

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (UPCORP)

## **CORRIDORS OF VISION**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> FACILITATED SESSION**

Thursday, April 13, 2000

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

4753 North Broadway

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Center

#### **Study Area:**

Broadway Avenue – Leland to Ainslie

Including: Lawrence Avenue – Magnolia to Winthrop

*See attached map.*

#### **Participants:**

Mary Laura Bushman, Institute of Cultural Affairs (Facilitator)

Tomas Bissonette, Spanish Speaking Bookstore

Pam Bordner, Planning Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Marguerite Boyd, Truman College

Rodrigo del Canto, Macondo Corp Architects

Solomon Chu, Uptown Chamber Exec. Director

Edward Cucci, Weiss Memorial Hospital

Paul Fitzpatrick, Freed & Associates

Dennis Harder, Freed & Associates

Dr. Phoebe Helm, Truman College

Liz Holland, Abbell Credit Corporation

Chip Long, Erdinberg Otten Realtors

Suellen Long, Long Promotional Group, Broadway-Clark Bldg. Corp.

Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn, Heartland Alliance

Patrick Thompson, Manske-Dieckmann-Thompson Architects

Mimi Slogar, UPCORP Executive Director

Jennifer Connors, UPCORP Project Coordinator

#### **Executive Summary:**

A couple weeks before the session, each invited participant received an assessment workbook with thought-provoking questions centered on the five values: accessibility, safety, goods and services, aesthetics, and community diversity. Each participant was asked to visit the study area, preferably more than once to observe activities during several different times of day.

Based on their notes and observations, the session participants shared their current impressions and visions for the future of the study area. Known to the group as Uptown's entertainment district, the study area is alternatively viewed as the tired remains of a bygone era or as a vibrant entertainment landmark with not-so-hidden charms. Led by facilitator Mary Laura Bushman, the group threw out their ideas for a revitalized district, then developed those ideas further by grouping them and discussing potential next steps for each vision category.

This session is the first in a series of Corridors workshops. The workshop series represents Phase 1 of the Corridors of Vision process. In later stages, UPCORP will share their draft vision for the corridors of Uptown with other community groups, incorporating input and inspiring discussion among community leaders. With each refined iteration, the corridor visions will grow into a tool with which the community can evaluate future development, identify and attract new businesses and development, and guide the revitalization of the Uptown community.

The process for this first session was developed by experienced facilitator Mary Laura Bushman of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). Bushman, a member of the UPCORP Board of Directors, donated her time and materials for the session. Catering by LaDonna Italian Eatery was donated by the Broadway-Clark Building Corp.

**Process:**

1. Introduction
2. Silent Walk (*Individual Brainstorming*)
3. Sharing In Pairs (*Prioritizing Ideas*)
4. Vision Elements (*Gestalt Categories*)
5. Vision Paragraphs & Action Steps (*Small Group Breakout*)
6. Plenary

**Session Highlights:**

INTRODUCTIONS:

Participants introduced themselves and shared a short story, adjective, or image that reflected their current impressions of the corridor. Many impressions were expressed as physical descriptions. Others were based on general feelings. Participants were also asked to express their hopes and dreams for the future of the corridor. These included:

**Current Impressions:**

Monumentality with Urban Grit  
 Surprises Under the Surface  
 Feelings of Being Alone  
 Feelings of Exhaustion and Hunger  
 Old Landmarks with Curious Angles  
 A Place to Get Through  
 Nothing to Stop For  
 Connecting the Dots between Large Structures  
 Stripped of Charm  
 Uninviting  
 Lots of Positives  
 Dormant, Dark  
 Inconsistent Signage  
 Fallen Asleep  
 Strange, Abandoned, Seedy  
 Lack of Green Space  
 No Visual Division between Sidewalk & Street  
 Of a Bygone Era  
 Tired  
 Sense of Energy  
 Nostalgia  
 Unfulfilled Dreams  
 Audience for Retail  
 Many Walks of Life  
 Activity & People  
 Neglected, Overlooked  
 Lacking Cohesiveness  
 Lacking Planning

**Visions for the Future:**

Survival of Monumentality and “Edge” as Area Develops  
 More Activity & Energy  
 Public Places to Rest (benches?)  
 More Options for Quality Food  
 Appropriate Activities for Existing Buildings  
 Something to Stop For  
 Feeling of Connectedness (between large structures)  
 Trip to Charm School  
 Discover Hidden Charms  
 More Positives  
 Wake it Up  
 Nice Restaurants  
 Magnet to Keep Attention of Passers  
 Nice Streetscape  
 Sense of Renewal  
 Walking with a Purpose  
 More Energy  
 Build on Character  
 Reason to Come/Stay  
 Catalyst  
 Expand upon Diversity  
 More National Retail Tenants  
 Planning

As one participant noted, although many negative aspects of the community were highlighted, the reason why everyone chooses to be a part of this group is that they share a sense of Uptown's exceptional potential.

#### SILENT WALK:

Bushman shared an excerpt of an article about a workplace consultant who takes a "silent walk" through his clients' offices, then leads the supervisors on a silent walk as well to observe the office culture through new eyes. She invited the session participants to take a "silent walk" through the study area three to five years into the future through their mind's eye. The participants jotted notes to themselves about the changes they envision as the facilitator quietly suggested questions to spur their imaginations.

#### SHARING IN PAIRS:

Next each participant shared his/her top few ideas that are key to the revitalization of the district. Splitting into pairs, the participants chose three or four favorite ideas to share with the group. Starting with one favorite idea per pair, group members placed idea cards on a "sticky wall" at the front of the room. Then the second favorite ideas that were not already mentioned were added. Once all the original ideas were placed on the sticky wall, the group worked together to categorize all the ideas into Vision Element categories.

#### VISION ELEMENTS:

The five Vision Element categories the group decided on were:

- Realistic Renaissance of Theaters
- Branding the Uptown Identity
- Beautification & Curb Appeal
- Master Planning - Cohesive Land Use Mix
- Multi-Location Parking & Transportation

The idea cards that comprised these Vision Elements are listed as "Original Data" on the pages that follow.

#### VISION PARAGRAPHS & ACTION STEPS:

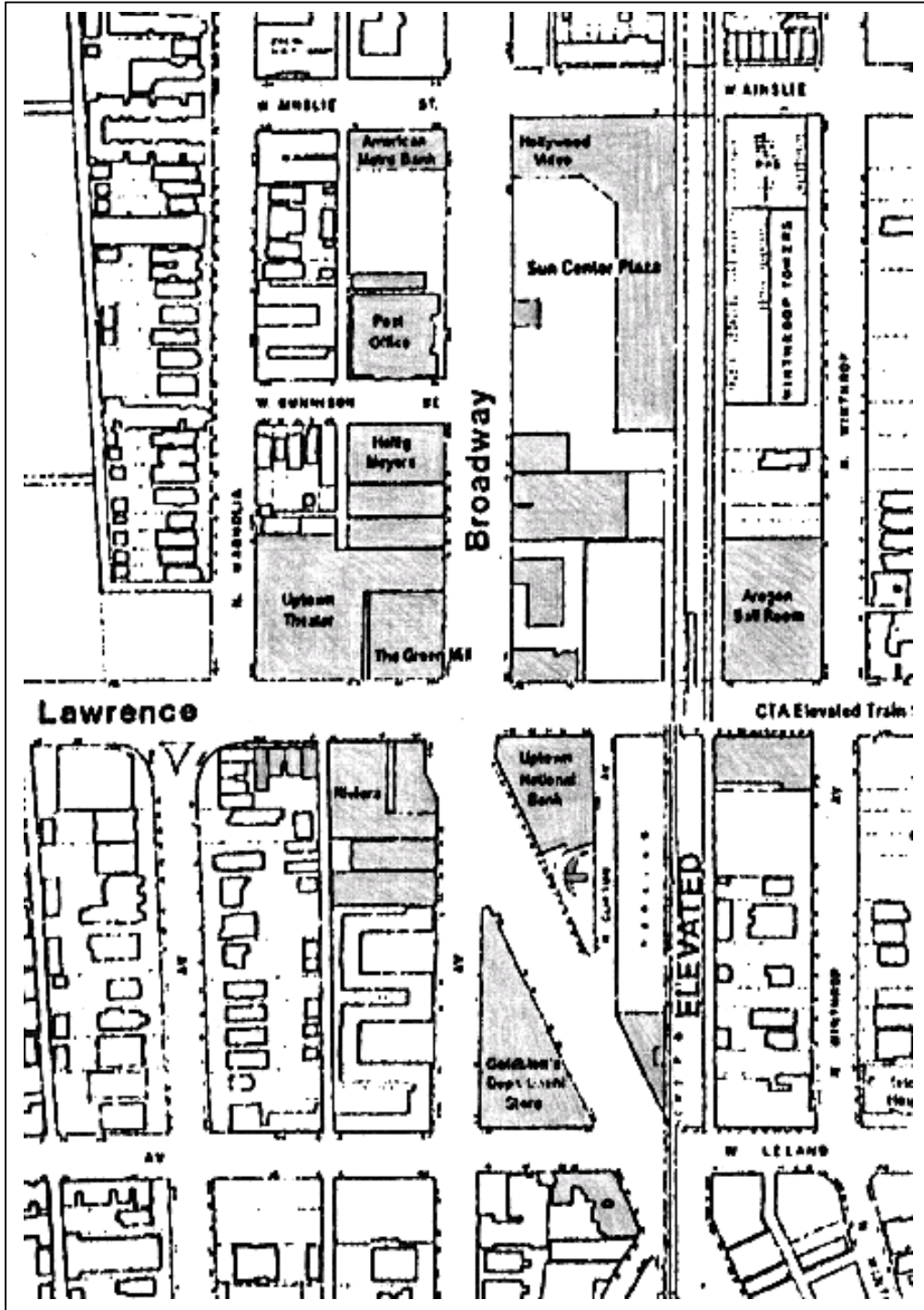
After numbering off into five groups for each of the Vision Element categories, participants worked in their small groups to coalesce the ideas into a Vision Paragraph with specific Action Steps. Worksheets were provided for the paragraph (one per group) and the action steps (several per group). The completed Vision Paragraphs and Action Steps for each of the five categories are given on the pages that follow.

#### PLENARY:

The group reconvened to share and comment on the results of their small group work. The group also took time to evaluate the session and reflect on the Corridors of Vision process as a whole. The most common comment was a request for more time at the next session. Group members also suggested who else might be included in future sessions. Perhaps more developers, more planners, or a more ethnically diverse representation should be included. The group reflected on next steps both for the district and for the next phase of Corridors of Vision. The written evaluations, summarized on page 10, reflect many of the same comments. All participants were very positive about the experience and expressed their enthusiasm for the Corridors of Vision process.

Session 1 Study Area:

**BROADWAY – Leland to Ainslie**  
Including: Lawrence – Magnolia to Winthrop






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**VISION ELEMENT:**
**REALISTIC RENAISSANCE OF THEATERS**


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**VISION PARAGRAPH:**

The Uptown Theatre is key to the success and character of the Entertainment District, even if its renovation is the very last step in the revitalization of the area. Because it is large and historic, it should contain many uses—daytime and evening, live entertainment, movies, a museum and other entertainment, possibly incorporating virtual reality, interactive history, etc. It could be a tourist destination and the focus of walking tours. Corporate sponsorship and public money will be necessary, and nonprofit, volunteer and active community involvement is necessary.

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**ACTION STEP:** Organize group to decide what can or can not be done with the Uptown Theatre, independently financed, charged with finding feasible solution by date certain.

WHEN: Before end of 2001

HOW: Public sources, not only city but state and federal also, plus corporate sources

**ACTION STEP:** Develop multipurpose entertainment center and museum appealing to all age groups.

WHEN: Next 2-3 years

HOW: Entice developer with passion for capturing historic movie/theater themes and personages through use of virtual reality technology, wax museum, video, music, live entertainment, etc., to develop Uptown, Riviera, Aragon.

**ACTION STEP:** Identify and secure financing, design improvements, and implement final plan to save/renovate Uptown Theatre.

WHEN: After feasibility is proven, probably 2004-2005

HOW: Public/private sources have to back up pledges with real money. Leadership has to be consistent and continuous.

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**ORIGINAL DATA:**

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Renaissance of Theaters category:

- Cultural and historic museum, walking tours, tourist destination
- Uptown Theatre Movie Museum
- Theaters renovated and in use, movies and live theater
- Revived arts and entertainment center
- Corporately sponsored Uptown Theatre, multi-venue, multi-tenant, constant theme




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**VISION ELEMENT:**
**BRANDING THE UPTOWN IDENTITY**


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**VISION PARAGRAPH:**

The challenge of “branding” the identity of Uptown is to encompass not only the physical attributes but also the sentiment or feel of the multicultural dimension of the neighborhood. While creating an independent identity, it is important to guarantee to include the “Chicago” identity of the community.

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**ACTION STEP:** Develop relationship with City Hall, owners and theater owners

WHEN: Ongoing

HOW: Networking opportunities

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**ACTION STEP:** Involve larger community in identifying the symbols, images, and phrases to use to express the Uptown identity.

WHEN: Next 6-12 months

HOW: Community meetings or workshops

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**ORIGINAL DATA:**

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Branding the Uptown Identity category:

- Development of destination location around theme, e.g., Times Square, French Quarter, Quality Ethnic Restaurants
- Uses to complement Entertainment, street life at night, “stickyness”
- EL Station acts as a “sign” to identify the area – “Entertainment” or “Uptown” marquis
- Future parking structures named after different countries or continents.
- Points of interest at Broadway-Lawrence corners, such as a globe on a pedestal
- Uptown Square (Times Square)
- Downtown Uptown
- The Whole World Comes to Uptown
- All Roads Lead to Uptown




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**VISION ELEMENT:**
**BEAUTIFICATION & CURB APPEAL**


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**VISION PARAGRAPH:**

We don't want to distract from the big buildings coming to the edge of the sidewalk. Sheltered feeling—like the corridor feel. What can we do now to improve curb appeal with large projects that are in progress?

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**ACTION STEP:** Work with City to develop lighting and planter plan along with signature symbol.

WHEN: Six months

HOW: Through Alderman Smith and Alderman Shiller

**ACTION STEP:** Create a Goldblatt's Plaza area

WHEN: Next 6-9 months

HOW: Work with developer to include in design plans

**ACTION STEP:** Create café culture plans. Begin with two cafes and get info out to all property owners.

WHEN: Over next year

HOW: Include in Goldblatt's plan. Work with U.S. Submarine. Have UPCORP provide info to Broadway storekeepers and property owners.

**ACTION STEP:** Develop design guidelines and façade improvement plan.

WHEN: Over next year

HOW: Through UPCORP

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**ORIGINAL DATA:**

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Beautification and Curb Appeal category:

- Era lighting
- Center-divide planters to act as traffic calming and beautification
- Opportunity for urban plaza (in front of Goldblatts, cul-de-sac Racine?)
- Streetscape, trees, spaces
- Indoor/outdoor café culture
- Green space at triangles and Broadway median
- No security bars on store windows
- Strong, multi-story buildings at street corner. No new one-story buildings. Maintain street wall.
- SW Lawrence/Broadway as urban park




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**VISION ELEMENT:**
**MASTER PLANNING – COHESIVE LAND USE MIX**


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**VISION PARAGRAPH:**

Creation of a dynamic framework in the form of a master plan to preserve the diverse community that exists while expanding the options available to a wider audience. An effective master plan would include certain anchoring elements, e.g., use of the existing theaters, conversion of the Uptown Theater to a hotel and conference center, mix of national and local retail uses, proper mix of uses between office, housing, goods and services.

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**ACTION STEP:** Identification of existing zoning and determination of potential rezoning issues.

**WHEN:** Master plan and zoning identification now, to be finished by the end of summer. Identity of funding and anchors ongoing.

**HOW:** Identification of public and private entities and individuals who are capable of funding key areas and buildings, i.e., theater operators and hoteliers who could couple to revitalize Uptown Theatre and Riviera. Creation of anchoring elements.

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**ORIGINAL DATA:**

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Mix of Uses category:

- Office uses created by E-commerce—  
a center for start-ups
- Quality social services to decrease wanderers and panhandling
- Retail, national/regional/local mix
- Ethnic-based shopping
- Art galleries
- Conference center
- Hotel
- Stores for concert-goers and youth
- Pedestrian friendly businesses: drugstore, Kinko's, fresh fruit market, bakery, shoe repair, laundromat
- Mixed use: retail, office, condos and affordable housing, parking
- Shopping mall




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**VISION ELEMENT:**
**MULTI-LOCATION PARKING & TRANSPORTATION**


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**VISION PARAGRAPH:**

Parking for district must be located in a number of multi-level structures that are integrated with other street-level uses as part of a master plan for northside transportation hub.

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**ACTION STEP:** Identify parking locations near Broadway-Lawrence as well as satellite sites.

WHEN: Before development as part of Master Planning Process by 12/2000.

HOW: Integrate ULI findings with community vision to create Master Plan.

**ACTION STEP:** Leverage upcoming developments to develop parking facilities

WHEN: 2000-2002

HOW: Using TIF resources

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**ORIGINAL DATA:**

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Parking and Transportation category:

- Parking
- Parking structures in different traffic areas
- Public parking garage
- Multi-level attractive parking garages with first-floor commercial
- Multiple, multi-level parking with street-level integration
- Transportation, mass transit, bus routes, parking focused

**UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
CORRIDORS OF VISION – SESSION 1  
BROADWAY-LAWRENCE**

**Summary of Evaluative Comments:**

1. What do you remember doing at today's session?

Creating collective vision; Cooperative interaction; Focus on Bdwy & Lawrence as a positive experience "locality;" Having to see many possibilities; Potential obstacles but not insurmountable; Listening and contributing to a dynamic discussion about what Uptown is now and what it can become in the future; Creative visioning of Uptown's future; Thinking/Sharing; Creative thinking, learned new information, coalescing of ideas; Generating, evaluating and consolidating ideas for improvement of Uptown; Creatively channeling visions for the improvement of a defined area

2. How would you describe the feel of the group and its interaction?

Open/searching/creative; Upbeat; Invigorating; Open; Comfortable with growing ideas together; Positive—In a few instances where people have been in the area for a while, I noticed they were in awe of the "Can Do" attitude and spirit; Tentative but open; Positive; Cooperative, friendly and willing to discuss pros & cons; Positive/Upbeat; Optimistic/realistic/idealistic

3. What do you recommend we do the same at future sessions?

Good job—few changes needed! Brainstorm freely; Open discussion; Preliminary legwork was very effective, Time of the meeting, Large and small group discussions, Food was really good; Making people search for the core; Same process; Most of what we did in #1; Same version—Focus on what has already been achieved; Good process; Moved well (good job); I like the format

4. What do you recommend we do differently at future sessions?

More time; Eat first or last; More visual aids; Go over what's on the board prior to break out; People should write larger on their cards; Inclusion of potential and active developers in the area; Include multiethnic representation; Make it longer; Serve wine/beer earlier; Direct implementation; Different groups, then collective of them; Open the wine at the beginning; Add another half-hour to session; Allow perhaps 30 minutes more time; Allow a little more time

5. What next steps do you see in this process?

Type up; Be careful about asking for physical upgrades from the city before the "branding" identity is clearly fixed, else the upgrades may not support the identity; Develop a detailed path; Dissemination to community; Refining of all of the elements that were touched on today; Everything Sid said; Further explorations of means and methods; Continue to achieve an implementation plan that is reasonable, viable, realistic and timely; Direction of implementation; Urban Renewal SWAT Team, Urban planners take ideas/proposals and develop concept/plan based on inputs of seven groups; Committees assembled to implement the plan