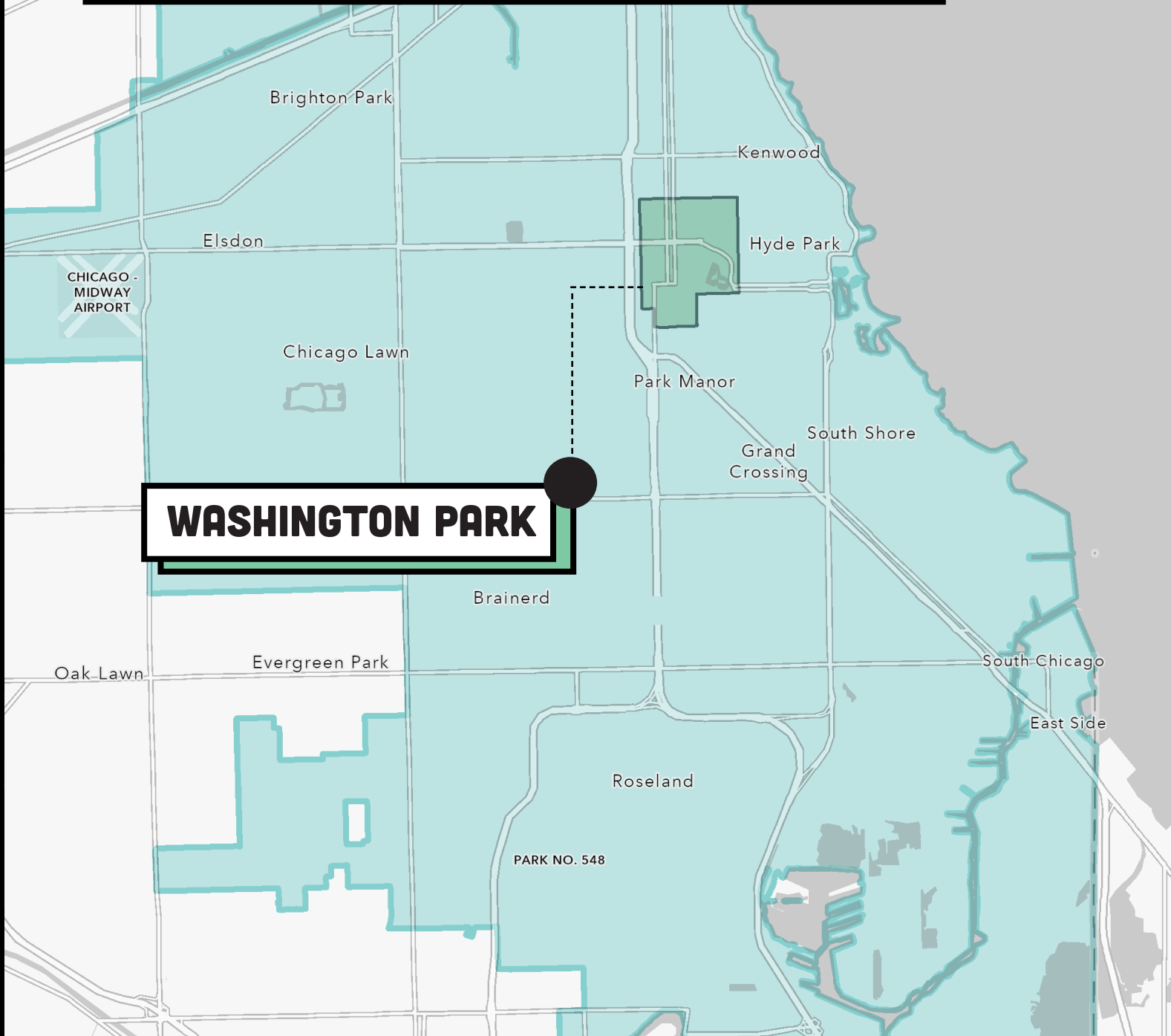


WASHINGTON PARK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION GUIDE



OVERVIEW

Washington Park is a majority Black Chicago neighborhood and a social hot spot and gathering place for the South Side. The neighborhood is known across the city for its vast namesake park, and its special events and sports and recreation amenities draw visitors from across the city and region.

Washington Park's entrepreneurial spirit, transportation access, strong partner and community relationships, available residential and commercial land, and new and established businesses have led to developments in recent years driven by Black-owned and arts-forward businesses. And the neighborhood is ready to continue welcoming vibrant, community-inspired, and resident-led development and growth.

This action guide focuses on aspects of economic growth and ways that residents can participate in driving the neighborhood's development and recognition. It offers steps that may lead to development and increase awareness of the neighborhood and its assets, and ways to hold leaders and others accountable. Throughout this guide readers can hover over headlines and organization names to discover additional resources. This action guide also presents different ideas for how residents themselves can play a role in achieving those things, especially in the face of new developments in Washington Park's surrounding neighborhoods.

The City of Chicago and many Chicagoans have long overlooked Washington Park, but residents know it's the place to be and are ready to welcome others to see it through their eyes.

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ABOUT WASHINGTON PARK

WHY IT'S THE PLACE TO BE

Countless events draw people in to the beautiful Washington Park community and can be opportunities to invite them to explore the neighborhood. A family barbecue, a basketball game or afternoon at the pool, a civil action or protest, a performance or party at the DuSable Museum or in the park, public sculptures and art, birdwatching, one of many festivals, the Bud Billiken parade and picnic, the circus—the possibilities are endless!



WASHINGTON PARK STATS

WHO: 12,707 residents, friends, and families

WHAT: Neighbors, community groups, schools, faith institutions, and small businesses living together in 1.5 square miles on the South Side, in a neighborhood famous for its history, landmark park, and legacy events

WHEN: Washington Park in History
 1900s-1930s: Black Metropolis
 1960s: Chicago Freedom Movement
 1980s to today: A South Side social hub

WHERE: Between 51st and 63rd Streets. The iconic Garfield Boulevard runs right through the neighborhood and park. The Green Line has three stops in the neighborhood.

MAJOR MILESTONES

1880

Washington Park named

1910s-1930s

Part of Bronzeville's Black Metropolis, stretching from 12th to 79th Street

1929

First Bud Billiken Parade held

1960s

Chicago Freedom Movement with MLK and local leaders

1973

DuSable Museum established in the park

1997

First UniverSoul Circus in the park

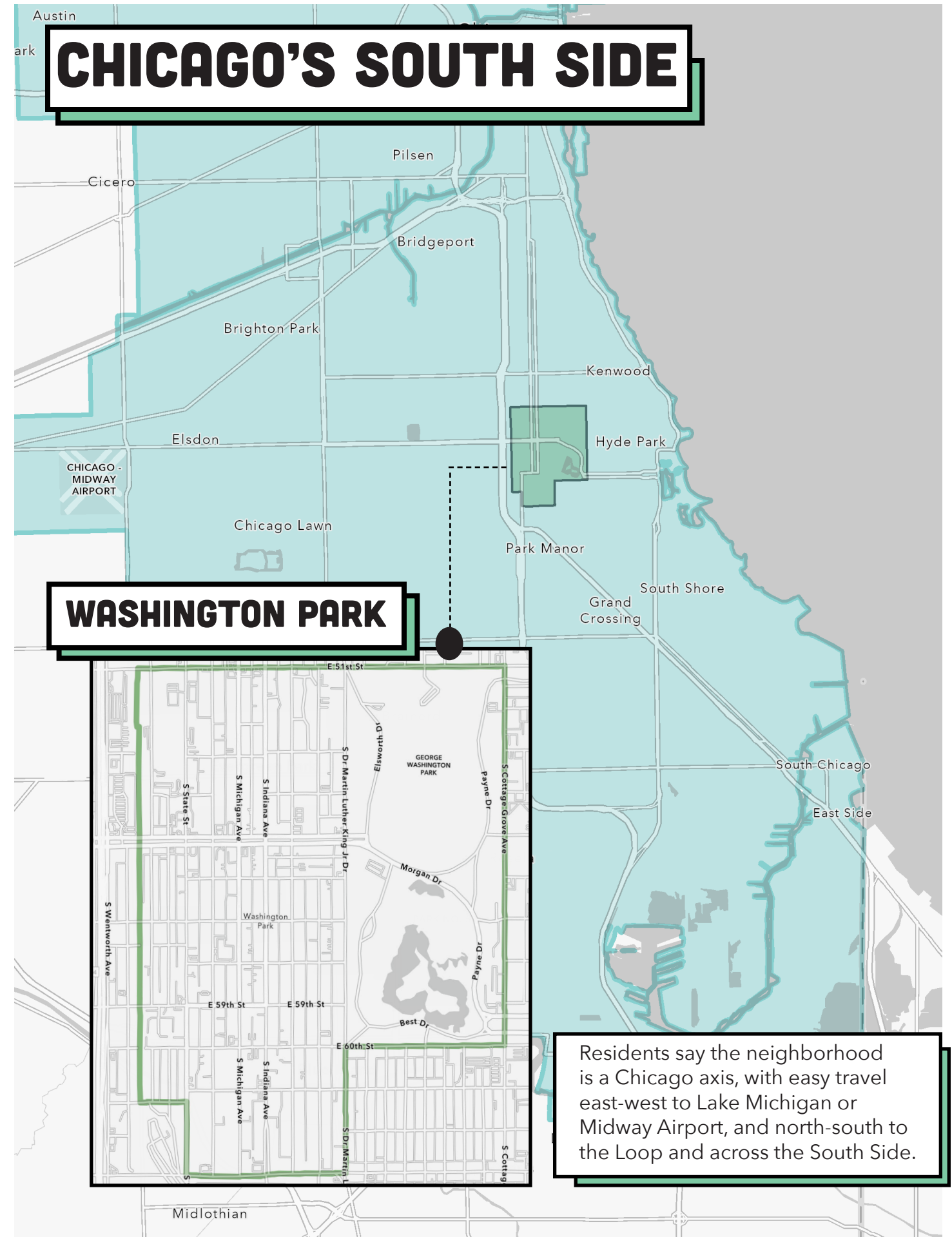
2004

Washington Park added to National Register of Historic Places

2021

Venus Williams plays at XS Tennis

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE



WASHINGTON PARK

Residents say the neighborhood is a Chicago axis, with easy travel east-west to Lake Michigan or Midway Airport, and north-south to the Loop and across the South Side.

AN INSIDER'S VIEW

What are the places that make Washington Park special? We asked a Washington Park insider and photographer to capture some neighborhood gems and tell us about them. Here are just a few.

What other places would you share?



The Garfield Green Line—every community is known for its “L” stop, and Washington Park is no different.



The Fountain of Time, by Lorado Taft, is one of Chicago’s most significant artworks. It is at the eastern edge of the park.



The DuSable Museum of African American History (recently renamed) is dedicated to conserving Black history, art, and culture.



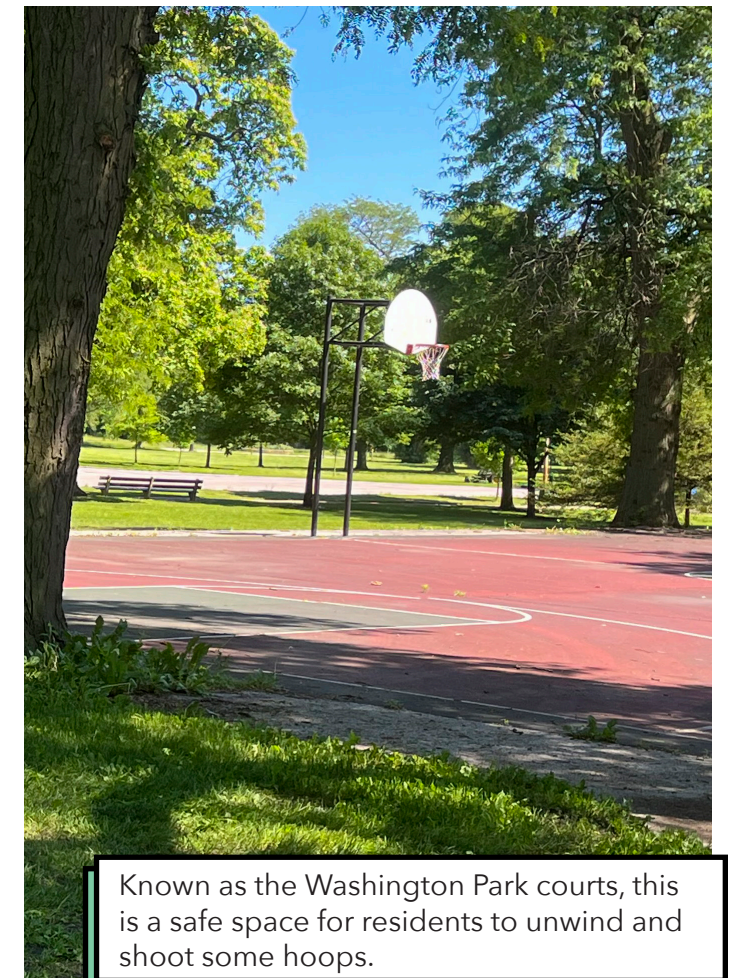
The Retreat at Currency Exchange Café is a neighborhood go-to. The café is a comforting space for music, food, and art.



Harold's Chicken is a South Side staple. The Washington Park location on Garfield and Indiana is a popular eatery.



The Boxville shipping container market on 51st Street hosts many local businesses and provides year-round opportunities.



Known as the Washington Park courts, this is a safe space for residents to unwind and shoot some hoops.

NEIGHBORHOOD DETAILS

To support and grow healthy economic activity in Washington Park, it's important to consider lots of data, especially about the people who live there. Where do they work? How do they get around? The answers can inform economic decisions for the neighborhood.



12,707 RESIDENTS

30.5

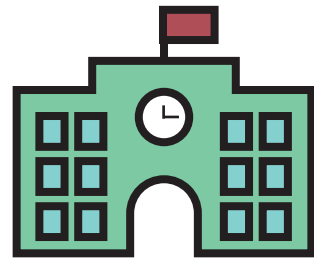
RESIDENTS' MEDIAN AGE



50%+ OF RESIDENTS ARE WORKING AGE



46% HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HAVE COMPLETED SOME COLLEGE COURSES



4 K-8 PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE IS 2.65 PEOPLE



45% OF RESIDENTS DRIVE ALONE TO WORK



38% TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO WORK



7% WORK AT HOME

POPULAR JOBS

- Office and administrative support
- Sales
- Transportation and logistics

BIGGEST EMPLOYERS NEARBY

1. Provident Hospital
2. University of Chicago

It's also important to consider data about the neighborhood's assets: businesses, community groups, gardens, schools, hospitals, train stations and bus stops, and churches and social support providers. How many people ride the train or bus to Washington Park? How much land is available for development? These details inform big decisions, too.

239

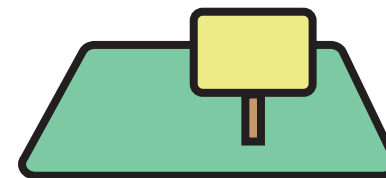
BUSINESSES FOUND IN A 15-MINUTE WALK FROM GARFIELD GREEN LINE

29

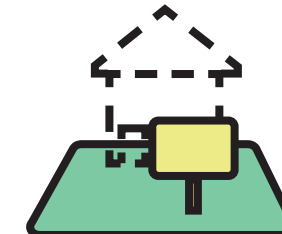
RETAIL FOOD BUSINESSES IN NEIGHBORHOOD

5

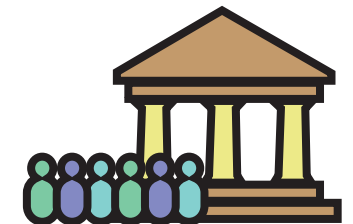
DAYCARE BUSINESSES IN NEIGHBORHOOD



170+ ACRES OF VACANT LAND TO BE DEVELOPED



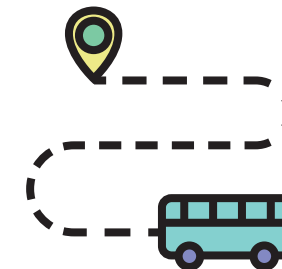
400+ VACANT LOTS WAITING FOR HOUSES



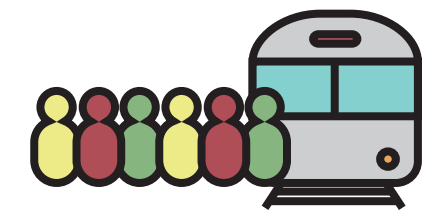
100,000+ VISITORS EACH YEAR TO DUSABLE MUSEUM



3 CTA GREEN LINE STATIONS 51ST, GARFIELD, 63RD



8 CTA BUS ROUTES #2, #3, #4, #15, #24, #29, #55, #59, #63



1,090 PEOPLE GOT ON/OFF GARFIELD GREEN LINE DAILY IN 2021

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE WASHINGTON PARK'S GREATEST ASSETS?

It's best when people who know a neighborhood best identify what's great about it. If you live in and love Washington Park, visit **this map** to see the assets identified and contribute your own ideas to the map. The map will change as more people participate and as Washington Park gains new assets, experiences, and perspectives.

NEW INVESTMENTS

Several new, ongoing, and planned investments in Washington Park are likely to have direct impacts on the neighborhood's visibility and economy—whether that be creating jobs, bringing more people into the neighborhood, supporting residents, encouraging development, or providing neighborhood gathering spaces.

DATA CENTER AT OLD SCHULZE BAKING SITE

The Schulze Baking Company building on Garfield Boulevard, where Hostess baked bread for nearly 80 years, was sold in 2018 to a large national developer. Plans have been in the works for several years to renovate the site to house a data center.

XS TENNIS

XS Tennis introduces local youth to tennis in order to lead them toward college scholarships and excellence in everything they do and want to pursue. It is home to the longest stretch of tennis courts in the world and a 10,000-square-foot fitness center.

CHICAGO ECO HOUSE

The Chicago Eco House, an urban farm project that focuses on employment through its flower farms, received \$25,000 in federal funds to expand programming at its Washington Park farm, located at 5211 S. Prairie.

SOUL KITCHENS

A former Streets and Sanitation building has been reimagined as a commercial kitchen. Urban Equities will purchase the building for \$1. In reporting on the initiative, the *Sun-Times* referred to an "emerging food corridor" along 51st Street.

SOUTH SIDE CONNECTIVITY

The South Side Connectivity Collaborative partnered with Comcast to create "Lift Zones" across the South Side, including in Washington Park at the KLEO Community Family Life Center and Equality Should Be Normal. The zones offer high-capacity internet to students and adults.

SUNFLOWER CITY

At 5345 S. Prairie, Sunflower City works to "infuse natural beauty into the urban landscape." On about an acre of land, Rob McHugh plants sunflowers for the community to enjoy and appreciate.

GARFIELD GREEN LINE SOUTH ACTION PLAN

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is encouraging equitable, community-supported development around the Garfield CTA Station. The project is working with the community to continue converting the station into a community asset.

RESIDENTS' VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We asked residents to share their great ideas for ways to benefit the community and to bring hustle and bustle to Washington Park. These pages show just some of what we heard. The map on the facing page shows other highlights from residents for ways to raise the neighborhood's profile and support the local economy.

A good mix of businesses that serves many local needs

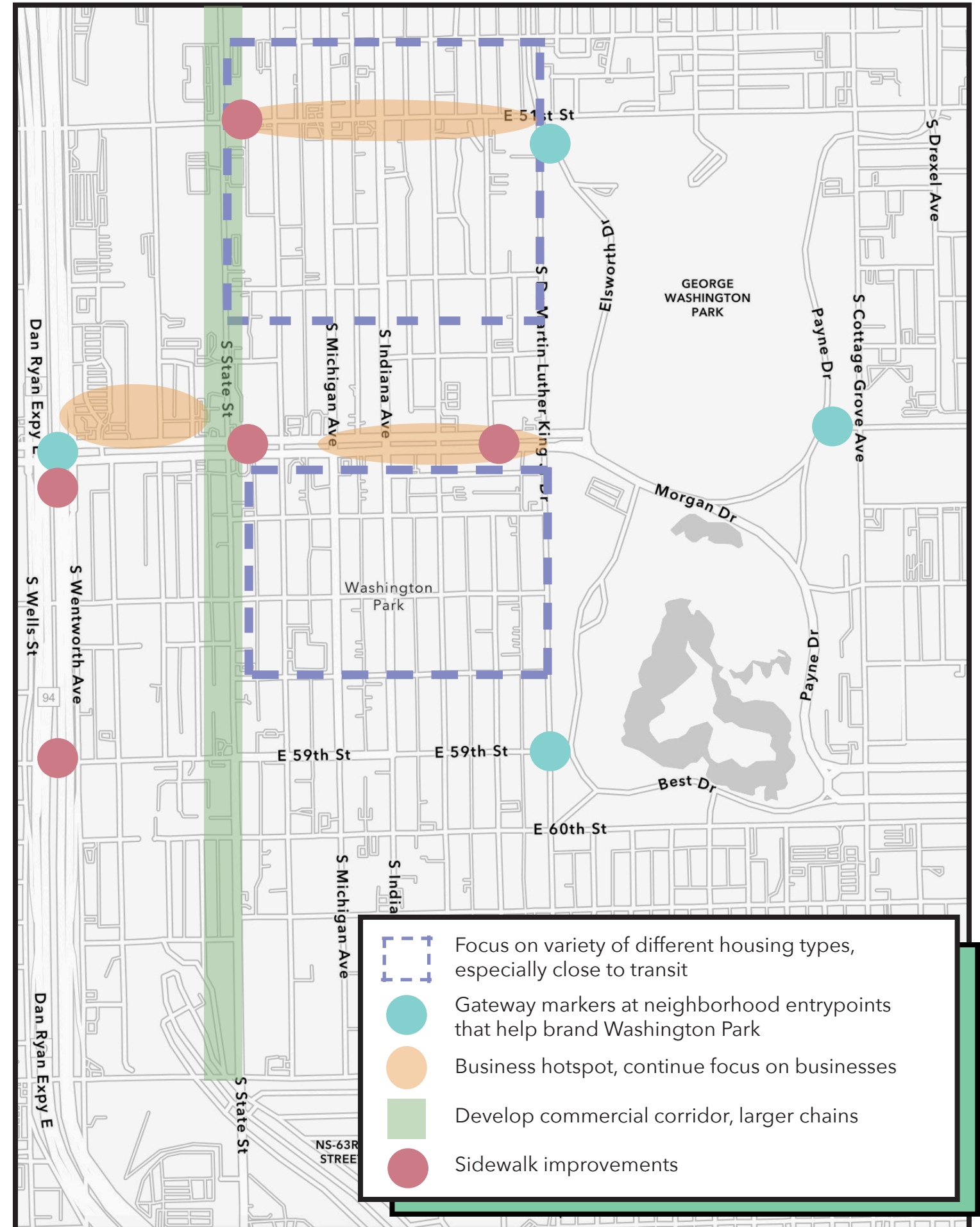
Incentives and support for entrepreneurs and people who dream of being entrepreneurs

A technology hub to provide skills training and job support to people of all ages

A year-round market to sell the produce grown here and to support local makers and small businesses

Making home-based business—places for hair, tattoos, and photography—more visible

A directory of all the businesses and available spaces for rent and for pop-ups and other events



TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT WASHINGTON PARK

Washington Park has many assets to help residents, advocates, and developers continue to build the community. (View these community-mapped assets at the map at this link.) And with so much land available for development, it has plenty of room to grow.

The following sections present community-inspired ideas and actions in the areas of business, housing, employment, infrastructure, and community support networks. The actions focus on supporting residents and their households, and also strengthening the economy in Washington Park.

Residents can't do this work alone. Each section also provides resources and tools for residents to add to their toolbox for inspiration, community growth, and accountability.

The end goal is a thriving Washington Park neighborhood and local economy now and into the future.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR FUTURE GROWTH

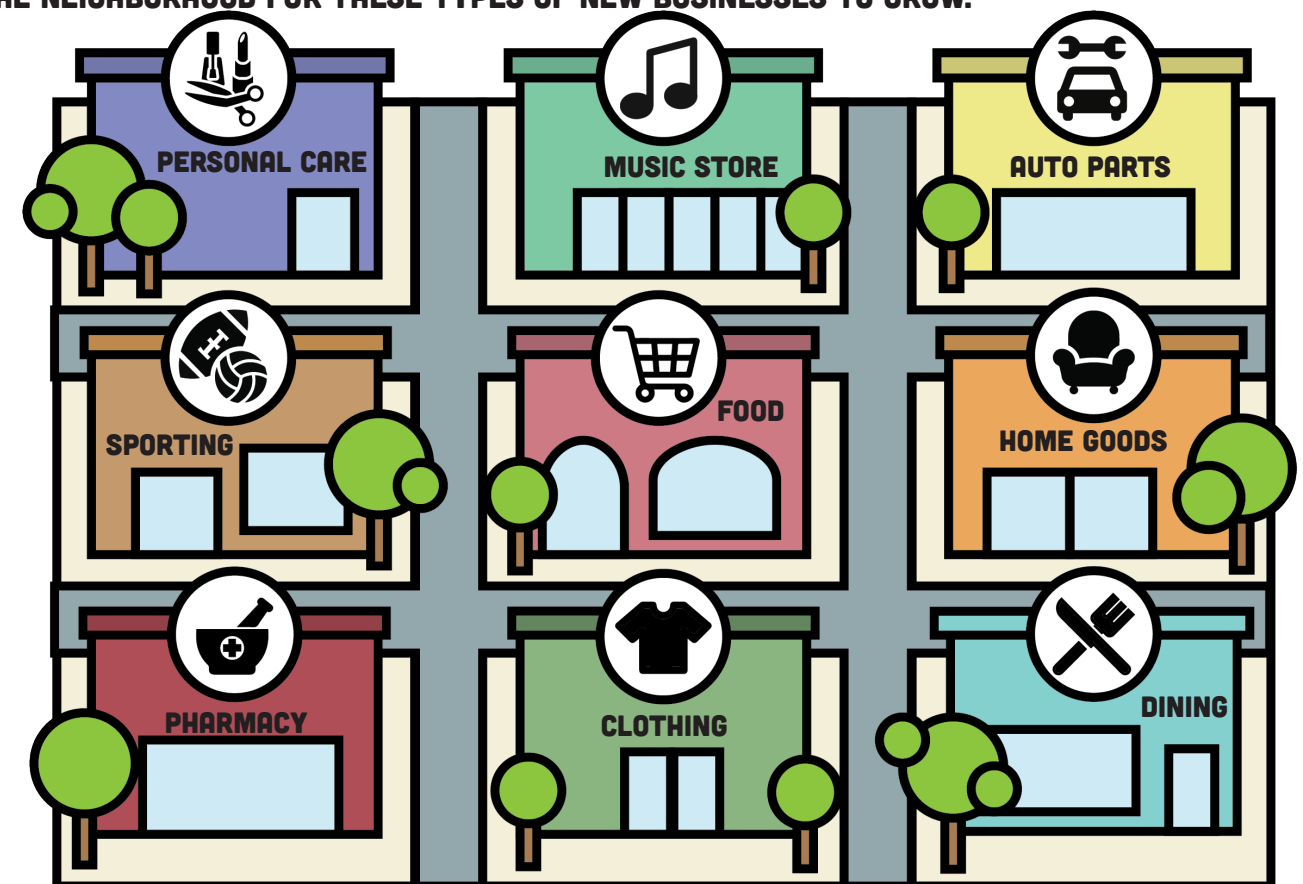
Many Washington Park residents want to see new businesses and more economic activity all across the neighborhood. They know change won't come overnight. So in setting expectations about new investments, it's helpful to think about how businesses and entrepreneurs decide to establish themselves in a neighborhood.

Businesses usually consider neighborhood details and data. For example, how many people live there, how much money a household has to spend on goods and services, and which properties are available to develop. They look at the businesses already in the neighborhood, especially if they want to fill a gap and provide products and services that complement existing ones or aren't available already.

As housing options grow in Washington Park, and as new developments of all kinds continue to arrive, it is more likely that residents and advocates will find it a little easier to get positive attention and to get things done for their neighborhood. At the end of this plan are ways to measure that success. Things are likely to get easier for businesses, too. More housing means more people and more money to spend. It may become more feasible for certain types of larger or specialty retail stores to open. For example, research shows that the types of businesses shown below, of any size, could open up shop in Washington Park.

In any event, Washington Park is a great place to open a new business that will grow with the neighborhood. And all the actions and resources in this plan can contribute to everyone starting to see it that way.

WASHINGTON PARK RESIDENTS HAVE TO TRAVEL TO VISIT CERTAIN TYPES OF BUSINESSES. THERE IS ROOM IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOR THESE TYPES OF NEW BUSINESSES TO GROW.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS: ACTIONS

Washington Park residents want to attract and support businesses to the neighborhood. Promoting Washington Park as a place that's open for business can look many different ways. From the alderperson to large employers in the neighborhood and local groups working to boost economic activity and supports, residents can try to get attention at a variety of scales.

Growing and supporting local business and economic activity in the neighborhood will help Washington Park thrive. More activity, more residents, more hustle and bustle can all draw attention to the neighborhood as a place to be. And there are benefits to residents, too, who will find the goods and services they need, or jobs, or entertainment, much closer to home.

ENGAGE LOCAL OFFICIALS.

Aldermanic offices, state representative offices, and other local officials—even media outlets—are great resources for letting people know that Washington Park is open for business and to request services and amenities for the neighborhood. Let them know that residents are eager to see new businesses and developments, and attention from officials. Ask them:

- To come to the neighborhood quarterly to present to residents about the kinds of development projects they know about in the neighborhood and nearby, and what types of other projects and resources are available
- To share how what they learn across Chicago or in City Council and the Illinois General Assembly affects Washington Park directly.
- To share how Washington Park might be affected by other big developments in the area, and how they imagine Washington Park can also benefit.

CONNECT WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITYWIDE ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECEIVE MONEY FROM THE CITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES.

Many different types of organizations receive funding to support small business and neighborhood economies, including in and around Washington Park. These organizations are important players who can involve residents and share information with them. Examples are the local chamber of commerce or nonprofit social services providers. Many such organizations offer business and neighborhood support and services that are not limited to the neighborhood where they are located (see resources panel at right). They can help people interested in starting a business, and help local businesses with information, networking, hiring, marketing, and more. Residents can connect with them to learn about what they offer and invite them to community events, too.

START A BUSINESS, OR COOPERATE WITH NEIGHBORS TO START ONE.

Starting a new business in Washington Park contributes to the neighborhood because it boosts household resources and can offer products and services to the neighborhood. The panel at right provides several resources for support to entrepreneurs at all stages of developing a business.

If a solo business isn't quite right, another option is to organize neighbors and friends to establish a co-op. Co-ops are stores owned by their members, who buy a share of the business. Members get a share in profits and can often access discounts on products and services. Co-ops are often grocery stores, but they can be any kind of business. Co-ops are helpful for creating neighborhood jobs and building wealth, because residents own a piece of a business.

WASHINGTON PARK PUBLIC OFFICIALS <<

Washington Park has several representatives. Because the neighborhood falls in multiple districts, it's important to have contact information for everyone to encourage working together. While the people in office may change in the near future, the numbered districts are more likely to stay the same. Be sure to call representatives, and visit their websites and social media accounts, too.

1 & 7

**US HOUSE DISTRICT
(WASHINGTON, DC)**

3

**IL STATE SENATE
DISTRICT
(SPRINGFIELD)**

5

**IL STATE HOUSE
DISTRICT
(SPRINGFIELD)**

3 & 20

CHICAGO WARDS

CITY BUREAU OF AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (BACP)

Provides a wealth of resources on how to start a small business.

SUNSHINE ENTERPRISES

Offers an entrepreneurship academy and other resources to start a business and build community.

YWCA LAURA PARKS AND MILDRED FRANCIS CENTER (WOODLAWN)

Offers "Side Hustle Saturdays" to develop businesses, including childcare businesses, and provides resources for starting a business.

CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE

Helps Black entrepreneurs launch businesses through a class series and resources.

IJ CLINIC FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP (HYDE PARK)

Provides seminars and free legal assistance to entrepreneurs.

BUILD BRONZEVILLE

A federal- and state-funded center that offers resources and assistance to business owners and entrepreneurs.

51ST STREET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Supports local and aspiring businesses with pilot projects and resources.

WASHINGTON PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Promotes Washington Park regionally as a place for business.

NEIGHBORING FOOD CO-OP ASSOCIATION

Provides many resources and videos on how to start co-ops of all types, with a grocery focus.



EVELYN'S FOOD LOVE

**"WASHINGTON PARK CAN BE ONE OF CHICAGO'S POPULAR NEIGHBORHOODS TO SHOP AND DINE. IT ALREADY HAS A GREAT FOUNDATION."
—EVELYN SHELTON**

WASHINGTON PARK: IN BUSINESS OWNERS' WORDS

After 20 years in the corporate world, Evelyn Shelton embarked on a lifelong dream: becoming a chef and restaurant owner. It was essential to her that she operate her business in an underserved community. "You can throw a brick and not miss a fast food joint or a liquor store, but very few places where somebody has the choice or option to say, 'No, I don't want fast food today. I want a good meal cooked from scratch from my neighborhood,'" she says.

She found that there weren't many options for fresh, home-cooked meals in Washington Park and sought to change that narrative. Shelton opened Evelyn's Food Love in 2017.

At Evelyn's Food Love, American comfort food, Black American Southern classics, and international flavors come together. All the dishes are made from scratch. The restaurant is especially known for its crawfish shrimp and grits, fried lobster tails, and catfish po'boys.

In 2015, Washington Park resident and longtime health-care professional Jacqueline Boyd was seeing the obstacles marginalized communities faced in accessing health care while aging and experiencing health challenges.

She stepped out on faith, launching the Care Plan in her home to help individuals and families navigate planning around health or aging, with an emphasis on the LGBTQ+ community.

Thanks to the Care Plan, seniors and their families are armed with the tools to advocate for themselves, hire caregivers, and navigate hospitalizations and housing.

In addition to providing patient advocacy and health-care services, the company works alongside others to offer training, facilitation, and consulting to enhance organizations' culture of wellness.

The 14-member team relocated to the South Loop a few years ago. But for Washington Park, Boyd says she sees the potential for more growth with grant funding geared explicitly toward emerging Washington Park businesses: "Grants would be beneficial for small businesses starting in Washington Park, and those are the folks that need it."

THE CARE PLAN

**"SO MANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN HERE THEIR WHOLE LIVES AND JUST NEED THE ABILITY TO START A BUSINESS AND ALL THE CAPITAL THAT IT TAKES TO DO THAT."
—JACQUELINE BOYD**



FEATHERFIST

**"I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN WASHINGTON PARK, SO I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT IT. IT HAS CHANGED IN SOME WAYS NATURALLY, BUT MY MEMORY OF GOOD TIMES AT THE POOL AND THE PARADE, AND THE 63RD STREET BEACH, ALL OF IT, MAKES ME FEEL AT HOME WHEN I AM THERE."
—MELANIE ANEWISHKI**

Melanie Anewishki founded Featherfist in 1984. For over three decades, the social service agency has worked to eliminate homelessness in Chicago. The organization works with people at risk of homelessness and connects them to education, stable housing, and employment. The Washington Park location opened in 2000.

The neighborhood holds a special place in Anewishki's heart. She was born and raised in Washington Park. "[Some] residents and children have no idea what it was like back in the day. You could sleep in the park and BBQ on

Garfield mid-street greenery. There were lovers on park benches, old folks sleeping under a tree or eating PB&J sandwiches."

Since the 2000 opening, Anewishki has seen small businesses emerge. Still, she added that more significant development projects owned and operated by minority business owners aren't possible without major funding. In terms of support for small businesses and community residents, Anewishki suggests access to affordable housing and quality daycare and facilities for senior citizens.

A GOOD BUSINESS MIX: ACTIONS

Washington Park residents would like to see a better variety or mix of businesses across the neighborhood. They especially identified focusing development on Garfield Boulevard, and then 51st Street, to stimulate existing businesses and fill in commercial gaps. Residents can leverage existing investments and help plan for future ones in many ways. These actions all help communicate that Washington Park will welcome new business. They may also pay off in coming years as neighborhood traffic—people and cars—increases, as Washington Park is likely to see more activity as the Obama Presidential Center opens and if the Bronzeville Historic Area receives a national historic designation.

CONNECT EXISTING BUSINESSES TO ONE ANOTHER, AND HELP PROMOTE THEM.

Ask existing business owners about the types of support they need and connect them to specific resources, or connect young people or job seekers to these businesses. Here are some other ways to promote local business:

- Make a directory of all businesses, including home-based ones, to help make visible all neighborhood businesses and to let residents and outsiders know where to shop. The community-mapped assets found at this link can be a good starting point.
- Connect local organizations that grow food, make products, or provide services to establish a monthly market in Washington Park. A community market can go far beyond food to offer health services, clothing or appliance repairs, and family entertainment.
- Advertise and promote vacant storefronts as places for hosting temporary pop-ups.
- Coordinate local pop-ups on streets and in the park in conjunction with the park's special events to attract people from the park into the neighborhood. This could be a retail block party or an event in the park featuring local food makers selling their goods.
- Organize walks through the neighborhood and invite businesses, alderpersons and other officials, and local media to tour the neighborhood. Invite the community out as well to celebrate the neighborhood and share its wealth.

RESOURCES

EQUITICITY

Offers tours of communities of color with a focus on social transformation and economic viability to achieve racial justice and mobility.

SOUTH EAST CHICAGO COMMISSION

Runs "shop local" events and gives neighborhood enhancement grants for small businesses.

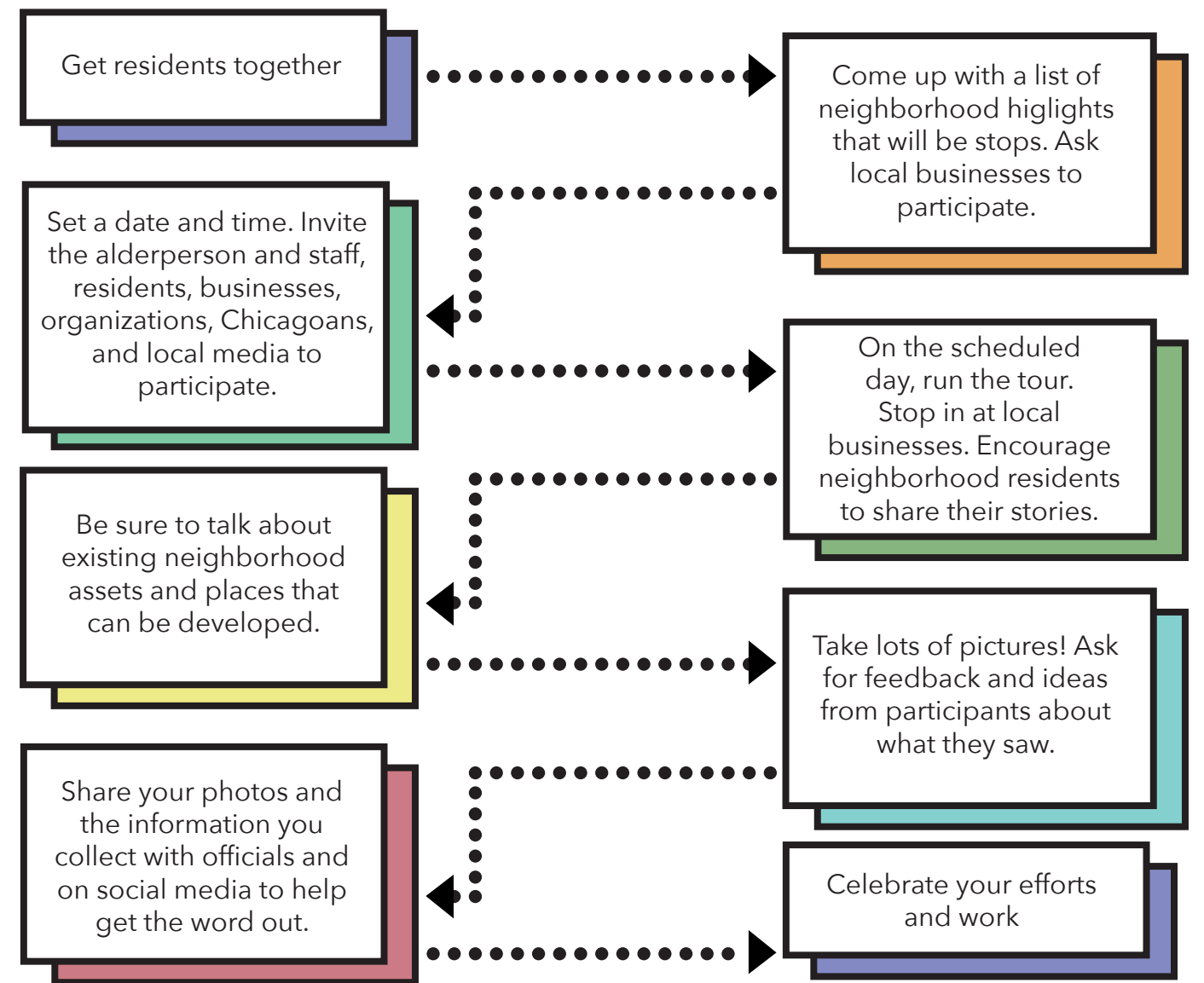
ARTS + PUBLIC LIFE

This University of Chicago initiative offers free public events and small business promotions and acceleration, with a focus on attracting people to Garfield Boulevard.

Getting residents together—longtime residents, new arrivals, young and old—to show off Washington Park to each other and the people who don't know it as well as they do is a great way to get people thinking about the neighborhood. Spending time together builds trust, and that can lead to more people outside on the street. Vibrant streets means more people, more retail, more places to go, more jobs. And that leads to not just a good business mix but a thriving Washington Park.

HOW TO SHOW OFF WASHINGTON PARK

Follow these steps to organize a tour highlighting the best of Washington Park, to raise interest, build trust, and get the word out.



THE HYPERLOCAL ECONOMY: ACTIONS

Washington Parkers have heard that the neighborhood is too small and doesn't have enough buying power to support new business. But many times, the information businesses and local officials use to decide where to open or focus resources doesn't accurately measure the businesses in a community or residents' real purchasing power. This is where the hyperlocal economy (sometimes called the informal economy) comes in.

The hyperlocal economy includes street vendors and people who run home-based businesses like doing hair, offering tattoo art, baking cakes for parties, or selling crafts online. It also includes people who drive for ride-share services and shop for groceries, rent out a room in their home, or sell T-shirts on the weekends. There are so many ways that people participate in the hyperlocal economy.

Knowing about the hyperlocal economy might help residents convince others that Washington Park is a great place to do business. It can also show businesses that they might be missing opportunities to open up in the neighborhood. Another benefit? Many people dream of starting a full-on business or a side hustle. When residents, local officials, and supporters know about the types of businesses Washington Park residents dream of starting, they can help connect entrepreneurs to the resources they need to fuel their ideas.

HYPERLOCAL ECONOMY EXAMPLE

Washington Park's famous Hustleman is a great example of entrepreneurship and the hyperlocal economy.



RESOURCES

EQUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

An organization that supports Black Chicagoans who work in and interact with the informal economy, and jobs that aren't protected by the state, to have resources they need to change their economic situation.

"SURVIVAL ECONOMIES: BLACK INFORMALITY IN CHICAGO"

A joint research report by a UIC professor and Equity and Transformation's founder that explores the situation of Black Chicagoans in the informal economy and the challenges they face.

MEASURING THE *REALLY* LOCAL ECONOMY

The easiest way to measure the hyperlocal economy is to get together a group of people to organize a survey of friends and neighbors in Washington Park. You can survey people who have businesses, and people who spend money at informal businesses. Spreading the word can help disprove misconceptions about the Washington Park economy and help everyone see the true business potential there.

READY...

- Get your friends and neighbors together.
- Brainstorm questions that will help you show the kinds of businesses and sales in the neighborhood that might not be usually documented and formally recognized, and also the types of businesses that Washington Parkers support.
- Decide how you'll run the survey. Door to door? On-the-street interviews? Meetings in a community space? Leaving surveys in common areas? Or something else entirely.

SET...

- Share that the survey is to show Washington Park has more business activity than people think. Talk about the questions about home-based business or side work, and share lots of examples—baking cakes, being an online shopper, making and selling jewelry at fairs, renting out a room on Airbnb.
- Tell people you won't collect any personal information, and when you share your results, you will never connect their name to the activity they do (unless they want). Tell them you'll provide only general information to organizations and local officials so they can see the real economic activity in Washington Park.
- Let your potential survey takers decide whether they still want to participate. You can also tell them that if they do want to provide their information to get more recognition, you're happy to collect it and share it.

GO!!!

- Start surveying your neighborhood! You can do this in one big push, or over time, such as a few weeks or months.
- Once you've received all the surveys, appoint someone to summarize the information you've gathered. For example, create categories of the types of business people report and count up how many businesses fall into each one. Or add up how much people told you they spend at informal businesses into one total number.
- Share your results widely: with local officials, with friends and neighbors, with organizations and local businesses, with local media.

CAREER PATHWAYS: ACTIONS

Washington Park residents, like all Chicagoans, can benefit from being connected to jobs and employment resources, skills training to pursue their interests, and technology access to explore and help achieve their professional dreams. There are many employment resources out there, but they are widely dispersed and can be difficult to navigate. Resources on this page aim to provide several options in one place.

When residents have access to jobs, and are able to work in fields that interest them, it benefits the local economy because it benefits every household.

RESOURCES

INDEED.COM

Voted “best overall job board” of 2022, users can create a free profile to upload résumés to allow companies to contact them or search for jobs across the Chicagoland area.

CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

Provides a job board across Cook County and links to resources and programming for residents to receive free professional development.

SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO JOBS

A free job board dedicated to employers and job seekers on the South Side.

JOB RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

A City of Chicago website with links to 22 programs and initiatives that link teenagers and young adults directly to jobs.

SKILLS FOR CHICAGOLAND'S FUTURE

A job board specifically for people experiencing unemployment or who are working less than 32 hours per week. Posts job listings from companies across the city.

BRIGHT STAR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Provides residents of Bronzeville and neighboring communities with résumé help, training, and networking with employers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER, CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE

Focuses programming on Black employment through job training and placement, coaching, career support, and career education and exposure across fields and industries.

FUTURE READY, CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

A program that offers credit and also continuing education classes at no cost in certain industries to Chicago residents, young and old.



LOWERING THE HOUSING BURDEN: ACTIONS

Lowering the cost of housing and associated burdens—like maintenance and utilities—can directly benefit Washington Park residents because it means they will keep more money in their pocket. Nontraditional paths to home ownership and protections for renters also help households save money or even build wealth. Being able to more easily afford a rent or mortgage payment means that people have more resources to spend on their families and themselves, and in the neighborhood. There are many resources and programs available, but they are not always easy to access or even understand. These actions present a variety of different strategies for learning about different resources available.

EXPLORE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE UTILITY AND HOME MAINTENANCE COSTS.

The costs of maintaining a home add up for homeowners and renters, and utilities are a leading expense. Aside from LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), there are additional programs available that help households audit their energy use to lower costs, provide energy efficiency kits, and offer tips to weatherize homes. Learning about and enrolling in these programs can mean saving money.

EXPLORE HOUSING COOPERATIVES.

Housing cooperatives are an alternative way to own a home. Residents join the co-op to purchase an ownership share in a dwelling. Co-ops are a way to increase access to homeownership and to help build community wealth. They are an important tool for allowing residents to stay in quickly changing neighborhoods. They also can lower housing costs through shared responsibilities and resources. There are many active co-ops in the Chicago area. See the resources panel at right for more information on how to start a co-op, where to get financing, and different examples of co-ops in Chicago and other cities.

LEARN ABOUT INNOVATIVE PATHS FOR TENANTS.

Tenants can organize unions to build support and solidarity among neighbors. Organized tenant unions can work toward fair and safe housing conditions, and can help protect people against rent raises and eviction. Another option is to organize to purchase a building that goes up for sale. In the Woodlawn neighborhood, the City of Chicago approved the pilot Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Program, which gives tenants the first right to buy buildings with 10 or more units.



STEPS TO START A HOUSING CO-OP

1. Identify a community of willing members.
2. Find a mentor like another successful co-op or housing organization.
3. Learn together about the entire process.
4. Determine whether all the potential members are ready to follow through and commit to the complete process (like accounting, legal, and maintenance).
5. Create a budget for buying or building (which can be financed through HUD, affordable housing programs, and community development loans).
6. Buy or build the co-op building with the community.
7. Build community spirit and togetherness to support shared resources.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING'S "HOME: HOUSING PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR RESIDENTS OF CHICAGO"

Presents many City and partner housing programs, including maintenance and repairs, in one place and user-friendly language, different from a City website.

CEDA

A one-stop shop of resources for assistance in paying utility bills and receiving energy efficiency kits.

COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES OF CHICAGO

Provides many resources about housing co-ops and how to start them. Lists all active co-ops in Chicago.

PILSEN HOUSING COOPERATIVE

A co-op in the Pilsen neighborhood started to ensure that residents continue to live in a gentrifying neighborhood. Provides many resources on housing co-ops.

TENANTS UNITED

A Hyde Park-based organization that helps organize tenants' unions across the South Side.

CHICAGO TENANTS MOVEMENT

A collaborative that supports tenant unions and housing organizers across the city and provides many online resources.

WOODLAWN TENANT OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE PROGRAM.

Gives Woodlawn's tenants the opportunity to organize to buy apartment buildings. Currently limited to Woodlawn, residents could lobby to expand the pilot or use it as a model to build on their own ideas.

SUPPORTING NEW HOUSING: ACTIONS

There are hundreds of vacant lots in Washington Park waiting to be developed. To achieve a strong Washington Park local economy, it will be essential to reduce the number of vacant lots. Replacing lots with homes, businesses, art, gardens, and other productive activities can make the neighborhood more inviting and vibrant. More housing options will bring more residents to the neighborhood, which can increase economic resources and activity across Washington Park. Residents can encourage an intense focus on bringing increased housing options to the neighborhood on these lots to support existing and future residents. In July 2022, Chicago's City Council passed an ordinance to spur ETOD—that's housing and investments within a half mile of transit stations—this means the 51st Street, Garfield, and 63rd Street Green Line stations for Washington Park.

New housing can bring changes to a neighborhood. By communicating with officials and developers, residents can help manage that change and keep it positive for the neighborhood. More people, after all, can also mean more attention from officials and organizations, more resources to share, and more people to support Washington Park's businesses, schools, and social life.

COMMUNICATE WITH OFFICIALS.

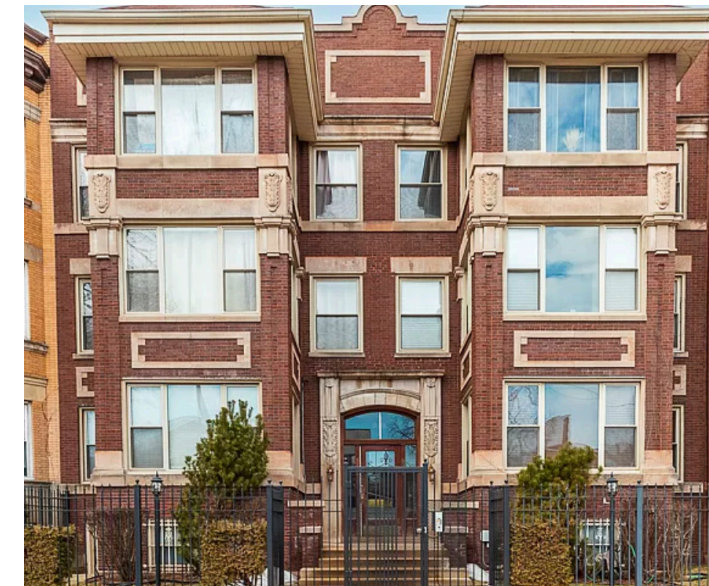
Letting the aldermanic offices and community groups know that residents support new housing can create important bonds to drive neighborhood change. Residents can also ask aldermanic offices and local officials to hold neighborhood meetings to explain developments and the advantages and disadvantages they see for Washington Park.

ENCOURAGE CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENT.

Washington Park has seen some new housing developments that are meant to serve existing residents and can be models for the neighborhood, such as the KLEO Art Residences and the proposed Abrams Intergenerational Village. Residents should encourage development from east to west, especially east of State Street and within 4 blocks of the Green Line train stations. Concentrated new development here will be most visible for shifting the narrative about the neighborhood.

ASK DEVELOPERS AND OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

As the City of Chicago expands its focus on housing and residential areas through programs like Invest South/West, residents can learn about the developers, housing organizations, and community groups that are most likely to develop housing in the neighborhood. Contacting these organizations to show support for development and to share information about Washington Park can help drive development. Residents can ask developers to consider the neighborhood in their plans. This might involve providing jobs to residents, making contributions to local events, committing to supporting local businesses like restaurants, or holding an event to teach residents about the development process or students about the career path.



WHAT NEW HOUSING MIGHT LOOK LIKE

In Washington Park, new housing can look many different ways. It might be a fully rehabbed apartment or condo building (top left), a newly built three-flat on a vacant lot (top right), a single-family home (bottom left), or a large new-construction apartment building, like the KLEO Art Residences (bottom right).

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE: ACTIONS

Washington Park residents have identified a need to improve community infrastructure, such as sidewalk and street repairs, pedestrian amenities, tree planting, alley resurfacing, and street lighting. Infrastructure is key to economic development because it changes the appearance of a neighborhood, can make it seem safer, and invites people to move about more visibly. Some types of infrastructure improvements also help “brand” a neighborhood, like gateways and banners announcing the neighborhood’s name, public art installations, decorative bike racks, and permanent historical markers or community information signs. For Washington Park, infrastructure improvements ranging from basic repairs to branding can have an impact on neighborhood pride and identity, and they can attract people into the neighborhood.

Many infrastructure repairs, including ones that help brand a neighborhood, are paid for by aldermanic “menu” funds. Each ward receives \$1.5 million from the City of Chicago to pay for various repairs. Another source of infrastructure funding can be the Washington Park Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, funded by residential and commercial property taxes. From 2021 to 2022, taxes paid into Washington Park’s TIF increased by 50%, bringing the total 2022 balance to approximately \$7 million: a sign that development is happening. TIF funds are usually accessed by developers and community organizations to improve infrastructure near projects or offset project costs.

LEVERAGE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES ON GARFIELD BOULEVARD.

The Chicago Department of Transportation’s program Vision Zero South Side has proposed improving infrastructure on Garfield Boulevard to slow traffic. Improvements like new curb corners and bike lanes slow traffic for everyone on the street, which makes pedestrians safer. When pedestrians feel safe, a street can become more vibrant, with people of all ages walking through the neighborhood and lingering. This can appeal to new businesses, which will want to capture traffic in the area.

ACTIVATE THE GARFIELD MEDIAN.

The median running through Garfield Boulevard provides nearly a mile of green space. As pedestrians feel safer, the neighborhood can turn to the median and activate that space, which will serve to further slow traffic and create interest. Infrastructure improvements might include new crosswalks and curbs, walking paths, community gardens and trees, benches, and lighting. An active median can attract microbusinesses and vendors, too, further driving the local economy.

LOBBY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD “GATEWAYS” TO BE INCLUDED IN INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING.

Many residents have expressed interest in “gateways”—signage, banners, or art—that lets people know they’re in Washington Park. Gateways help nonresidents know about a neighborhood, and they are a great way to showcase neighborhood pride. Gateways are typically considered part of infrastructure spending, so residents can organize to lobby aldermanic offices, developers, and other officials and City departments to include neighborhood gateways as part of improvements. Consider holding a design contest or asking local artists to share their design ideas.

ACTIVATE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING.

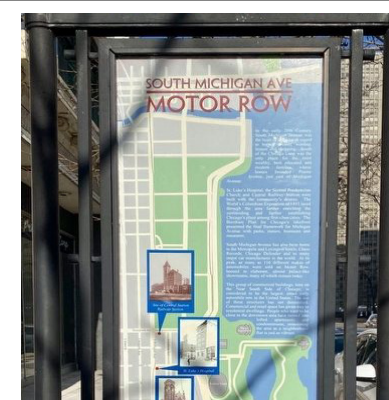
Residents and community groups can organize to participate vigorously in ward and City infrastructure decisions. They can encourage officials to welcome advisory committees to weigh in on pressing issues and repairs, such as youth advisory or streetscape committees. In some City wards, residents vote on how to spend the aldermanic menu money. This can look many ways, but participatory budgeting is most common. In this, residents come up with ideas, hold a community vote, and spend menu money on winning projects (see resources panel at right).

CONSIDER WAYS TO MAKE THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S HISTORY MORE VISIBLE.

Washington Park has many points of historical and cultural interest—in the park and across the neighborhood. Neighbors can create an accompanied or self-led walk or tour (see page 21) of these sites to appeal to residents and to neighborhood newcomers or explorers. Sites can be marked with banners—like photos printed on fabric that tell neighborhood stories—or can be permanent signs that provide context, maps, and photos. Community businesses can benefit from people stopping in during or after a walk. Permanent markers can fall within aldermanic menu money expenses, and community organizations and local businesses might sponsor temporary ones. Residents can also seek assistance from the city’s Historic Preservation Division.

HISTORICAL MARKER EXAMPLE

In Chicago’s Motor Row, historical signs stretch from just south of Roosevelt Road to I-55. They include old photos, maps, and stories.



311

A website for reporting service requests to the City of Chicago, including infrastructure repairs, building problems, requests to plant trees, and more. Requests can also be phoned in by dialing 311.

CHICAGO COMPLETE STREETS

A citywide initiative, including Vision Zero South Side, to engage residents to help plan for infrastructure improvements that make streets safe for everyone. Page visitors can learn about upcoming events, submit feedback, and request that safety ambassadors give presentations in the neighborhood, such as to seniors, pedestrians, or schools.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING CHICAGO

Supports aldermanic offices and Chicago Public Schools in projects that invite residents to participate in budget decisions by developing project ideas and holding community votes. Provides resources and information about funded projects across the city.

SEVEN TIPS TO CREATE A HERITAGE TRAIL

Tips and ideas from the National Trust for Historic Preservation on how to determine sites for a historical walk or trail.

CHICAGO LANDMARKS DATABASE

A City of Chicago database of all properties officially considered of historic interest. There are about 75 Washington Park locations on the list.

MEASURING SUCCESS

This action guide has presented many ideas about how to grow the economy in Washington Park. These are just some ways that residents, community organizations, and advocates might measure their progress and successes into the future.

HOUSEHOLD

- Improved health outcomes
- Improved employment outcomes
- Decreased budget burden on households

BUSINESSES

- Number of new business licenses granted
- Number of informal businesses documented (survey)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ALDERMANIC ENGAGEMENT

- Number of sidewalks repaired
- Number of aldermanic menu money projects initiated / completed
- Number of aldermanic office visits to neighborhood

VACANT LOTS

- Number of vacant lots sold (or in process)
- Number of building permits applied for
- Number of new apartments / dwelling units added
- Lower than city average percentage change in area rent
- Decrease in rent burden statistics
- Increase in real estate values across categories

TRANSIT AND MOBILITY

- Increase in ridership numbers (so traffic) at Garfield Green Line train and bus routes
- Increased pedestrian count on Garfield Boulevard

PARK SPACE AND EVENTS

- Number of new park concessions
- Number of residents signed up to participate in Washington Park organizing
- Number of free events open to public held on Garfield Boulevard
- Increase in number of positive and/or neutral local media stories about Washington Park



NEXT STEPS

Washington Park residents and community advocates have indicated a desire to focus intentions and support for new economic development activities on Garfield Boulevard. The Arts + Public Life initiative, the L1 business accelerator, the KLEO Art Residences, and the Park Supper Club are all examples of successful economic activity on Garfield Boulevard.

The expectation for development to occur on Garfield is that the park and open space, and the DuSable museum in Washington Park, already attract many visitors all year long for recreation and to events and festivals. But other areas in Washington Park deserve attention as well. The 51st Street corridor is seeing many new businesses and is home to the Boxville market and gathering place. As nearby neighborhoods like Woodlawn and Bronzeville continue to experience growth and development, Washington Park can position itself to also benefit across the neighborhood as more people and businesses locate nearby and in the area.

Residents, advocates, and organizations can organize, and stay organized, to make sure that development comes to Washington Park in ways that are informed by the community and its needs and wishes. New developments in the area are announced what seems like every day: the Abrams Intergenerational Village, a Northwestern University Hospital outpatient care center nearby in Bronzeville, new housing options near 51st Street, the Arts Lawn on Garfield Boulevard, and more. These are all likely to have positive effects for Washington Park. The hope of this guide and the actions and resources it presents is to help residents and neighborhood advocates continue to work toward bringing development to Washington Park. By putting all the people of Washington Park first in strengthening the local economy, the entire neighborhood and City can benefit.

ABOUT THIS ACTION GUIDE

This economic development action guide was contracted and funded by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Garfield Green Line South Action Plan. The action guide was created by Muse Community + Design and Rudd Resources. Shantell Jamison provided photos and captions for the section "An Insider's View." Input and ideas from Washington Park residents were essential to the actions found here. The producers of this action guide want to acknowledge and thank the creatives whose photographs, murals, arts, and likenesses are included here. Without them, the demonstration of Washington Park's beauty would be less vibrant.

