



CHICAGO PLAN COMMISSION

Department of Planning and Development

Northwest Region

Informational Presentation – Harlem Avenue Visioning Study

Wards: 29 / Ald. Taliaferro and 38 / Ald. Sposato

Community Areas: Montclare and Dunning

04/18/2024

STUDY GOALS

01 Create a vision for public improvements along Harlem Ave.

02 Build an identity for the commercial with a brand

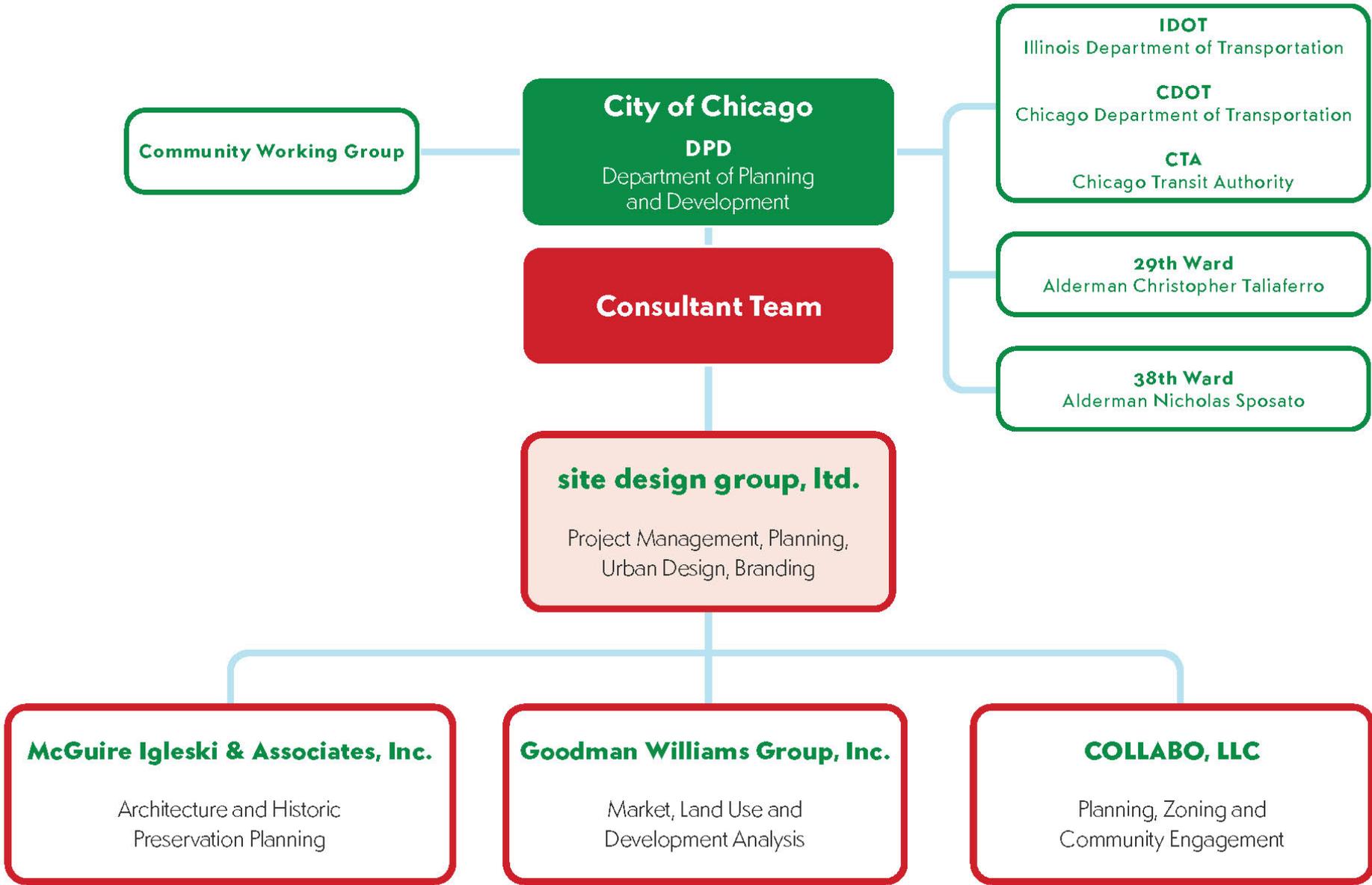
03 Strengthen the small business corridor with an established brand

04 Outline a framework for implementation (short-term and long-term goals)

05 Identify opportunities for open space, street events, streetscape and redevelopment

06 Identify potential partners for collaboration

THE STUDY TEAM



ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The study included an initial working group site visit walk and four working group meetings to gather feedback. The working group participants consisted of representatives from the City of Chicago departments and sister agencies, the Village of Elmwood Park, and the Illinois Department of Transportation; elected officials; local business owners from HALIBA; property owners; and residents.

1 Working Group Site Walk

4 Working Group Meetings

39 # of Working Group Participants



Figure 5. Initial working group site walk



Figure 6. Working group meeting 1



Figure 9. Working group meeting 3



Figure 10. Working group meeting 3



Figure 7. Working group meeting 2



Figure 8. Working group meeting 2

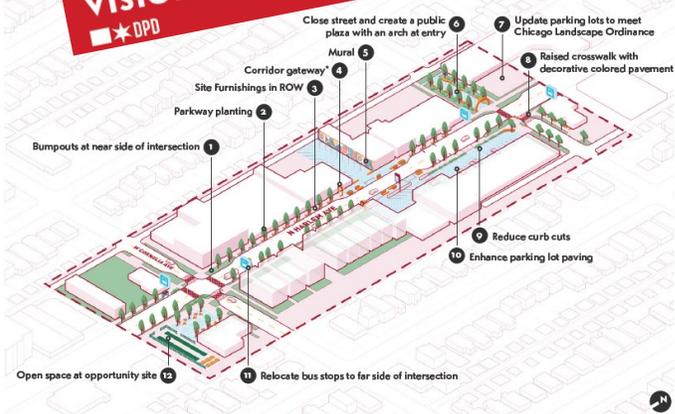
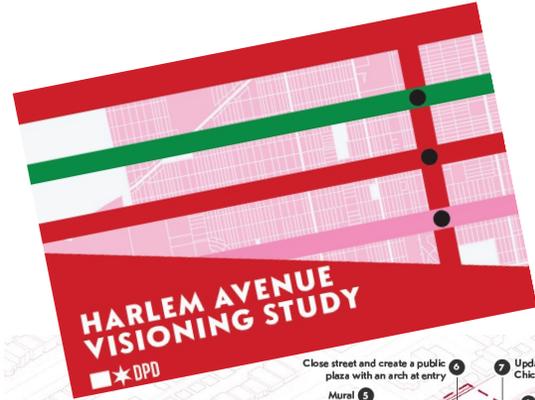


Figure 11. Working group meeting 4



Figure 12. Working group meeting 4

DELIVERABLES



CORRIDOR IDENTITY AND BRANDING

The brand identity for Harlem Avenue should speak to the people and culture of Harlem Avenue in a way that honors the present and future residents of this neighborhood and their collective values of community, collaboration, and connection while paying homage to the corridor's history. The brand will be implemented on all signage, wayfinding, and marketing materials.

The Harlem Avenue brand identity drew inspiration from mid-century Italian graphic designers who have had contemporary twists on traditional forms mixed with the values of connection, celebration, and awe while, expanded to include Chicago blues and other colors to represent the diverse population found along Harlem Avenue today.



OVERALL CORRIDOR: SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Seasonal displays	Install seasonal displays at the Community Heart and Hubs. These displays could include temporary holiday installations, light displays, or art that reflect the changing seasons. CDOT Business Service Organization*	
Light pole banners	Install vinyl banners on light poles along the entire two-mile corridor. These banners provide a sense of continuity and reinforce the unique character of the corridor. CDOT Alderpersons Business Service Organization*	Identify community desired locations where metal banners can be added to light poles. CDOT Alderpersons Business Service Organization*
Bus shelters	Coordinate the use of bus shelter wall panels for events, community announcements, and wayfinding. Community groups, business service organizations, and non-city entities can request to post signage on bus shelter wall panels as long as they make the request directly with JCDecaux at least three weeks before the desired posting date. For city messaging, requests go through the Finance Department. CDOT JCDecaux Business Service Organization*	Install new bus shelter styles and coordinate corridor branding into the final design. DPD CDOT JCDecaux Business Service Organization*



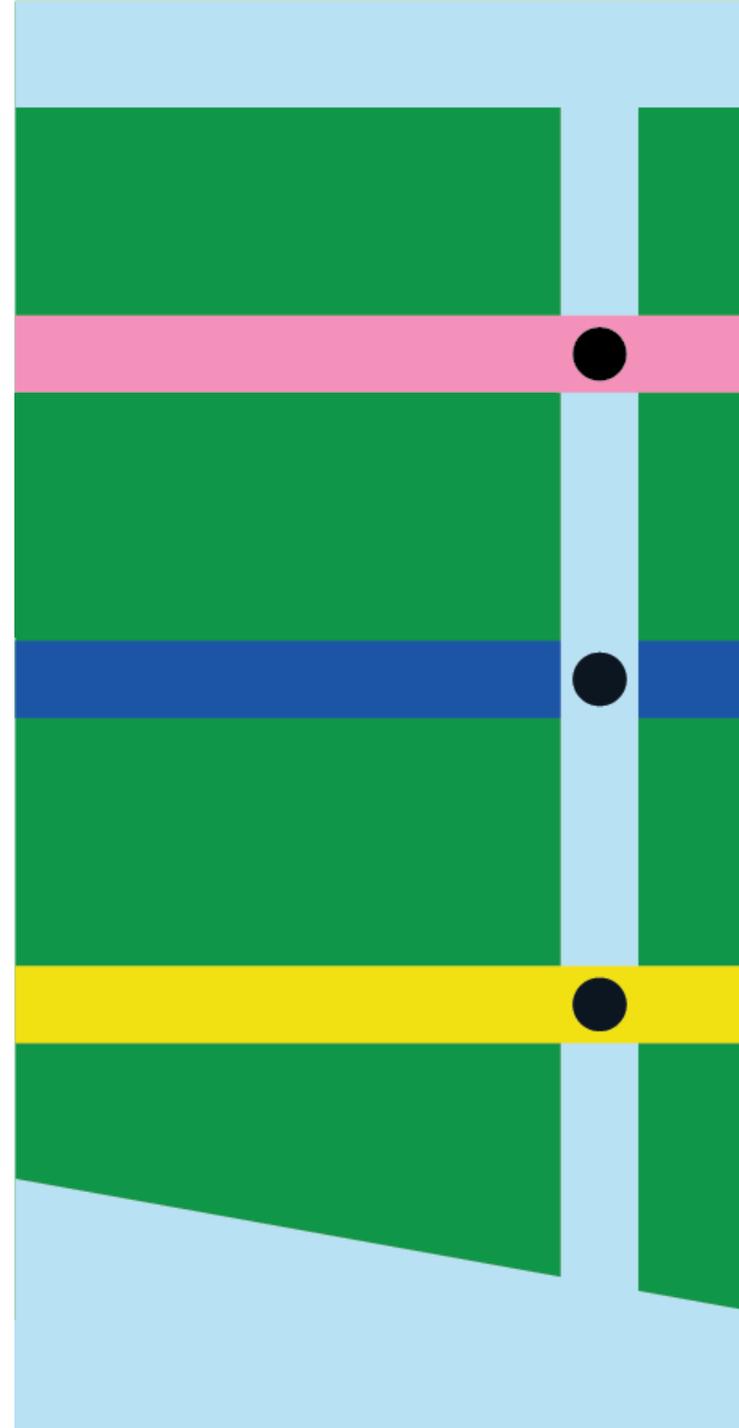
01 Focus Area Recommendations

02 Gateway Visioning + Corridor Branding

03 Implementation Framework

The final report will also include: Demographics and market analysis, history of the corridor, existing zoning and regulations, existing conditions analysis, existing building recommendations, public realm recommendations and development scenarios for focus areas, recommended short-term and long-term public realm improvements, future traffic considerations, gateway illustrative visions, best practices, corridor branding and a building database.

ANALYSIS



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

- No cohesive identity along Harlem Avenue
- Local partners need to be identified
- Funding sources for implementation

Opportunities

- Areas closest to Irving Park Rd, Belmont Ave, and Grand Ave, are within Transit Served Location Zones
- Newly relocated National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame under construction – potential community hub or anchor for the neighborhood
- Data could be used to market, support and identify future development needs
- Create new gateway entrances that celebrates the corridor
- Identify the existing business owner needs, attract new businesses to area and bring visitors to this area



NEIGHBORHOOD PHOTOS



Belmont & Harlem Ave (looking north)



3245 N Harlem Ave (looking north)



3344 N Harlem Ave (looking north)



3432 N Harlem Ave (looking north)

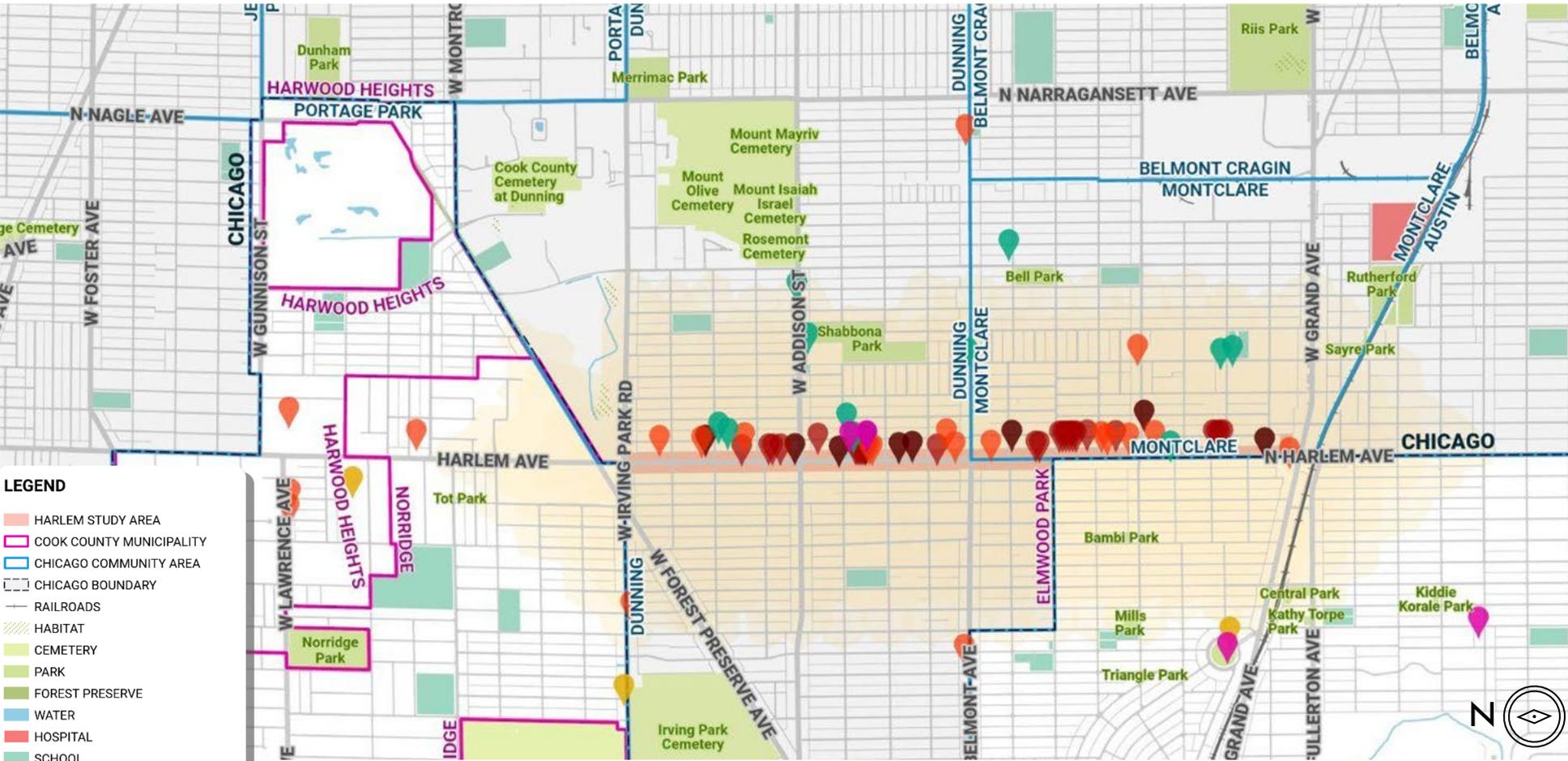


Addison & Harlem Ave (looking north)

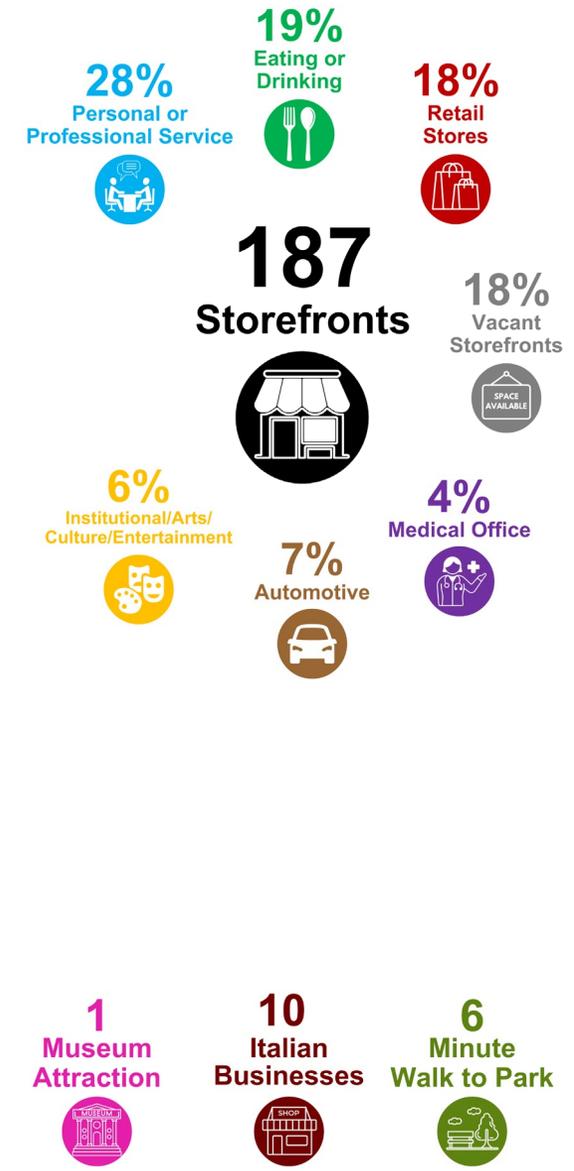


Grace & Harlem Ave (looking south)

CULTURAL ASSETS MAP



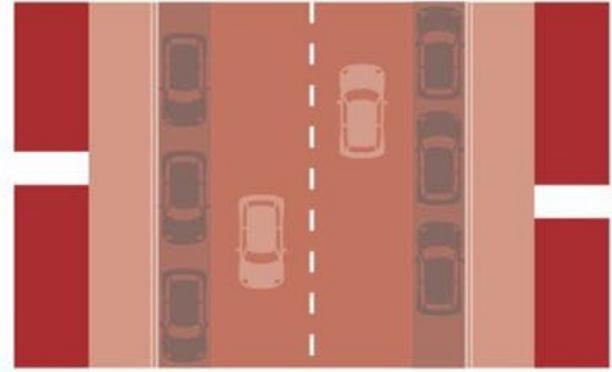
- LEGEND**
- HARLEM STUDY AREA
 - COOK COUNTY MUNICIPALITY
 - CHICAGO COMMUNITY AREA
 - CHICAGO BOUNDARY
 - RAILROADS
 - HABITAT
 - CEMETERY
 - PARK
 - FOREST PRESERVE
 - WATER
 - HOSPITAL
 - SCHOOL
 - SPORTS
 - ITALIAN RESTAURANTS & MARKETS
 - ITALIAN PROPERTIES & DEVELOPMENTS
 - ITALIAN OWNED BUSINESSES
 - COMMUNITY CENTERS
 - CHURCHES
 - MUSEUMS
 - 10 MINUTE WALK



SCALE COMPARISONS

Harlem Ave

PLAN



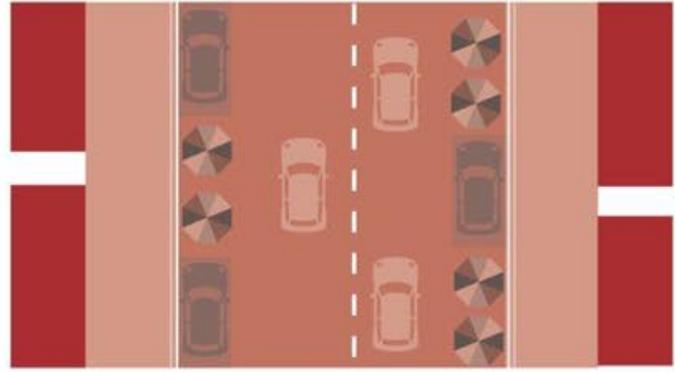
SECTION



11' ped. 44' veh. 11' ped.

66' Total Width

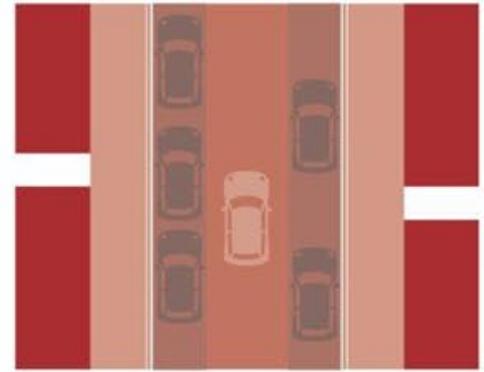
Little Italy, San Diego



12' ped. 46' veh. 12' ped.

70' Total Width

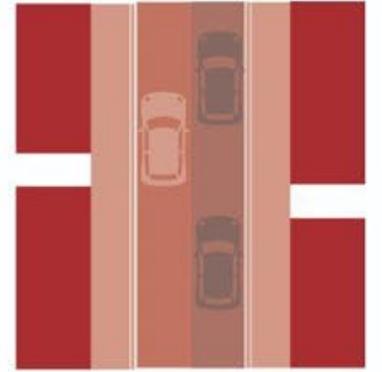
Little Italy, NYC



8' ped. 24' veh. 8' ped.

40' Total Width

North End, Boston

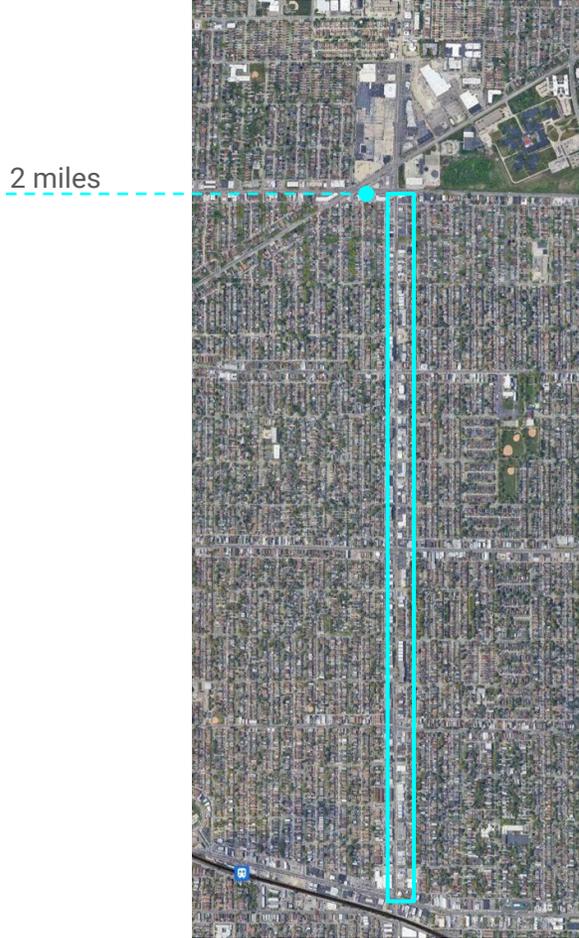


5' ped. 15' veh. 5' ped.

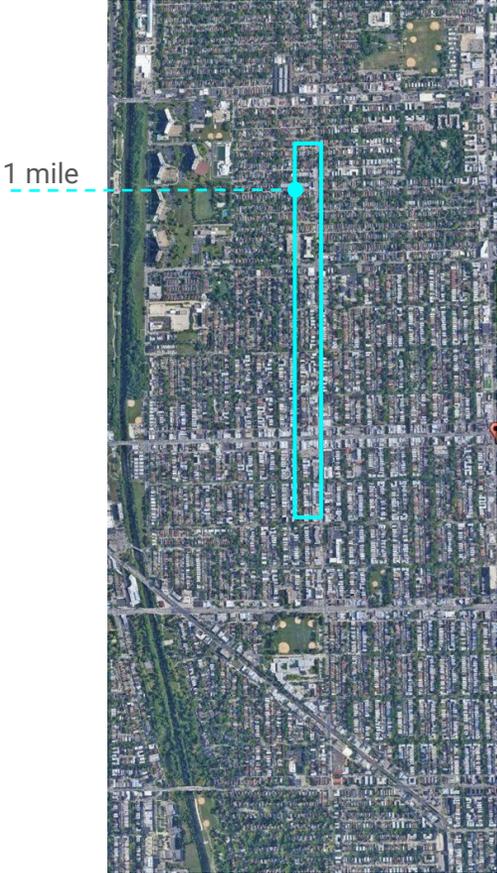
25' Total Width

CULTURAL CORRIDORS IN CHICAGO

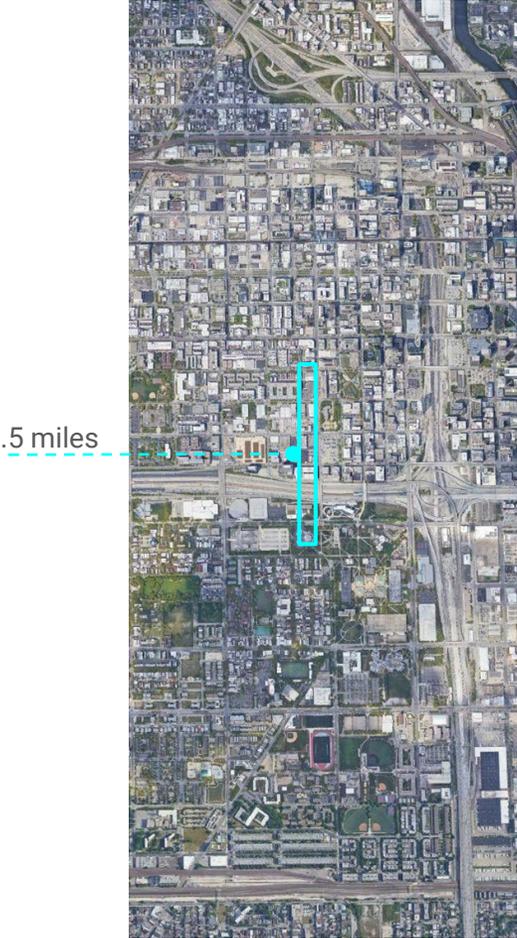
Harlem Ave



Little India, Chicago



Little Italy, Taylor St



Chinatown, Chicago



OTHER LITTLE ITALY ANALYSIS

Little Italy, NYC



- Colorful
- Celebratory
- Alive with people & plant life

North End, Boston



- Gathering places
- Space for events
- Intimate human scale

Little Italy, San Diego



- Gateway
- Flexible seating
- Use of water

CULTURAL CORRIDORS - CHICAGO

Little India



Chinatown



W Argyle St



W Howard St



Taylor St



Humboldt Park



- Murals on the street
- Gateway
- Uniform design language

- Murals on buildings
- Shade structures
- Entry signage

- Sculptural Gateway
- Street trees
- Murals on buildings & fences

TRANSPORTATION - ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

ASSETS



Strong Bus Connection



Divvy Bikes

CONSTRAINTS



Length of Corridor



Lack of Bike Lanes



State Road



Ample Parking



Auto-oriented Design



Safety

PUBLIC REALM CONSIDERATIONS



EXISTING BUILDING & OPPORTUNITIES



3813-23 N Harlem

3811 N Harlem

3543 N Harlem

3223 N Harlem

3101-3131 N Harlem

7146 W Diversey

2701 N Harlem

3759 N Harlem

3555 N Harlem

3510 N Harlem

3300-02 N Harlem

3132 N Harlem

2723 N Harlem

■ OPPORTUNITY SITES
■ RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES
■ HEART
■ HUBS

COMMUNITY HUB

INSPIRATIONS



Shared Alley



Planted Buffer between Pedestrians and Vehicles



Public Gathering Spaces at Corners



Bus Shelters at Major Intersections



Sidewalk Art



Raised crosswalk at Side Streets

The graphic design features a background of a light pink grid pattern. A solid red diagonal shape cuts across the bottom left. A horizontal green bar is positioned in the upper middle, and a horizontal pink bar is in the lower middle. Three black circles are arranged vertically on the right side, overlapping the green and pink bars. The text 'HARLEM AVENUE VISIONING STUDY' is located in the bottom left corner.

HARLEM AVENUE VISIONING STUDY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

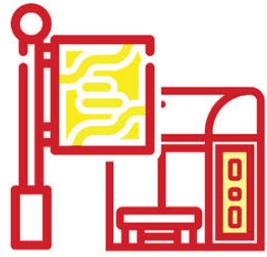


1 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

The study envisions a future for Harlem Avenue as a thriving mixed-use corridor that harmoniously caters to the needs of both pedestrians and vehicles. Over time, the street has been designed to prioritize vehicular traffic. To effectively shift the focus towards pedestrians, several key improvements are necessary. Placing greater emphasis on the public sidewalk within the Right-of-Way (ROW) will be crucial, which can be achieved by strategically reducing the widths of on-street parking and driving lanes. Reclaiming space for pedestrian use will allow for the creation of protective buffers between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Additionally, this reallocation of space will contribute to the overall beautification of the corridor, fostering a more vibrant and inviting atmosphere.

Goals:

- Improve pedestrian safety and circulation by adding traffic calming measures, identifying locations of pedestrian crossing concerns, and adding new light poles.
- Improve CTA bus safety, operations, and bus stop accessibility.
- Strengthen the business corridor by making the area more inviting to pedestrians by enhancing public improvements and streetscape infrastructure.
- Enhance the public streetscape by incorporating green infrastructure and making landscape improvements as outlined in the Chicago Landscape Ordinance.
- Build strong partnerships within a multijurisdictional area.

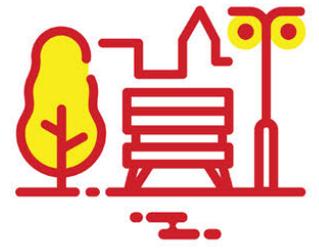


2 CORRIDOR IDENTITY

A consistent brand and design approach is needed to commemorate the history of Italian business presence along the corridor, drive investment, and define an identity.

Goals:

- Define the identity of the corridor.
- Develop a consistent brand and design approach considering the cultural history and people that live within the community today.
- Develop redevelopment strategies considering short and long-term interventions for improvements.
- Improve signage and wayfinding along the corridor.



3 COMMUNITY GATHERING

To foster a vibrant and welcoming public realm, the Harlem Avenue visioning study proposes the creation of signature spaces known as "The Community Heart" and "The Community Hubs." These strategically located focus areas will serve as anchors for neighborhood activity, providing spaces for visitors, businesses, and residents to gather, connect, and celebrate. The Heart and Hubs will be easily accessible via public transportation and situated around currently active business nodes, intersections with redevelopment potential, and opportunity sites for multipurpose open space. The key to the success of these focus areas is the emphasis on creating ample public space and inviting gathering areas.

Goals:

- Create new open spaces, plazas, and multi-purpose areas.
- Identify existing underutilized spaces that can be used for temporary activations.
- Program these spaces with vibrant events, gatherings, and markets for the community and visitors alike.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

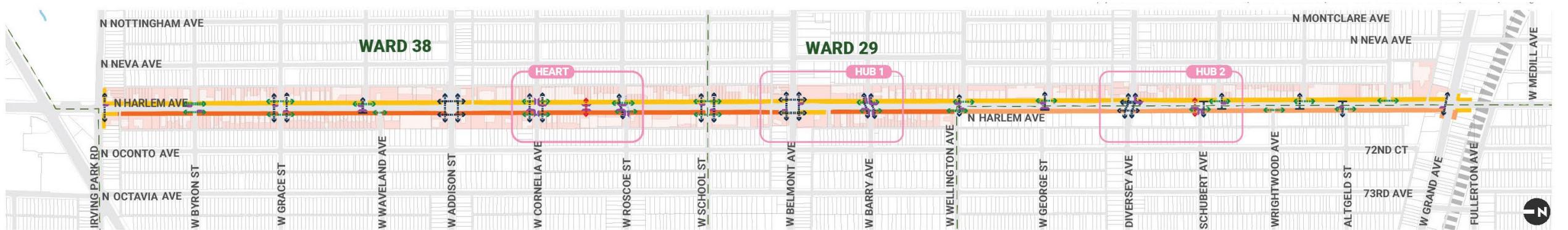


Figure 32. Harlem Avenue corridor overall pedestrian experience improvement opportunities

LEGEND

- Harlem study area
- Chicago Ward Boundary
- Enhanced materiality of existing crosswalks to be high-visibility crosswalks
- Raised crosswalk
- Removed existing crosswalk at Roscoe for closed street
- Future locations of activation - opportunity for increase of public open space/pedestrian traffic
- Proposed bumpouts
- Sidewalk with proposed light poles
- Sidewalk with existing light poles within the Village of Elmwood Park
- Sidewalk with existing light poles to be replaced



Figure 33. Harlem Avenue corridor overall vehicular experience improvement opportunities

LEGEND

- Harlem study area
- Chicago Ward Boundary
- Bus line
- Existing bus stop (existing location to remain)
- Relocated bus stop (proposed location)
- Relocated bus stop (existing location)
- Bus stop with bus shelter
- Existing intersection with left turn lane at both directions

RIGHT-OF-WAY TYPOLOGIES



Figure 42. Residential ROW with trees in sodded parkway planters

The use of native plants can increase habitat and visual interest in the neighborhood.



Figure 43. ROW less than nine feet with no trees

For narrower sidewalks where trees are unable to be planted, freestanding planters can be introduced to enhance the streetscape and add visual interest to storefronts.



Figure 44. Commercial ROW between nine and twelve feet with trees in grates

For sidewalks between nine and twelve feet, trees can be planted in tree grates.



Figure 45. Commercial ROW over twelve feet with trees in curbed parkway planters

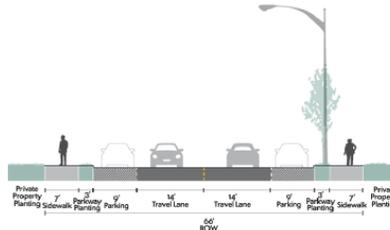
For sidewalks over twelve feet, trees can be planted in a curbed parkway planter.

CIRCULATION AND SAFETY

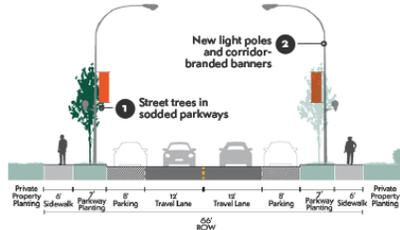
The corridor currently has four main ROW typologies. The following cross-sections on pages 28-31 depict typical existing conditions of those typologies and the future vision. The existing cross section

dimensions are shown approximate and shall be verified in the field. The future vision for the roadway is to create consistent travel lane widths at twelve feet wide, consistent parking and bumpouts at eight feet, plant trees where possible in areas that do not currently meet the Chicago Landscape Ordinance, and add light poles.

1 RESIDENTIAL



EXISTING
Typical residential typology with five feet wide parkway planting areas and six feet wide sidewalks.



FUTURE VISION
Consistent twelve feet wide travel lanes, eight feet wide parking lanes, seven feet wide parkway planting areas to meet the Chicago Landscape Ordinance, and six feet wide sidewalks.

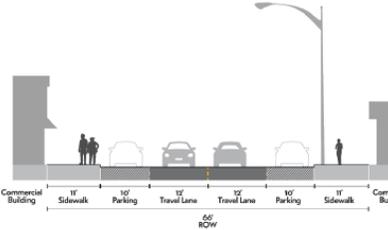
Figure 34. Typical residential Harlem Avenue corridor ROW typology

FUTURE ENGINEERING EFFORTS

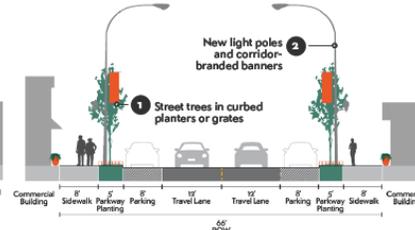
Due to the existing, and likely future traffic volumes, two conceptual cross sections have been illustrated to study how both of these strategies would affect the existing roadway.

A future study would explore options that would benefit all users of the roadway from a safety and operational perspective. See Figure 93 and Figure 94 for reference. These cross-sections are not recommendations per this vision study, but for reference only.

2 COMMERCIAL



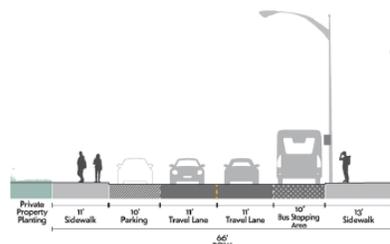
EXISTING
Typical commercial typology with nine feet or wider sidewalks.



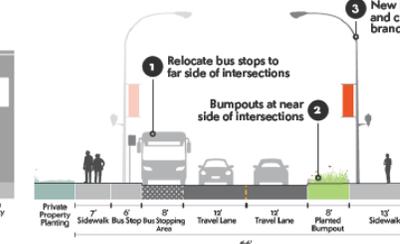
FUTURE VISION
Consistent twelve feet wide travel lanes, eight feet wide parking lanes, five feet wide parkway planting areas to meet the Chicago Landscape Ordinance, and eight feet wide sidewalks, creating a more visually appealing and inviting streetscape.

Figure 35. Typical commercial Harlem Avenue corridor ROW typology

3 LOCAL INTERSECTION



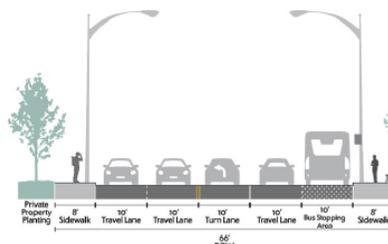
EXISTING
Typical local intersection typology with nine feet or wider sidewalks.



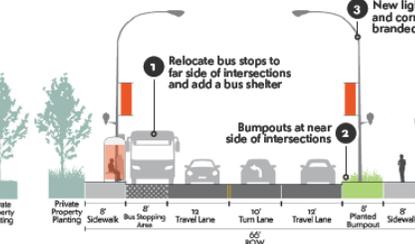
FUTURE VISION
Consistent twelve feet wide travel lanes, eight feet wide bumpouts on the near side and bus stops on the far side, thirteen feet wide sidewalks, which can accommodate pedestrian traffic and bus stops at intersections. This will improve safety for pedestrians crossing the street and make bus operations more effective.

Figure 36. Typical local intersection Harlem Avenue corridor ROW typology

4 MAJOR INTERSECTION



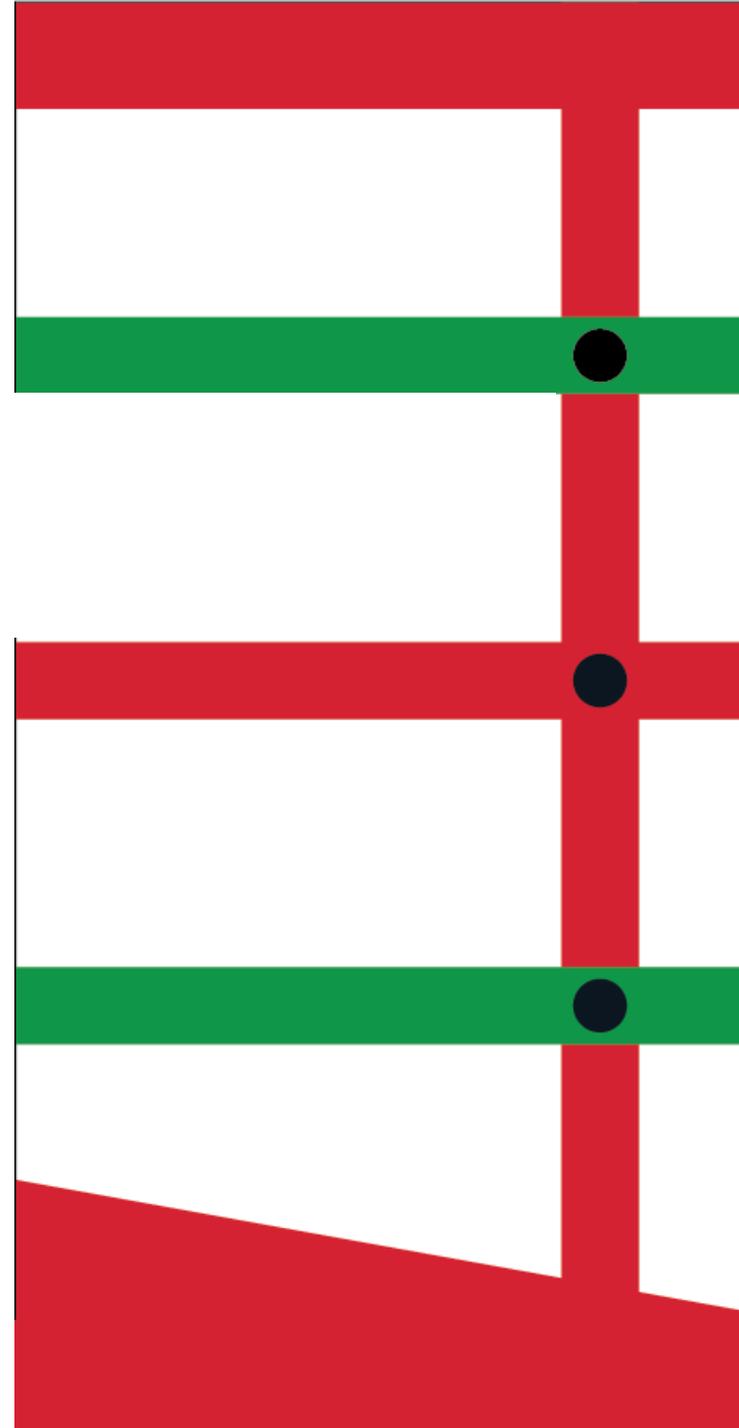
EXISTING
Typical major intersection typology with sidewalks less than nine feet.



FUTURE VISION
Consistent twelve feet wide travel lanes, ten feet wide left turning lane, eight feet wide bumpouts on the near side and bus stops on the far side, and eight feet wide sidewalks. This will improve safety for pedestrians crossing the street and make bus operations more effective.

Figure 37. Typical major intersection Harlem Avenue corridor ROW typology

BRANDING

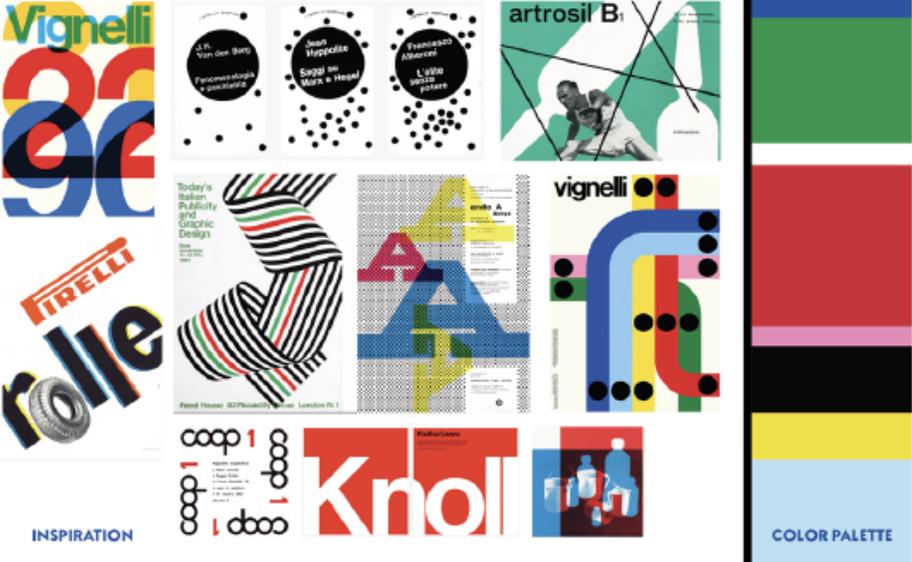


CORRIDOR IDENTITY

- Speaks to the people and culture which celebrates the past, present, and future
- Signals the entry to a special place
- Assists to market the area, supports existing businesses and attracts new businesses
- Flexibility of branding for focus areas, two Chicago community areas, and the corridor
- Provides short-term and long-term gateway identifiers for implementation

HARLEM AVENUE

LOGOS - FONT: SONAR SANS



INSPIRATION

COLOR PALETTE



Figure 47. Harlem Avenue Corridor branded light pole banner options

Figure 46. Harlem Avenue Corridor branding fonts, inspiration and color palette

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

1992 Honorary street designations by former Ald. William J.P. Banks

530 N Harlem – 4000 N Harlem as “Chicago’s Little Italy”

2500 N Harlem – 4000 N Harlem as Harlem Avenue Little Italy Business Association

Potential honorary street designation boundaries:

- Addison to Roscoe (38)
- Roscoe to Belmont (29)
- Schubert to George (29)



Figure 57. Street wayfinding (Source: DPD)



Figure 58. Gateways (Source: Wikipedia)



Figure 59. Light pole banners (Source: CDOT)



Figure 60. Bus shelter wall panel for announcements, community communication, and events signage (Source: DPD)



Figure 61. Seasonal displays at the Heart and Hubs (Source: Flickr)



Figure 62. Signage and wayfinding recommendations

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

GATEWAY VISIONS

Creating a distinctive identity for the Harlem Avenue corridor involves establishing gateway identifiers that draw attention to key areas like business centers and areas for community gatherings, and signifying the entrances to the Community's Heart and Hubs. These identifiers should be visually compelling, visible from a distance, and possess landmark quality. The Visioning study includes near term and longer term design recommendations for gateways. For the near term solution, murals are recommended to be implemented on walls of private property, with approval and coordination with property owners. For the longer term solution, either vertical gateways or pedestrian arch gateways are recommended to be implemented within the ROW within the pedestrian space. These are longer term solutions as a gateway identifier would require coordination and approval from IDOT and CDOT. The Working Groups preference is the pedestrian arch gateway. Feasibility of the gateway locations and design shall be completed in a future design study



Figure 81. Near term: Murals



Figure 82. Longer term: Option A: Vertical Gateways



Figure 83. Longer term: Option B: Pedestrian Arch Gateways

THREE DESIGN OPTIONS FOR GATEWAY IDENTIFIERS:

1. Near term: Murals
2. Longer term: Option A: Vertical Gateways
3. Longer term: Option B: Pedestrian Arch Gateways

There are two options for the north and south gateway locations:

North Gateway



Option 1 - Placing two vertical gateways midblock between Cornelia and Roscoe avenues at the south side of the midblock bumpout. Providing a mural on the north side of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame building.



Option 2 - Placing two pedestrian arch gateways midblock between Cornelia and Roscoe avenues at the north side of the midblock bumpout. Providing a mural on the north side of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame building.

South Gateway



Option 1 - Placing two vertical gateways on the north side of Schubert and Harlem avenues. Providing a mural on the north side of the M C Foods building, and on the south side of the Harlem Cafe building.



Option 2 - Placing two pedestrian arch gateways south of the Harlem Cafe building. Providing a mural on the north side of the M C Foods building, and on the south side of the Harlem Cafe building.

● PEDESTRIAN ARCH GATEWAY
● VERTICAL GATEWAY
■ MURAL

COMMUNITY GATHERING

To foster a vibrant and welcoming public realm, three focus areas—the Community Heart and two Community Hubs — are proposed to serve as anchors for neighborhood activity, providing spaces for visitors, businesses, and residents to gather, connect, and celebrate.

COMMUNITY HEART

The main gathering area of the Harlem Avenue corridor is envisioned between Cornelia Avenue and Roscoe Street, a two-block stretch envisioned as the neighborhood's Community Heart. This section of Harlem Avenue currently houses a diverse range of businesses and institutional uses, including Piazza Italia with Pasta Fresh, Bartucci Homemade Italian Food, Salon Mia Bella, Palazzo Regali with La Bomboniera and Galleria D'Arte, the future National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and Piazza Italia, and the open space at the opportunity site on the northwest corner of Cornelia and Harlem avenues in collaboration

To transform this area into a Community Heart, design recommendations have been proposed and outlined on the following pages.

In addition, the Working Group has observed concerns about pedestrian safety at the Community Heart due to high volumes of vehicular traffic and the number of pedestrians crossing to access businesses. The future vision proposes additional public space for event activation to occur around the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and Piazza Italia, providing the opportunity for an increase in pedestrian traffic. The visioning study has identified the desire for IDOT to study this area for a midblock crossing between these spaces to help alleviate pedestrian crossing concerns and allow for safer crossing for pedestrians.



Figure 63. Looking south on Harlem Avenue from Cornelia Avenue



Figure 64. Looking north on Harlem Avenue from Roscoe Street

with the private property and business owners. For large events, the community can coordinate with IDOT, CDOT, and CTA to temporarily close Harlem Avenue from Cornelia to Roscoe and add movable market tents, planters, and tables and chairs.

For small and medium events, users can activate the bumpouts, the community plaza at the closed Roscoe Street, or temporarily activate private parking lots at the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and Piazza Italia, and the open space at the opportunity site on the northwest corner of Cornelia and Harlem avenues in collaboration

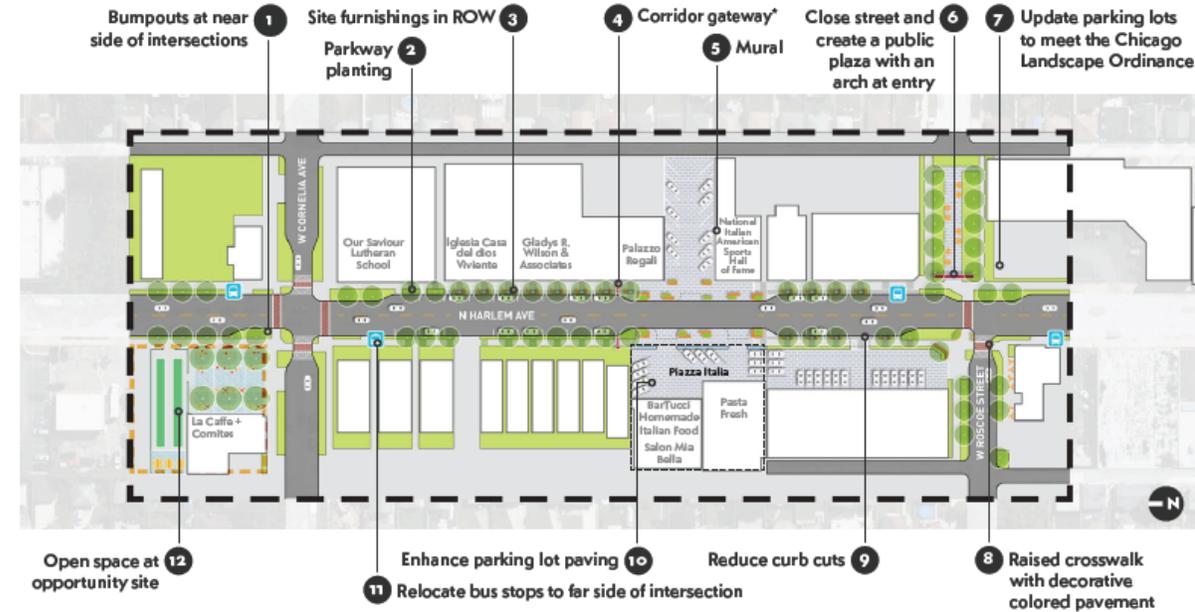


Figure 65. Community Heart plan

Note: These visions are for illustrative purposes only and would require further analysis, community engagement, cooperation with property owners, funding allocation, design, and engineering before future improvements could be implemented.

*Plan is depicting Option 8: Pedestrian Arch Gateway. For gateway options refer to pages 50-51.

COMMUNITY HEART & HUBS

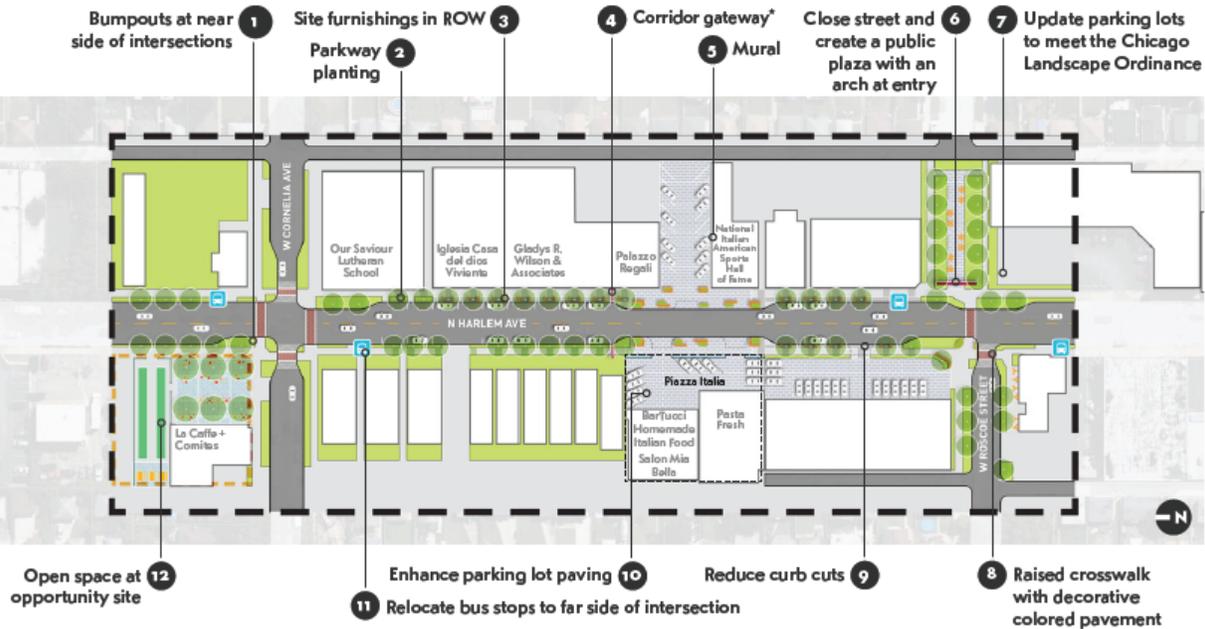


Figure 65. Community Heart plan



Figure 68. Community Heart perspective



Figure 80. Community Hub 2 - Temporary activation space and opportunity

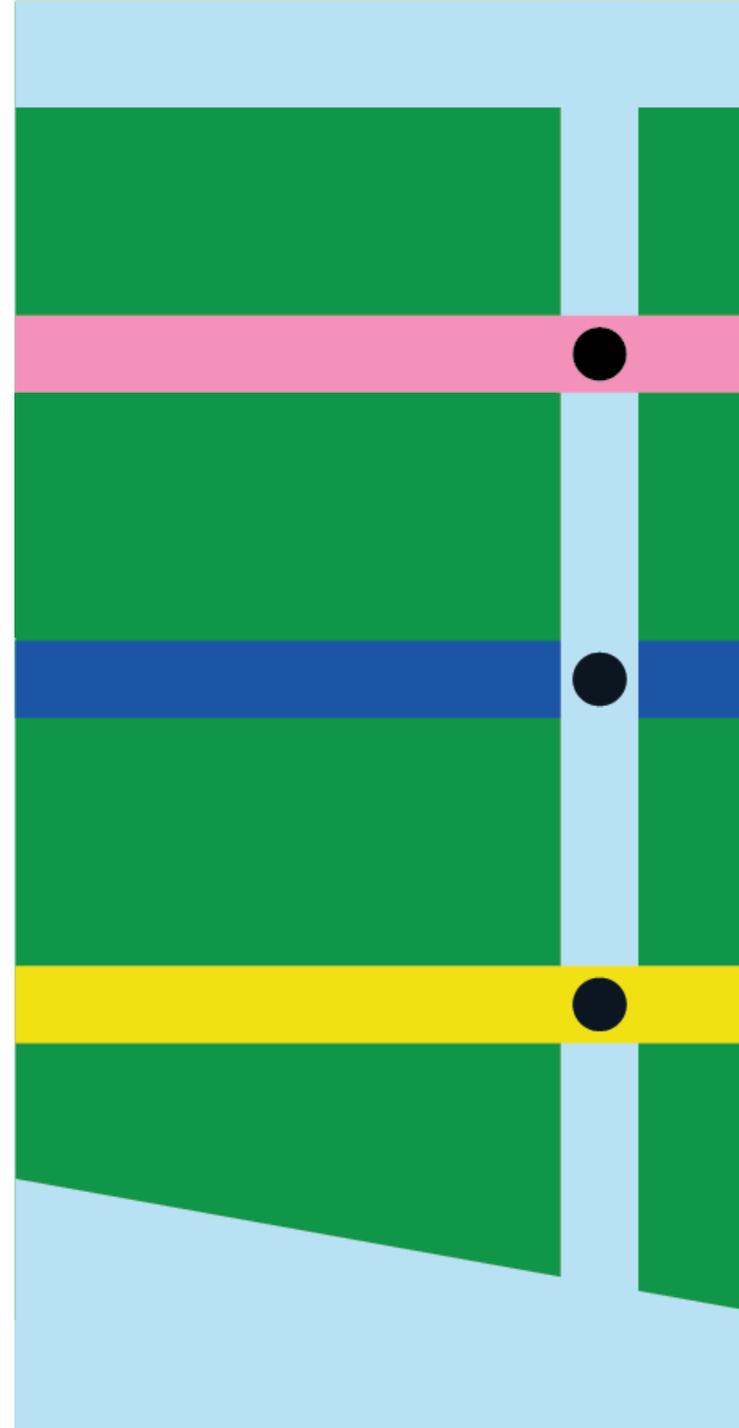


Figure 69. Community Hub 1 - Belmont plan



Figure 75. Community Hub 2 - Diversey plan

EXISTING BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS



EXISTING BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The built environment of Harlem Avenue, particularly the street-facing facades of the commercial buildings, are the heart and soul of the commercial corridor playing a formative role in shaping its sense of place.

To support Harlem Avenue's commercial character, the following design strategies guide rehabilitation work on the exteriors of existing buildings.

1 MAINTAIN AND REPAIR EXISTING MASONRY MATERIALS AT STREET-FACING/PRIMARY FACADES

A distinctive architectural feature of Harlem Avenue's built environment is the use of textured and/or polychromatic masonry (e.g., split face Roman brick, Lannon stone, Bedford limestone). Consideration should be given to the retention and repair of existing masonry when possible. Long-term maintenance of existing masonry should focus on repainting, as needed, to match the existing in joint width, color, tooling, profile, and mortar composition. Repairs should also include cleaning masonry to remove retardant deterioration (soiling materials that are potentially harmful to the masonry), to provide a clean surface for repairs, for masonry inspection, or to improve appearance. Cleaning masonry should be done using the most gentle effective means by avoiding the use of harsh acids or high-pressure water washing.

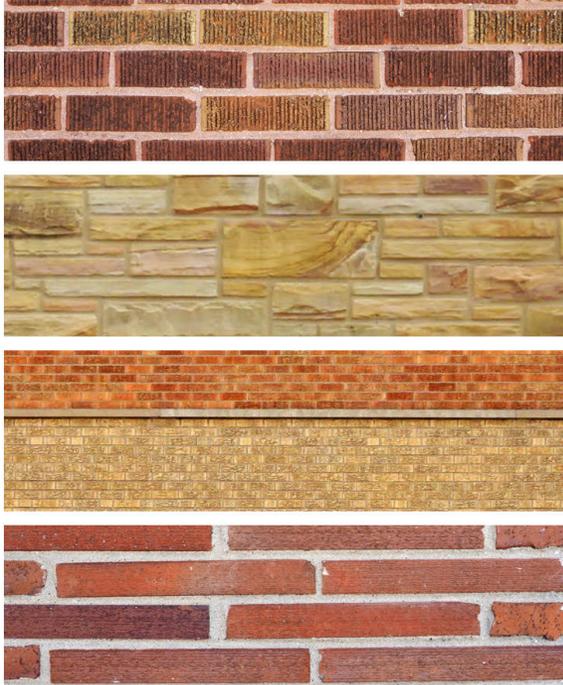


Figure 84. Examples of polychromatic and textured masonry along Harlem Avenue.

2 MAINTAIN THE EXISTING STOREFRONT CONFIGURATION AND OVERALL DESIGN

Many of the commercial buildings along Harlem Avenue retain their original mid-20th century metal storefronts. Key components of the storefronts include lower masonry knee walls and expansive, clear glass display windows which angle inward to meet a recessed storefront entrance. Consider rehabilitating existing storefronts by refinishing metal components and/or replacing/repairing glazing, as needed, or replace existing storefronts to match. It is recommended to retain the large display window configurations seen in the corridor to increase visibility and create a more welcoming environment for customers and visitors. Additionally, when rehabilitating or replacing an existing storefront consider retaining the existing configuration, specifically how many storefronts angle inward toward a recessed entrance. The setback created by the angled storefront can be used to provide outdoor dining or cafe seating or enhance the public realm through landscape planters.



Figure 85. Examples of rehabilitated mid-twentieth century commercial buildings. Each rehabilitation maintained the character-defining features while modernizing and enhancing the storefront. (Source: Triple Scoop'd (left), Google Streetview (right))

3 CONSIDER THE INSTALLATION OF BUILDING LIGHTING

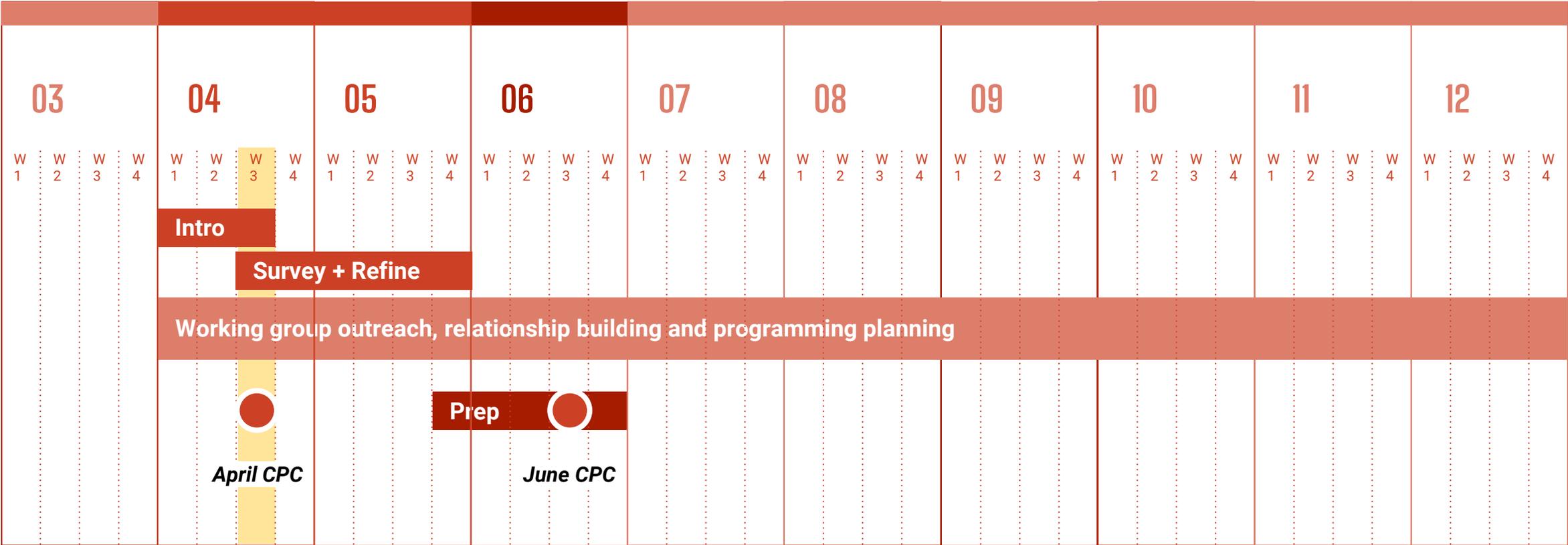
Building lighting is a contributing and essential component to the built environment and public realm of Harlem Avenue. It can also improve security, elevate visibility, and enhance the architectural features of a building. Specific recommendations for lighting at buildings includes:

- Consider lighting that maximizes energy efficiency in new and replacement installations.
- New lighting is encouraged to be aesthetically integrated into the architectural design of the building while avoiding exterior surface-mounted transformer boxes, raceways, and conduit.
- Ground-level and/or first-floor exterior lighting should enhance safety and security while adding a pedestrian-scale element to the public realm character.
- Consider concealed, minimal lighting targeted to illuminate architectural features, storefronts, and signs. Avoid lighting that will detract from the character of a building, such as industrial wall pack lights, unshielded lights, lamps, or floodlights that produce glare and light trespass, or animated/flashing lighting, except holiday lighting.



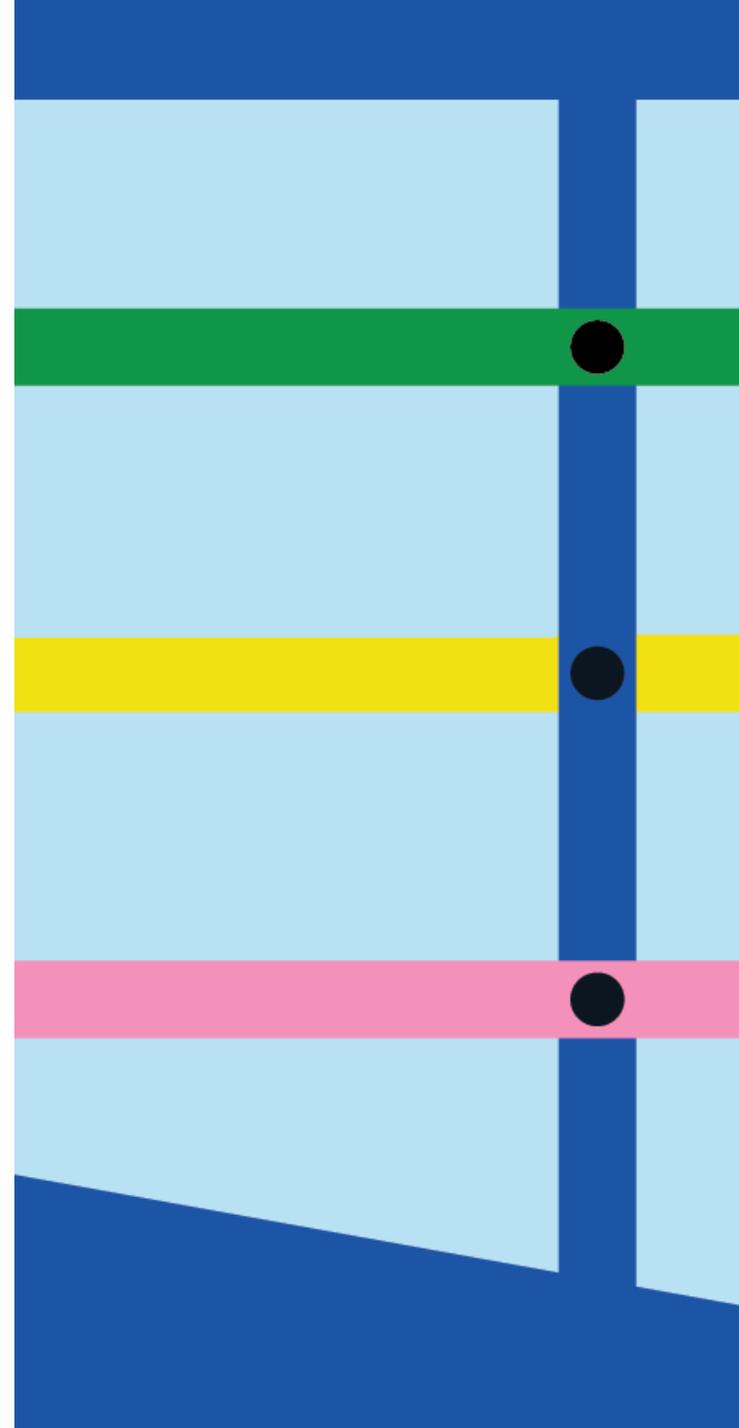
Figure 86. Building lighting example (Source: Capital Gazette)

Project Schedule – Next Steps



 We are here

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK



OVERALL CORRIDOR: SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Seasonal displays	Install seasonal displays at the Community Heart and Hubs. These displays could include temporary holiday installations, light displays, or art that reflect the changing seasons. [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]	
Light pole banners	[CDOT] [Alderson] [Business Service Organization]	[CDOT] [Alderson] [Business Service Organization]
Bus shelters	Coordinate the use of bus shelter wall panels for events, community announcements, and wayfinding. Community groups, business service organizations, and non-city entities can request to post signage on bus shelter wall panels as long as they make the request directly with CDOT at least three weeks before the desired posting date. For city messaging, requests go through the Finance Department. [CDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]	Install new bus shelter styles and coordinate corridor branding into the final design. [DPD] [CDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]

Overall corridor signage and wayfinding recommendations continue on next page...

OVERALL CORRIDOR: SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING (CONT.)		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Street wayfinding		Install street wayfinding signs on the streets perpendicular to the corridor to help individuals navigate to Harlem Avenue. These signs could provide clear directions and distance to Harlem Avenue from major streets. [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]
Gateway Identifier Structures		Install gateway identifier locations along Harlem Avenue. Refer to the Community Heart and Hub sections for locations. These identifiers would serve as visual landmarks, clearly signaling the entrance to the Heart and Hubs of the corridor. [DPD] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]
Finalize corridor branding		Further study and analysis will be required to create designs for corridor branded site furnishings and elements prior to purchase and placement. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]

SSA ESTABLISHMENT TIMELINE EXAMPLE

YEAR 1	
September 2025	Prepare SSA Feasibility Study
November 2025	Agency Interview with DPD and Determine Designation Management
December 2025	City notice regarding Support to Proceed Form an SSA Advisory Committee and Confirm SSA start-up funding
January - March 2026	SSA Funding, Visioning, and Boundaries
March - April 2026	SSA Outreach, Support, Two Community Meetings, Refinement and Submission
June 2026	SSA Application Package Due
June - July 2026	Make final corrections to SSA Package
YEAR 2	
August - December 2026	Legislative Steps
December 2026 - February 2027	Governance and Operations Set-up
August - October 2027	First SSA Tax Levy Distribution

OVERALL CORRIDOR: CIRCULATION AND SAFETY		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Light poles	New light poles will be implemented from Roscoe to Grace Street per a request from Aid Spozzo. Aid Spozzo has requested new light poles from Grace Street to Irving Park Road. Request new light poles that allow for outlets, attachments for metal and vinyl banners, and pedestrian lighting from Roscoe Street south to Grand Avenue. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Alderson]	Install new light poles on the west side of Harlem Avenue to create a consistently lit corridor that will increase safety and pedestrian experience. New light poles to allow for outlets, attachments for metal and vinyl banners, and pedestrian lighting. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Alderson]
ROW cross section	Refer to cross sections on pages 28-29 for typical future vision widths of travel and parking lanes, bumpouts, sidewalk, and planting areas. A traffic engineering study will be required for any future proposed bumpouts, medians, lane changes, and other updates that fall within the public ROW and affect vehicular traffic flow. [IDOT] [CDOT]	Where feasible (no existing driveway conflicts), relocate existing bus stops to the far side of intersections. Install bumpouts at the near side of intersections to allow for a safer and shorter crossing and a better pedestrian experience. Any planted bumpouts will require a maintenance partner. All proposed bumpout widths will need to be determined based on the autom analysis of a firetruck and a WB-05 design vehicle. [IDOT] [CDOT] [CTA]
Local intersection improvements	Where feasible (no existing driveway conflicts), relocate existing bus stops to the far side of intersections and add bus shelters if sidewalk widths permit. Install bumpouts at the near side of intersections to allow for a safer and shorter crossing and a better pedestrian experience. Any planted bumpouts will require a maintenance partner. All proposed bumpout widths will need to be determined based on the autom analysis of a firetruck and a WB-05 design vehicle. [IDOT] [CDOT] [CTA]	
Major intersection improvements		

Overall corridor circulation and safety recommendations continue on next page...

OVERALL CORRIDOR: CIRCULATION AND SAFETY (CONT.)		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Raised crosswalks		Install raised crosswalks parallel to Harlem Avenue at all cross streets except for major intersections. Raised crosswalks promote pedestrian safety and slow down vehicular traffic, increasing visibility. [IDOT] [CDOT]
Enhance crosswalk materiality		Implement high-visibility crosswalk materials to create strong visual cues at crossings. This will promote a safer experience for the pedestrian and cohesiveness throughout the entire corridor. All proposed materials will need to be reviewed and approved by IDOT and CDOT. [IDOT] [CDOT]
Street trees and planting	Encourage 311 requests for tree plantings where there is an empty tree grate or available parkway space. Refer to page 23 for more information on the Chicago Landscape Ordinance. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Citizens]	Refer to pages 28-33 for future visions of parkway planting along the Harlem Avenue corridor. All proposed street tree and parkway planting will need to comply with the requirements of the Chicago Landscape Ordinance. Apart from street trees, any planting will require a maintenance partner. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]
Freestanding planters	At narrow commercial parkways in the corridor, where decreasing sidewalk widths to install parkway planting areas is not feasible, freestanding planters can be placed directly in front of businesses or storefronts. This creates a better curb appeal and pedestrian experience. Freestanding planters require a maintenance partner, such as a business service organization, or can be provided and maintained by the business or storefront. Review and approval by CDOT is required to place any freestanding planters within the public ROW. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]	

***** = Recommended future partner organization
* = Pending approval of SSA or potential BID by Harlem Avenue community

60 HARLEM AVENUE VISIONING STUDY

COMMUNITY HEART		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Install a corridor gateway identifier		Install a gateway identifier between Cornelia Avenue and Roscoe Street that clearly signifies entry into the Harlem Avenue corridor from the north. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Alderson] [Business Service Organization]
Create a community plaza		Close Roscoe Street to vehicle traffic from Roscoe Avenue to the alley half a block east and create a permanent public plaza with shade trees. [CDOT] [Alderson] [Business Service Organization]
Study feasibility of midblock crossing		Study the feasibility and design of a midblock crossing between Cornelia Avenue and Roscoe Street. Add bumpouts on both sides to shorten the crossing distance while creating additional space for ROW furnishing and planting areas. Apart from street trees, any planting will require a maintenance partner. A traffic engineering study will be required for any proposed bumpouts and other updates that fall within the public ROW and affect vehicular traffic flow. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]
Convert vacant lot to public open space	Activate the vacant parcel near the northwest corner of Cornelia and Harlem avenues with seating areas and bocce ball courts. [DPD] [Private Land Owner]	
Enhance existing parking lots	(1) Enhance the parking lot at the northwest corner of Cornelia and Harlem avenues with permeable paving and landscaping to create a plaza. (2) Enhance existing parking lots at the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and Piazza Italia Shopping Center with improved landscaping and permeable paving. Any improvements within private property are to be maintained by private property owners or a business service organization. Any permeable pavers, infiltration planters, planted bumpouts, or parkway planting (besides street trees) in the ROW will require a maintenance partner. [DPD] [Private Land Owner] [Business Service Organization]	

62 HARLEM AVENUE VISIONING STUDY

Community Heart recommendations continue on next page...

COMMUNITY HEART (CONT.)		
	Near Term (0-3 Years)	Longer Term (3-10 Years)
Create and support temporary events	Transform various parking lots within the Community Heart into spaces for temporary events and seasonal markets. This can further activate the area and provide opportunities for local commerce. [Business Service Organization] [Private Land Owner]	Study the feasibility of temporarily closing Harlem Avenue between Cornelia Avenue and Roscoe Street one to two times a year for larger events and festivals. To relocate buses, trucks and vehicles, coordination with CDOT, IDOT, and CTA will be required. [IDOT] [CDOT] [CTA] [Business Service Organization]
Improve and propose additional parkway site furnishings and elements	Purchase and locate corridor branded benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and freestanding planters. Further study and analysis will be required to create designs for corridor branded site furnishings and elements prior to purchase and placement. [IDOT] [CDOT] [Business Service Organization]	Reduce the number of parking lot curb cuts along Harlem Avenue to provide more on-street parking spaces and create a more consistent and safe sidewalk zone for pedestrians. [CDOT] [Private Land Owner]
Reduce curb cuts		
Install murals	Hire local artists to paint murals on the blank sides of the buildings with approval from building owners. [Chicago Artists Coalition] [Chicago Public Art Group] [Business Service Organization] [Private Land Owner]	

***** = Recommended future partner organization
* = Pending approval of SSA or potential BID by Harlem Avenue community

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK 61

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK 63



Figure 89. SSA benefit example: special events (Source: DPD)



Figure 90. SSA benefit example: murals (Source: DPD)



Figure 91. SSA benefit example: sidewalk snow removal (Source: DPD)



Figure 92. SSA benefit example: freestanding planters (Source: DPD)

THANK YOU!

Project website: [Harlem Avenue Visioning Study](#)

