turn lanes, providing dedicated space to bikes, and adding more pedestrian refuge islands to further improve pedestrian crossing safety.



## Bus Stop Amenities

Incorporate enhanced bus stops and transit shelters with real-time arrival information at key sites to provide a protected, convenient place for people to wait for the bus.



## Intersection Activation

Curb extensions reduce crossing distances, slow turning vehicles, improve pedestrian visibility and function to widen the sidewalk for activation. Paint has created an immediate, low cost but effective curb extension at a few intersections on the corridor which are locations with an opportunity for permanent infrastructure in the future.



## Pedestrian Crossing Safety

Pedestrian refuge islands and curb extensions along the corridor help people cross the street safely. Interventions may also include improvements at traffic signal locations like pedestrian countdown timers and phasing that lets pedestrians get a head start crossing the street.

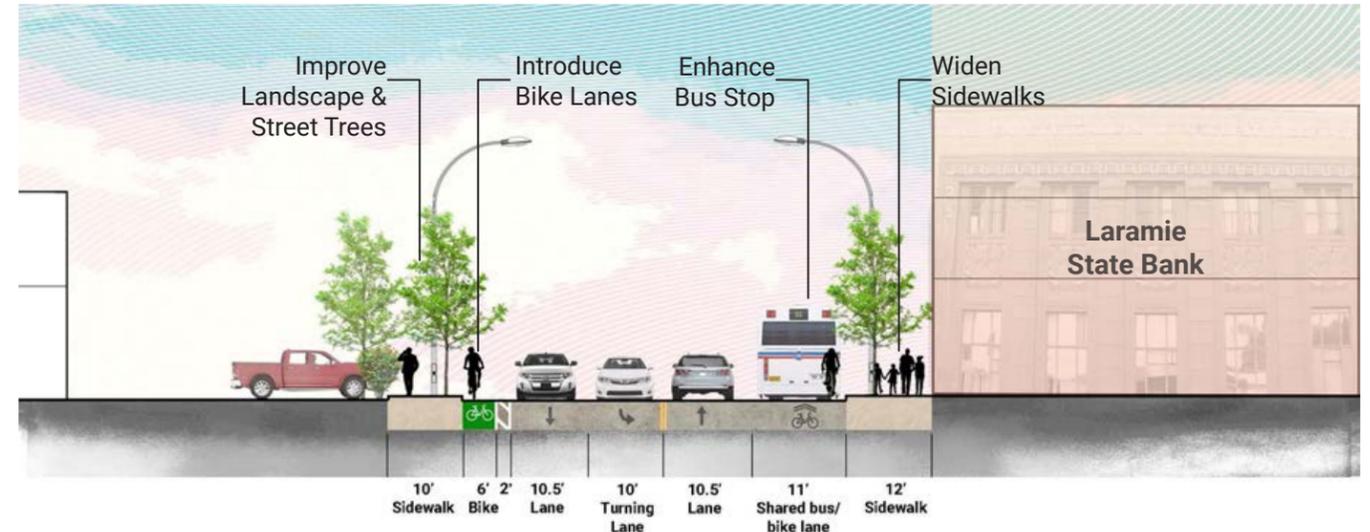


## Access Management

Limit driveways interrupting sidewalk continuity and thoughtfully design driveways that are necessary to prioritize the pedestrian. A Pedestrian Street (P-street) designation along segments of the corridor would help to enhance the pedestrian-oriented nature by prohibiting curb cuts, as well as setting other building design standards.

# SAFE AND ACTIVE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing strategies to promote safety and activity on the Soul City Corridor should come hand in hand with the development of key sites. As infill takes place, special importance should be given to providing better east-west mobility on the Avenue but also north-south between the residential pockets of Austin. Being on and crossing Chicago Avenue should be a pleasant experience for all. This map lays out potential interventions and where they should take place. Developers, community groups should work in close collaboration with the City of Chicago's Department of Transportation (DOT) to implement the outlined strategies as the corridor continues to grow and improve over future years.



Example of proposed street improvements at Laramie/Chicago



- Street reconfiguration (CDOT 2022)
- - - Streetscape improvements
- - - Widen sidewalk
- Recommend P-street designation
- Austin Forward. Together proposed improvements boundary

- Existing pedestrian refuge island
- Opportunity for pedestrian refuge island
- Expand amenities
- Traffic and pedestrian signal improvements
- Opportunity for curb extensions
- Existing curb extension/opportunity for activation
- Painted curb extension/opportunity for permanent installation

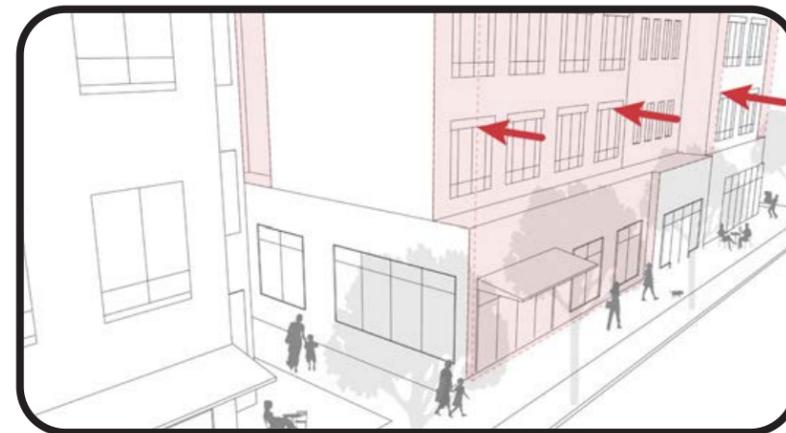
# DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Aiming to extend the dignity of design excellence to Chicago's Austin Neighborhood, this development framework is built on the foundation of the Design Excellence Guiding Principles and the Neighborhood Design Guidelines developed by the City of Chicago. The guidelines offer recommendations on massing, facades, site design, public realm, program, and sustainability. Development of the Soul City Corridor should abide by these guidelines as well as other regulations put forth by the Zoning Ordinance, Landscape Ordinance, and Complete Street Guide. To compliment the soon-to-be-released Neighborhood Design Guidelines, this framework suggests nine similar development recommendations. The urban design vision for development along the 1.6 mile stretch of Chicago Avenue is anchored by these recommendations.



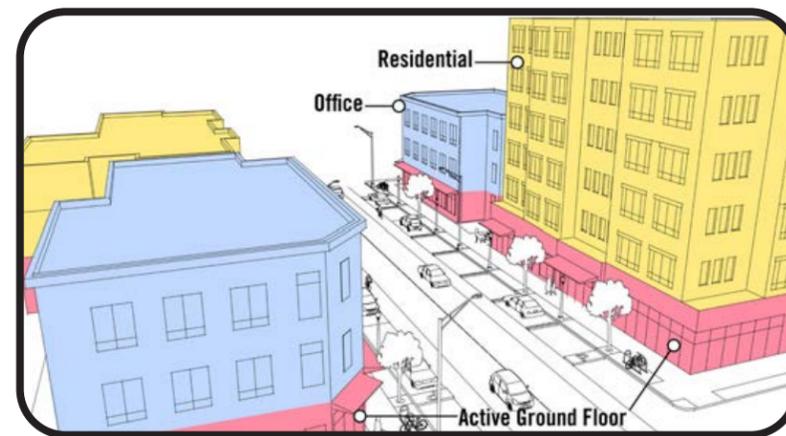
## 01

Front the street to reinforce the streetwall continuity and provide public entrances from the sidewalks



## 02

Thoughtfully integrate to the existing context uses and fabric with a tactful use of setbacks and breakdown in mass



## 03

Promote the creation of density with a mix of uses between and within buildings

# DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS



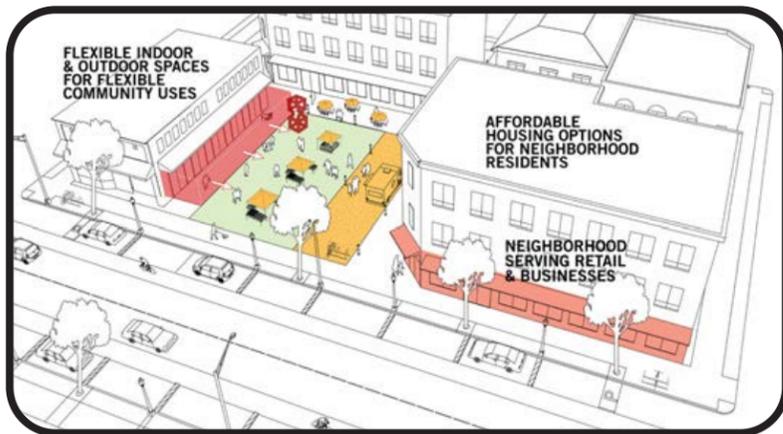
**04**

Feature active ground floor uses with transparency along streets and public spaces, and encourage a blend between interior and exterior



**05**

Encourage walking, biking, and public transit use through site and building design



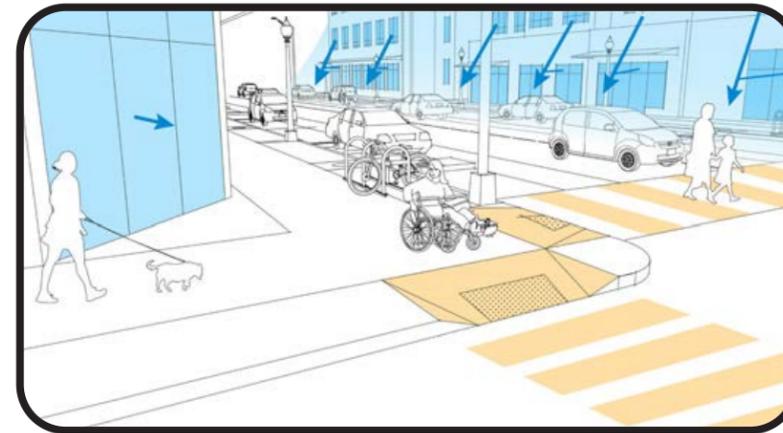
**06**

Offer public spaces with amenities that accommodate active uses or to otherwise engage pedestrian interest, and provide flexible programs that directly cater to and support daily needs for Austin



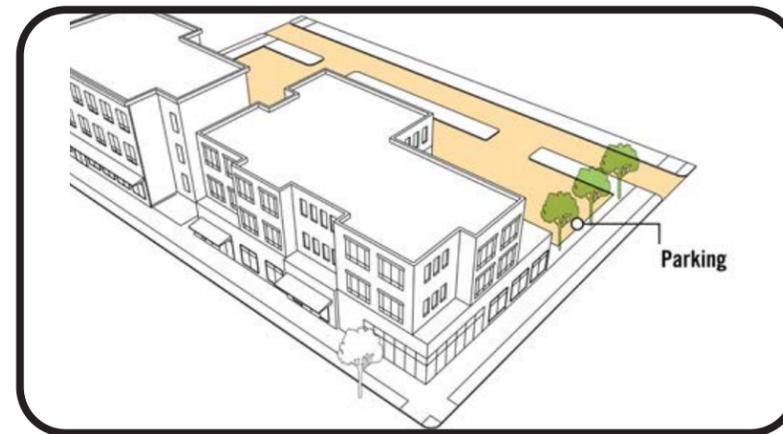
**07**

Support sustainable building interventions, landscapes, and street trees, including best practices to mitigate stormwater run-off on site



**08**

Prioritize accessibility and safety by bringing more "eyes on the street", increasing the feeling of security through visible and transparent activity between indoor and outdoor environments

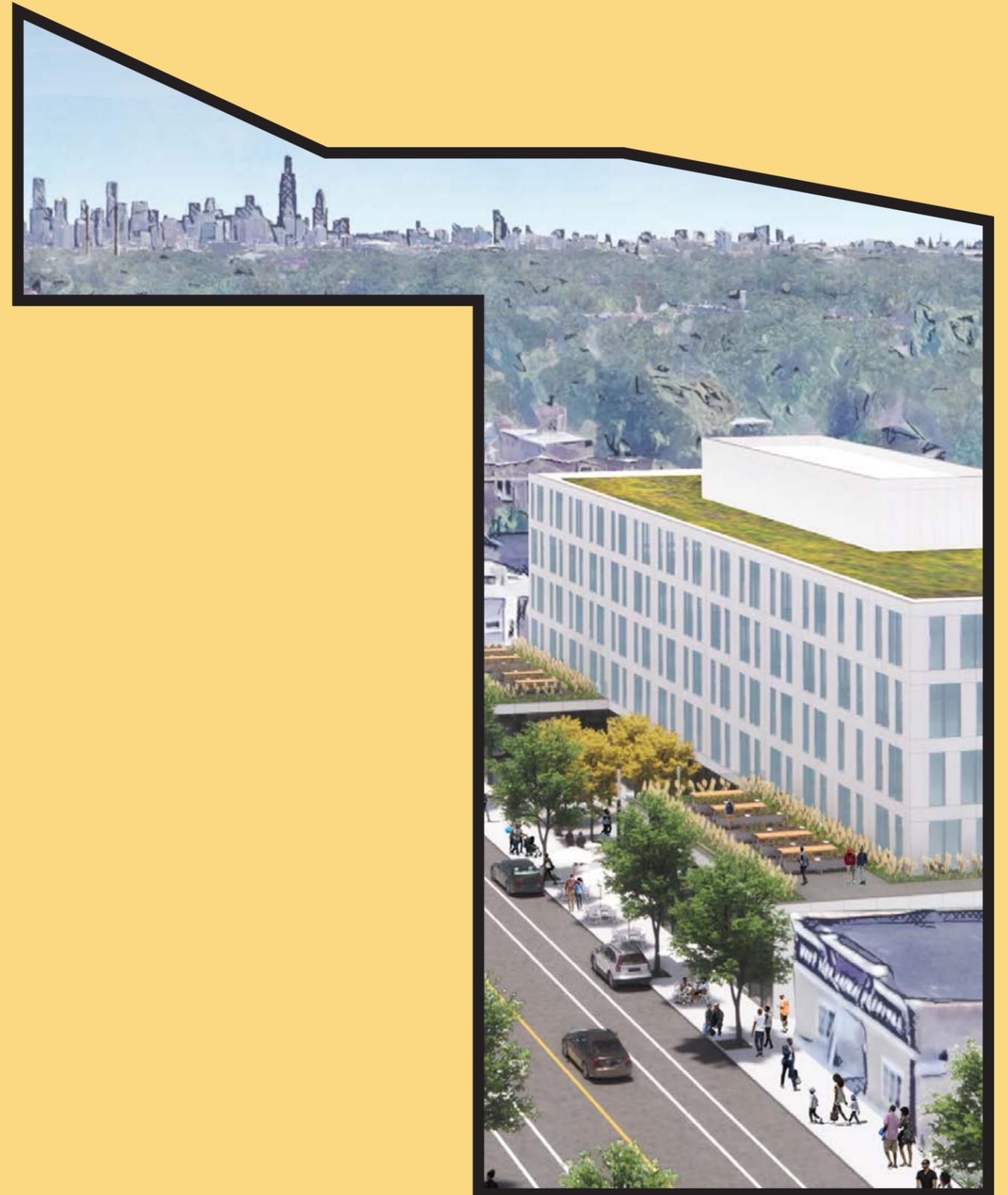


**09**

Screen parking lots either behind buildings or with greenery in mid-block locations

# 04 OPPORTUNITIES

Visualizing development opportunities in Soul City.



# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The site identification process began with a preliminary walking survey of the corridor to specific metrics dictating the development potential within the current market. Development typologies were tested on different sites and discussed in a Community roundtable on June 26, 2020. The 10 sites presented below were selected by looking at the following factors:

- Size & Shape - parcel large enough to house a meaningful development or a cluster of parcels with assemblage potential.
- Location - corner lots, large midblock gaps close to existing activity centers, transit, or large residential pockets.
- Ownership - publicly-owned land ready for redevelopment or privately held parcels with collaborative landowner
- Suitability to respond to a community need - ability of the site to house programming that directly responds to a stated community need

**1**  
5926-30 Chicago Ave  
Private Property  
9,000 GSF

**3**  
5704-22 Chicago Ave  
Public Private  
24,580 GSF

**2**  
5815-35 Chicago Ave  
Public/Private  
28,180 GSF

**4**  
755 Parkside Ave  
Private Property  
10,600 GSF

**5**  
759 Long Ave  
Private Property  
10,200 GSF

**6**  
5249 Chicago Ave  
Public Property  
9,800 GSF

**7**  
5200 Chicago Ave  
Private Property  
34,200 GSF

**8**  
5028-48 Chicago Ave  
Public/Private  
33,350 GSF

**9**  
4814-36 Chicago Ave  
Public/Private  
27,950 GSF

**10**  
4711 Chicago Ave  
Public  
12,500 GSF

**10** Opportunity Sites  
**5** Total Acres  
**324k** SF of Development Potential (based on current zoning)

# MARKET INFORMED DEVELOPMENT

Three sites have been selected for targeted development in the near future. The development proposal for priority sites must both satisfy community needs and be anchored in the current market conditions. The corridor's potential for successfully sustaining new retail and housing was a key driver in proposing programs that would give the developments the best chance at successfully activating the Soul City Corridor by attracting tenants, both commercial and residential.

## 2 Western Site 5815-35 Chicago Ave

4	<b>MIXED</b>
3	<b>INCOME</b>
2	<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>
1	<b>ACTIVE GF</b>

- Up to 60 mixed-income units
  - Mix of 60%, 80% AMI, and Market Rate
- Small ground floor retail
  - Mix of 60%, 80% AMI, and Market Rate

## 7 Central Site 5200 Chicago Ave

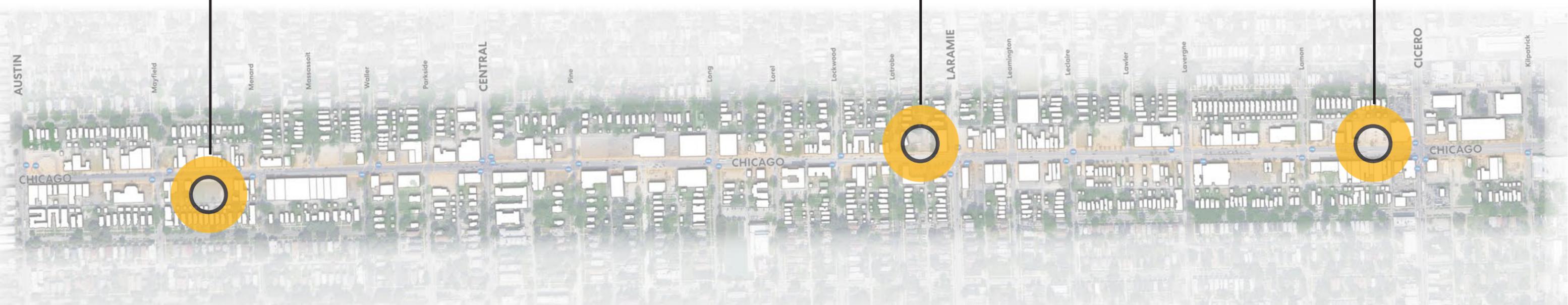
4	<b>MIXED</b>	LARAMIE
3	<b>INCOME</b>	STATE
2	<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	BANK
1	<b>ACTIVE GF</b>	REHAB

- Up to 70 mixed-income units
  - Mix of 60%, 80% AMI, and Market Rate
- Institutional or other retail

## 9 Eastern Site 4814-36 Chicago Ave

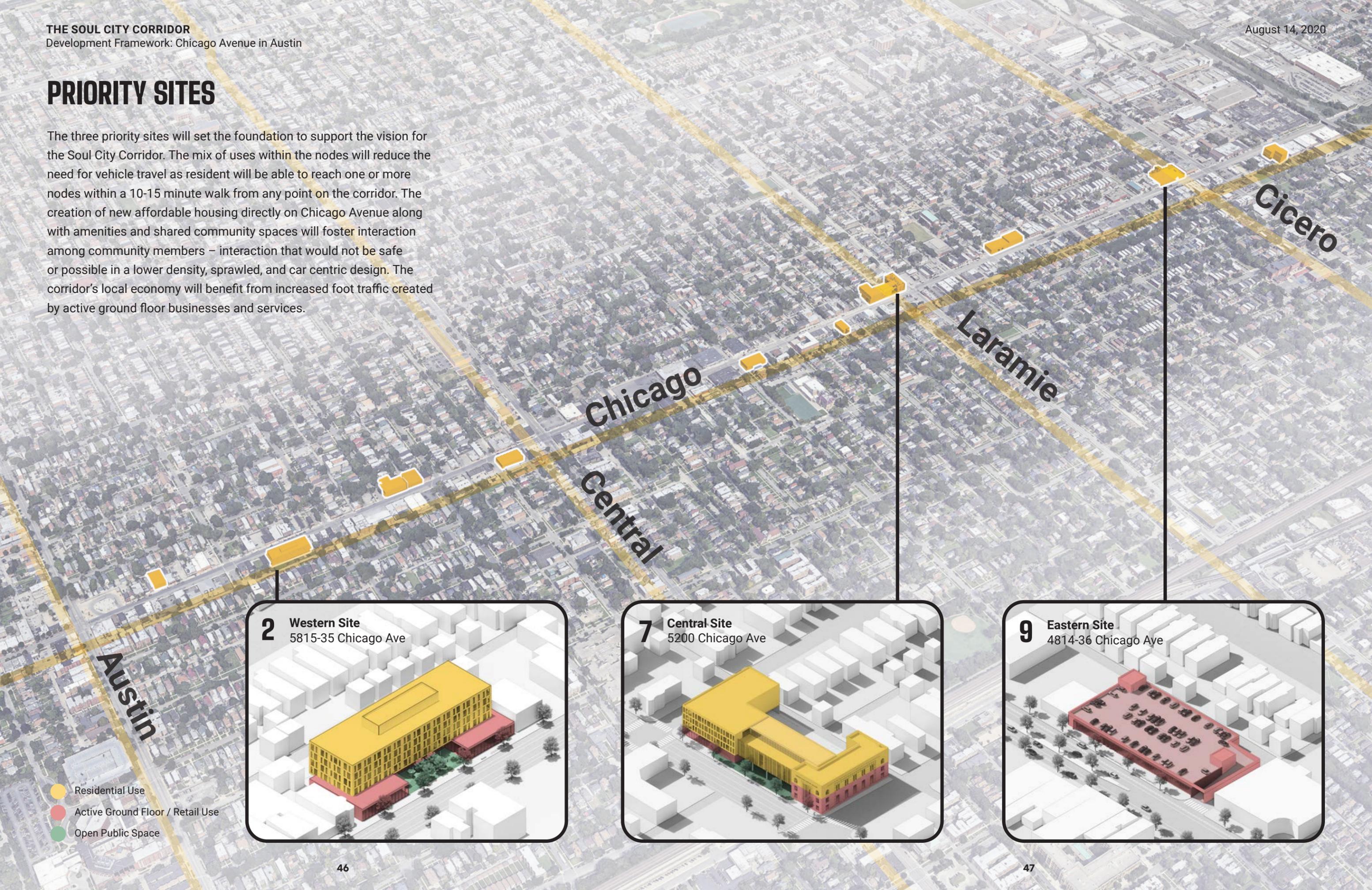
2	<b>ROOFTOP PARKING</b>
1	<b>GROCERY</b>

- 15,000-18,000 GSF Grocery/drug store and accessory parking



# PRIORITY SITES

The three priority sites will set the foundation to support the vision for the Soul City Corridor. The mix of uses within the nodes will reduce the need for vehicle travel as resident will be able to reach one or more nodes within a 10-15 minute walk from any point on the corridor. The creation of new affordable housing directly on Chicago Avenue along with amenities and shared community spaces will foster interaction among community members – interaction that would not be safe or possible in a lower density, sprawled, and car centric design. The corridor's local economy will benefit from increased foot traffic created by active ground floor businesses and services.



**2 Western Site**  
5815-35 Chicago Ave

**7 Central Site**  
5200 Chicago Ave

**9 Eastern Site**  
4814-36 Chicago Ave

- Residential Use
- Active Ground Floor / Retail Use
- Open Public Space

# WESTERN SITE

This site sits close to Oak Park on the western end of the Chicago Ave Corridor and is comprised entirely of vacant parcels. Infilling this large gap in the urban fabric of the Corridor is important to improve walkability and offer continuous & active street frontage.

Program for the site includes a 50-unit residential building with lobby and amenity space on the ground floor. The remainder of the ground floor is divided into two retail/food and beverage tenant spaces totaling 11,900 SF. The retail spaces flank a central open-air plaza designed to encourage activity on the street. Retail or restaurants can open to the street and plaza to take advantage of outdoor seating and flexible space, which is also available to building residents. Surface parking is planned for the rear of the building off the existing alleyway and is accessible directly from the ground floor lobby space.

The project will act as a catalyst to the redevelopment of the corridor by developing an underused site and providing space for a restaurant with outdoor seating. The retail spaces will create jobs. The plaza will enhance the pedestrian experience as well as offer a signature public space currently lacking on the western end of the corridor.



**57,000 GSF**



**50-70 RESIDENTIAL UNITS**



**MIXED USE WITH TWO RETAIL SPACES AT GROUND FLOOR**



**ARTS AND CULTURE POCKET PARK**



**GREEN ROOF, OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES, DAYLIGHT AND VIEWS**



Ground Floor Plan of Site



Rendering of illustrative development proposal

# WESTERN SITE



# CENTRAL SITE

The Central site is occupied by the vacant Laramie State Bank of Chicago building, the surface parking lots to its west and a vacant one-story building at the western end of the block.

Plans for the landmarked Laramie Bank building include renovation into commercial/retail space on its lower levels and residential on the top floor. The project will become a driving center in the neighborhood by rehabilitating an architectural icon in the community.

Program for the test fit includes a 50-unit residential building, with lobby and amenity space on the ground floor, as well as access to a roof patio and amenities on the upper levels. Providing activity and safe access to the street for community members is at the forefront of this proposal. To that end, the site is planned to have an open-air plaza at mid-block on its ground floor that offers direct visual connection from the planned parking lot in the back to the street activity along retail uses. This flexible plaza will provide the community with space for outdoor activities, outdoor dining opportunities, temporary installations, and pop-ups or gatherings. Additionally, the space could potentially be enclosed to function the same way in the winter months.



**78,350 GSF**



**50-70 RESIDENTIAL UNITS**



**TWO RETAIL SPACES AT GROUND FLOOR WITH PLAZA TO SUPPORT OUTDOOR DINING**



**PLAZA ALLOWS FOR ART INSTALLATIONS AND COMMUNITY GATHERINGS, REHABILITATION OF A HISTORIC LANDMARK**



**REUSE OF EXISTING BUILDING, GREEN ROOF, NATIVE LANDSCAPING**



Ground Floor Plan of Site

0 50 100'



Rendering of illustrative development proposal

# CENTRAL SITE



## EASTERN SITE

The site is bordered to the East by the Austin Health Center, and to the West by a one-story laundromat building.

The Eastern site is planned as a retail building to support a small format full-line grocery and pharmacy. Program for the test-fit building is 57,700 GSF, with 24,770 SF retail space and additional back-of-house support space. The building is designed to be divided into a larger grocery tenant on the east and a smaller pharmacy tenant on the west. The test fit has capacity for 85 parking spaces on 2nd level roof, accessed via speed ramp off Chicago Avenue. Loading is accessed from the alley to the east of the site, at the rear of the building. Consideration should be given to the sustainable energy provision for the store with installation such as solar panels on the roof parking or green infrastructure treatments to reduce site stormwater runoffs and urban heat effect in the summer.

The project will strengthen the neighborhood by providing a resource that the community is currently missing - access to a variety of fresh & other food options. The pedestrian experience was considered when the decision was made to place the parking on the roof of the building, rather than have pedestrians walk by a parking lot.



Ground Floor Plan of Site

0 50 100'



70,550 GSF



LARGE COMMERCIAL SPACE WITH  
PARKING ABOVE



ACCESS TO FRESH FOOD



SOLAR PANELS, NATIVE LANDSCAPING,  
HIGH ALBEDO ROOF



Rendering of illustrative development proposal

# EASTERN SITE



# ACHIEVING DESIGN EXCELLENCE

The development proposals seek to address the main question brought forth by the Design Excellence Guiding Principles: “How do we engender a culture that values design excellence in everyday life?”. The provision of affordable housing in mixed-use development seeks to activate the street while offering a market-supportable amount of retail. A special emphasis was put on enhancing the public realm around the sites and public space dedicated to creating activated places for the people of Austin and immersed in their culture.



## Western Site

- Inclusive and equitable mixed-use development with affordable units
- Communicates design excellence by proposing a new typology on the corridor that promotes density, mix of uses and an innovative architectural expression
- Promotes sustainability goals utilizing native landscaping and a green roof
- Provide an anchor public space with art and street improvements to promote safety, accessibility, and pedestrian mobility
- Creates a sense of place by providing a pocket-park, which is used as an entry for the building



## Central Site

- Inclusive and equitable mixed-use development with affordable units
- Encourages a diverse design approach through the adaptive reuse of a Chicago Landmark paired with a new addition, celebrating contemporary design
- Provides provisions for a safe and active public plaza for community members and visitors
- Enhance the public realm with street & landscape improvements with a focus on walkability, transit, biking
- Celebrate the authenticity of the urban fabric of the neighborhood and provide a space for cultural expression for residents through murals and public art



## Eastern Site

- Revitalizes the neighborhood by developing an underused site
- Prioritizes an inclusive design process by responding to needs established by the community.
- Enhance community resilience by providing access to fresh food and health care services
- Incorporates sustainable practices with a solar array, creating energy for use on site and providing shade for the roof top parking
- Creates jobs by leveraging a need for the community and a market demand for that need
- Enhance the public realm by avoiding surface parking and providing continuous & transparent frontage on Chicago Avenue

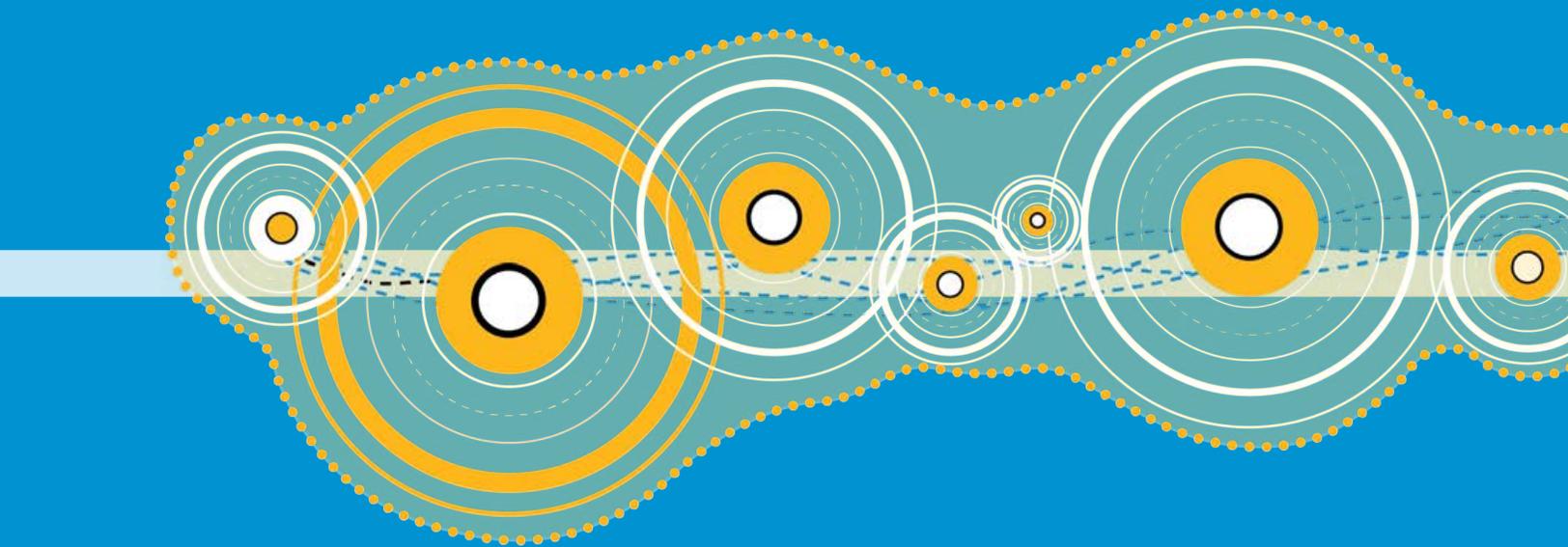
# 05 WHAT'S NEXT

Acting on the vision and opportunities for Soul City.

## Next Steps

This development framework was created through a collaboration of CCAC, the City of Chicago, and community stakeholders to drive decision-making for future development along Chicago Avenue. The first action to implement this framework is the RFP for the Laramie State Bank site. Identified in this document as the "Central Site", the Laramie State Bank is a designated Chicago Landmark and has suffered years of vacancy and deterioration. Redevelopment at this site has been prioritized by the City and community to serve as a symbol of reinvestment, given its prominent location and current danger of demolition. The City has been in conversation with the private property owners and is planning to release an RFP for the property in late August 2020.

Future priorities for new investment and new RFPs on the corridor will be determined by the community and the City, using this development framework to guide the decision-making process. Future RFPs will be determined based on which sites feasibly catalyze the community's priorities, and may include this document's Western site, Eastern site, and/or another site that is prioritized in the future.



**THANK YOU**