

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WOODLAWN NEIGHBORHOOD



PUBLIC MEETINGS SUMMARY JUNE - AUGUST, 2018



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT





OVERVIEW OF MEETINGS

During the summer of 2018, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) hosted several community meetings in Woodlawn to gather input from local residents on proposed strategies for the disposition of City-owned, vacant residential and commercial properties, including vacant land and four City-owned buildings in the neighborhood. Strategies focus on robust community input in a transparent process and prioritize building community wealth, particularly African-American wealth, in Woodlawn.

Members of the public listened to presentations on the proposed goals of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for commercial land along 63rd Street and four City-owned buildings from Aarti Kotak, Deputy Chief of Staff for Neighborhood

Economic Development with the Mayor’s Office, and a housing strategy from Anthony Simpkins, Managing Deputy Commissioner for the DPD Bureau of Housing

COMMUNITY INPUT

Commercial (RFP)

- Provide a note-taker at each meeting in order to record and publish public comments
- Offer more opportunities for community involvement in the RFP process (e.g., establish a Community Advisory Committee composed of a diverse group of Woodlawn residents, allow the community to review the RFP before it is finalized, and increase outreach efforts)
- RFP Issuance should be delayed until ongoing community planning is finished

- Allow for the qualitative and quantitative results of each proposal to be made available to community members before projects are selected
- Hire a “feasibility financial consultant” to review all proposals
- Specify building African-American wealth when discussing “building community wealth”
- Prioritize African-American contractors and laborers in construction projects, with the goal of building wealth
- Help African-American contractors with the City licensing process in order for them to be considered for new opportunities
- Give priority to businesses committed to community hiring and the retention of African-American employees, and to business owners who reside in Woodlawn

- Support locally-owned/ African-American businesses by providing additional City resources in order for community businesses to actually become stakeholders
- Consider developer cooperatives and joint ventures
- Host a “pre-bidders conference” in the community for interested businesses/contractors who are new to the RFP process
- Create design standards/ guidelines to prevent “mix and match” development
- Encourage more quality, neighborhood-serving businesses and retail along 63rd Street
- Address retail spending leakage to keep dollars in the community
- Engage with the owners of private vacant land along 63rd Street
- Create a 5 year/10 year plan or one cohesive plan for the Woodlawn neighborhood that could inform the process.
- Potentially require development proposals to be accompanied by a market study to show that their business can be supported by the market [in response to a concern that the current Woodlawn community may not be able to support a sizable increase in retail]
- Consider the impact of nonprofit organizations securing land at low rates with tax-exempt status, thus not contributing to the tax base

Housing

- Support greater income diversity and mixed-income housing in the neighborhood
- Address concerns of displacement, particularly among seniors and low income residents
- Create a local land bank or community land trust to help preserve affordability
- Manage the balance between providing affordable housing to renters, and preserving property values for homeowners

Residents also identified the following wants / needs:

- Local square or public space
- Sit-down restaurants
- Higher quality businesses
- Locally-owned businesses
- Improved walkability
- Produce market
- Coffee / tea shops
- Hotel
- Preserved affordability
- Lighting under the Green Line
- Local clinic or health facility
- After school programs
- Middle income housing

****NOTE:** If there are any comments you feel are missing, please contact DPD at DPD@cityofchicago.org

STAY INFORMED

Details about public meeting dates, times and locations will be posted on the project website here.

Please email DPD with any questions, or if you would like to be added to our contact database:

DPD@cityofchicago.org