

WOODLAWN HOUSING AND PLANNING EFFORTS



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY JANUARY 30, 2020



MEETING

On the evening of Thursday, January 30, 2020, more than 200 residents, business owners, and other Woodlawn stakeholders joined the Department of Housing and Department of Planning and Development at Hyde Park Academy High School to learn more about the Woodlawn Plan Consolidation Report and the proposed Woodlawn Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance, and to provide their thoughts and ideas for both. A summary of the community feedback received at the Open House is provided in this report.

BACKGROUND

Since LISC Chicago published its “Rebuilding the Neighborhood” plan in 2005, there have been nearly a dozen plans and studies developed for the Woodlawn community by the City of Chicago,

nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups and others. Although the studies are a clear indicator of how many people and organizations care about Woodlawn and its success, they also underscore a deeper need for greater coordination, and for one unified path forward.

Over the past several months, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has worked to consolidate these community-driven plans into one report to provide a roadmap for City officials to work alongside community groups with a vested interest to ensure that future development decisions prioritize sustainable, long-term growth and the needs of the Woodlawn community.

Over the same period, the Department of Housing (DOH) has convened a Woodlawn Housing Working Group to engage residents, including renters and homeowners,

as it works to create a Woodlawn Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance. This working group has met frequently since fall 2019 to talk through ideas and recommendations. This collaboration builds on and strengthens previous community efforts, and will eventually lead to feasible solutions that help ensure current Woodlawn residents are able to stay in their community by laying the groundwork for equitable and inclusive growth in Woodlawn.

WHAT WE HEARD

The meeting offered attendees an opportunity to provide feedback on a number of topic areas related to the Woodlawn Plan Consolidation Report. Woodlawn community members shared their thoughts on several topics, but three goals stood out. First, neighborhood stakeholders want to re-establish 63rd street as a walkable



neighborhood center with commercial establishments, cafes, restaurants, and multi-story housing. Second, housing-related feedback included diverse perspectives. Attendees expressed an interest for (1) more housing for very low income residents and (2) support for housing options for people with diverse incomes. Third, attendees want to see action rather than more planning, but indicated that the City needs to engage the community in order to be successful.

Vacant Land Opportunities

- Use vacant land to build new housing at various income levels.
- New construction should match the character of existing housing.
- Attendees support multi-unit housing, including two-to-four flat housing on residential blocks and mixed-use buildings on commercial corridors.

- Woodlawn stakeholders support easing new homeownership through rent-to-own programs and city support.
- There is support for using vacant lots for new parks, playgrounds, and/or community gardens.

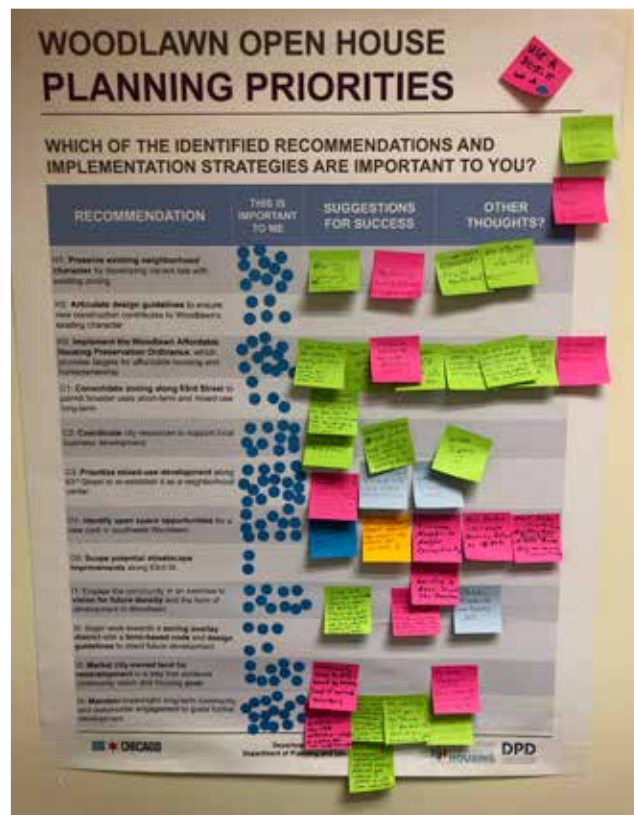
Housing and Residential Areas

- Attendees emphasized that Woodlawn's existing affordable housing must be preserved, and new housing options need to be created.
- Woodlawn residents called for affordability requirements at very low, middle and higher income levels on new development, on city-owned land.
- Stakeholders agreed with granting right of first refusal to building tenants when multi-unit buildings are sold.
- Residents supported local hiring requirements for new development, including a focus on re-entering citizens.

- Some residents called for the City to enhance code enforcement on multiunit buildings to avoid blight in the community.
- Stakeholders requested additional information and background. A link to these materials is available at chicago.gov/city/en/depts/doh/supp_info/woodlawn-housing-ordinance.html

Commercial Corridors

- Residents supported re-zoning the 63rd Street Corridor to allow for high-density mixed-use, noting that neighborhood centers need density beyond the surrounding landscape.
- Several residents want to re-extend the CTA Green Line to 63rd and Dorchester to connect with the Metra Electric.
- Residents are supportive of a new credit union or bank on a commercial corridor.



Public Realm Improvements

- Woodlawn stakeholders strongly supported a proposal to use vacant land to create a new park in Southwest Woodlawn, an area of the community farthest from existing open space opportunities.
- Residents emphasized the importance of better street lighting, especially under the Metra viaduct at 63rd Street and under CTA Green Line tracks.
- 63rd Street was identified as a location of streetscaping improvement – residents suggested planters, bike lanes, and street banners.

Reusing Former Public Schools

- At three former school sites (Wadsworth School at 64th and University, Fiske Elementary at 62nd and Ingleside, and Ross Elementary at 61st and Woodlawn), Woodlawn residents prioritized reimagining of the existing facilities as community centers, family housing providers, and job training/ small business incubators.
- Residents were also supportive of uses including artist live-work spaces, senior and veteran housing, and social service resource centers.

STAY INFORMED

More information is available at chicago.gov/woodlawn

Please email DPD with any questions, or if you would like to be added to our contact database to receive notices for future public meetings and engagement events:

DPD@cityofchicago.org





