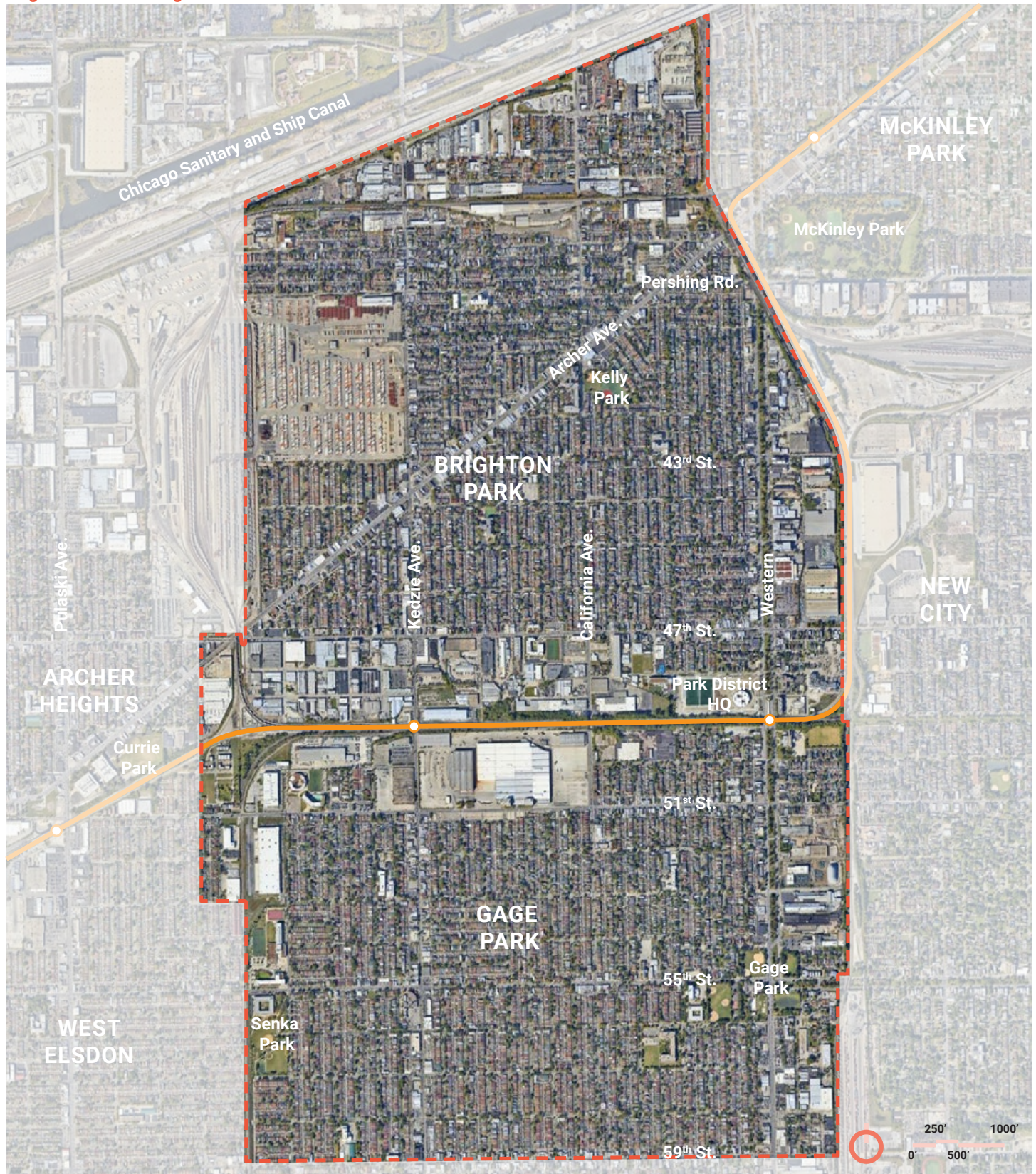


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Executive Summary

Brighton Park and Gage Park



Guiding Principles

The Role of this Plan

Stitching It Together is a community-led framework plan to strengthen connections between Brighton Park and Gage Park and improve access to community services and spaces.

The plan is intended to offer flexible approaches to common goals that enhance both communities. Its action items are collectively intended as a development framework to be referenced by City of Chicago departments, sister agencies, businesses and individuals as these communities continue to evolve.

Overview

The planning process was led by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to strengthen physical, social and economic connections between Brighton Park and Gage Park. The development of the new Chicago Park District Headquarters at 48th Street and Western Boulevard served as the initial catalyst for this plan.

Project Approach

The study area is bounded by Western Avenue, CSX rail, the Chicago Sanitary Canal and 59th Street, with a particular focus on areas around the Brighton Park Industrial Corridor.

Initial community listening sessions helped establish preliminary planning goals and principles. Through subsequent engagement with Brighton Park and Gage Park residents, businesses and institutions, the preliminary goals evolved into specific strategies that reflect the communities' key priorities.

Plan Goals

This framework plan articulated a set of preliminary goals that helped to inform the engagement process, identify potential topics, and create an inclusive process.

This plan seeks to:



Improve the Public Realm by enhancing transportation access, convenience, and safe spaces and connections within the study area.



Support Local Business by empowering entrepreneurs and local businesses to sustain and help create thriving business corridors.



Reduce Impacts of Industrial Operations by articulating ideas that help mitigate industrial issues.



Increase Public Health and Safety by implementing the communities' vision for the environment and urban form.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were established to help frame conversations and decisions on priorities and potential strategies:

1. Establish meaningful links between neighborhoods currently divided by physical barriers
2. Activate vacant and underutilized lots
3. Foster community culture and identity
4. Create a holistic approach to placemaking
5. Green the district and improve the public realm
6. Support and strengthen the local business community
7. Create well-scaled and pedestrian-focused relationships between residential and industrial uses
8. Position the entire corridor for climate resiliency

Community Engagement

Engagement Time frame

Pre-Engagement Pop-Up

Gage Park Trunk-or-Treat 2023



1-on-1 Interviews with Key Community Partners

January-February 2024



STITCHING

Community Open House

May 29th 2024
Saint Gall Church



Community Survey #1

Spring 2024



Community Advisory Group



Spring 2024 Pop-Ups



Community Survey #2

Spring-Summer 2024

Community Advisory Group



Summer 2024 Pop-Ups

SGA Kickbacks
SGA Sawyer Block Party
BPNC Community Fiestas
Southwest Senior Fest



IT

Business Survey

Summer 2024

TOGETHER



Fall 2024 Pop-Ups

Trick-or-Trunk - Brighton Park
Trick-or-Trunk - Gage Park
Fall Kermes - Gage Park

Student Workshop

Solorio High School

Community Advisory Group



Community Open House

March 5th 2024
Brighton Park Community Campus/
Park District HQ



Community Exhibition

October 2024
Brighton Park Library Branch

Engagement Time frame: Fall 2023-Fall 2024
People Engaged: 800+ people of all ages
Events Attended: 15 community events
Community Survey: 250 responses from individuals, families, groups

Business Survey: 77 responses
Student Work session: 30+ participants

Community Priorities

The community engagement process, surveys, group meetings, and planning activities helped to identify community members' key concerns and planning priorities:



INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING OPTIONS



EXPAND OPEN SPACE ACCESS AND NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS



PRIORITIZE SAFE STREETS AND THE PUBLIC REALM



FOSTER A CULTURE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



POSITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ENHANCE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING FOR ALL GENERATIONS



1. INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING OPTIONS

Supporting and expanding housing resources while maintaining affordability is essential, especially with rising housing costs. In Brighton Park and Gage Park multi-generational households are common, making multi-family units important for current residents.



1.1 Support pathways to affordable homeownership and increase community amenities

1.1.1

Expand programs that offer and support homeownership education.

1.1.2

Encourage new housing units that support existing and incentivize new community services such as cafes, places to eat and other entertainment to help activate corridors.

1.2 Build more units to sustain housing affordability

1.2.1

Support new housing development that expands housing offerings and options, including nontraditional housing units like accessory dwellings, ground floor residential, equitable transit-oriented development near multimodal transportation options, and new community assets and amenities.

1.2.2

Encourage dwelling unit configurations for multi-generational households.



2. EXPAND OPEN SPACE ACCESS AND NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS

Parks in this region are heavily used community destinations. Priority should be given to providing better access to parks and green spaces, proper maintenance, beautification, and the creation of new open spaces.



2.1 Continue to maintain and improve parks and open spaces

2.1.1

Continue to repair facilities and develop a maintenance program to promote community park stewardship.

2.2 Increase access to open space amenities

2.2.1

Improve and provide new connections between public spaces that increase overall safety, activate underutilized areas, and increase accessibility.

2.2.2

Increase the number of open space options and encourage the creation of different sized spaces that activate underutilized areas and are near areas with less access.

2.3 Support efforts and local participation in neighborhood beautification efforts

2.3.1

Find opportunities to expand neighborhood art initiatives that celebrate the community and invite local residents to participate.

2.3.2

Promote efforts to increase overall neighborhood greenery and landscaping that are multifunctional, offer access to fresh foods, produce, and gardening activities through community garden spaces and partnerships, and provide opportunities for community use.



3. PRIORITIZE SAFE STREETS AND THE PUBLIC REALM

Creating safer streets and providing community spaces can bring the community together, support programming and services, and promote more equitable access to community assets.



3.1 Prioritize pedestrian safety and multi-modal options for transportation

3.1.1

Integrate traffic calming measures at crosswalks to provide safer accessibility.

3.1.2

Improve streetscapes with features like street furniture, greenery, bike lanes, sidewalk connections and other inviting beautification elements.

3.1.3

Make infrastructure barriers, like viaducts and rail crossings more permeable and traversable to improve access to community amenities.

3.2 Target spaces that impact safety perceptions like underutilized lots and walkways

3.2.1

Target and activate vacant and underutilized lots through programming, development, and improved maintenance.

3.2.2

Maintain and improve essential city infrastructure through appropriate maintenance schedules, reporting and enforcement.

3.3 Provide well-distributed and inclusive community spaces

3.3.1

Consider social and physical barriers and develop strategies to make community assets accessible for everyone.

3.3.2

Promote the creation of inclusive spaces that can be inviting for recreation, learning and activities for everyone.



4. FOSTER A CULTURE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The impact from industrial land uses and their proximity to residential areas needs to be addressed. Incorporating multifunctional spaces can support healthy lifestyles, environmental quality, and buffer conflicting land uses.



4.1 Strengthen the health and wellbeing of the community

4.1.1

Encourage opportunities that support walking, biking and other physical activity by connecting community amenities and improving multimodal connections.

4.1.2

Promote access to healthcare services for all ages.

4.2 Incorporate green infrastructure that mitigates industrial and other intensive land uses

4.2.1

Develop policies that address issues with truck and freight traffic, pollution and other congestion.

4.2.2

Promote efforts to increase urban greenery and landscaping along intensive land uses to mitigate their impacts.



5. POSITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Skills training and workforce development programs are important to the community for economic prosperity. Incentives and outreach to small businesses will also be essential for economic success.



5.1 Support incentives and workforce development opportunities that meet the needs of the community

5.1.1

Continue to expand and create new workforce development opportunities that support the needs of local businesses and aspirations of the community.

5.1.2

Adapt existing incentive programs to meet the needs of local businesses and improve program outreach efforts by the City, its partners and community enterprises.

5.2 Activate vacant and underutilized sites

5.2.1

Target vacant and underutilized sites and provide support for future development of housing, community amenities, businesses, or other site improvements.

5.2.2

Promote uses that increase foot traffic, activate ground floors and empty storefronts, and provide amenities and services that foster lively corridors.



6. ENHANCE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Programming for a multi-generational community is essential for Brighton Park and Gage Park. This includes providing proper facilities, staffing, and programming open to everyone.



6.1 Provide multi-generational programming and spaces

6.1.1

Expand and provide services and year-round programming for youth and the elderly.

6.1.2

Provide more opportunities for education and community classes, new skills, hobbies, and wellness activities.

6.2 Create and support opportunities for the community to gather

6.2.1

Promote the creation of spaces that can serve multiple functions and host different kinds of community events.

6.3 Celebrate the local culture

6.3.1

Create and support events that celebrate the cultural richness of the community.

6.3.2

Support and expand beautification efforts and neighborhood cultural spaces by community members and local organizations.

Implementing a Vision

A Plan Informed by the Community

The year-long *Stitching It Together* community engagement process shaped the plan's priorities and action items as well as their strategies for implementation. *Stitching It Together* creates a foundation for planning collaboration with multiple community partners and individuals representing a diversity in ages, knowledge, culture and social backgrounds.

The plan's recommendations are intended to foster improvements to the area's built environment, especially local housing, public facilities and relevant infrastructure. The action items also identify other improvements that expand public programming and policies that accommodate people of all ages and interests, especially their safety and well-being.

The implementation of these recommendations will require the collaboration of multiple City departments, sister agencies, and community partners to realize the communities' vision for the future.

Implementation Strategies

The methods and techniques for implementation include:

- 1 Plan recommendations can guide resources, decisions, and initiatives.
 - The Plan can be used to inform City departments, sister agencies, and community partners for programming, incentives, and investments.
 - Recommendations can serve as a guide to potential implementation tasks and actions.
- 2 City departments, sister agencies, and community partners can collaborate to provide a greater and more effective impact.
 - Coordination can include funding, resource alignment and related financial efforts.
 - Inclusive partnerships with residents are encouraged, where possible.
- 3 Continually update community members and partners on the implementation progress.
 - Update opportunities could include progress reports from City departments, sister agencies, and community partners.
 - Community group meetings like the Brighton Park Neighborhood Network (BPNN) provide ongoing opportunities to share implementation updates.