

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (UPCORP)

CORRIDORS OF VISION

3rd FACILITATED SESSION

Tuesday, September 26, 2000

4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

4753 North Broadway

1st Floor Conference Center

Study Area:

Lawrence Avenue – Marine Drive to Ravenswood

See attached map.

Participants:

Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn, Heartland Alliance (Facilitator)
Tomas Bissonnette, Spanish Speaking Bookstore
Marguerite Boyd, Truman College
Mary Laura Bushman, Institute of Cultural Affairs
Solomon Chu, Uptown Chamber of Commerce
Rodrigo del Canto, Macondo Corp. Architects
Bob Ford, Peoples Church of Chicago
Judy Gall, Alternatives Inc.
J.R. Graves, CMS Consolidated

Dr. Phoebe Helm, Truman College
Liz Holland, Abbell Credit Corporation
Judy Reed, Uptown Chamber of Commerce
David Wejroch, LaSalle Bank
Erku Yimer, Ethiopian Community Association
Mimi Slogar, UPCORP Executive Director
Jennifer Connors, UPCORP Project Coordinator
Bruce Kahn, UPCORP Volunteer

Executive Summary:

At the September 13 session, participants continued the visioning process begun in April. The September session focused on the Lawrence Avenue corridor, from Marine Drive to Uptown's western border, Ravenswood Avenue. A couple weeks before the session, each participant received an assessment workbook with thought-provoking questions centered on 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. With the guidance of facilitator Sid Mohn, the group shared their ideas for a revitalized Lawrence Avenue corridor, then developed those ideas further by grouping them and discussing potential next steps for each vision category. The group articulated themes for the distinct sections of Lawrence Avenue, adding them to a map that visually summarized some of the ideas from previous sessions. In particular, the group focused on the themes of movie industry history, then and now, and the global character of Uptown.

***"In the past we saw the world through the movies.
Today we see the world through our neighbors."***

This session was the third 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 used at this session was based on the first session led by Mary Laura Bushman of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). Sid Mohn, an experienced facilitator and UPCORP Vice President, donated his time and materials for the session. Catering by Reza's Restaurant was donated by the Broadway-Clark Building Corp.

Process:

1. Introduction
2. Silent Walk: Individual Brainstorming
3. Sharing in Pairs: Prioritizing Ideas
4. Identifying Vision Element Categories
5. Small Group Breakout: Vision Paragraphs & Action Steps
6. Synthesis & Plenary

Session Highlights:

INTRODUCTIONS:

Participants introduced themselves, named their connection to the community, and gave their 1-3 word impression of the corridor as it is currently. These **Current Views** included:

Auto-oriented (west) & Monumental (east)	Challenged Thoroughfare
Congested and scattered	Blah
Two distinct sections	Disjointed, no sense of place
Competing interests	Potentially vibrant, currently rundown
Ugly, Un-enhanced & Unfriendly	Elongated Funnel, Transformative Opportunity
Potentially Magnificent	Needs lots of help
Five pieces, scattered & disoriented	Bland, dinghy

SILENT WALK:

Mohn invited the session participants to imagine taking a silent walk through the study area three to five years into the future, imagining what they would like to see. The facilitator referenced current landmarks along Lawrence Avenue while participants jotted notes to themselves about the changes that they envision.

SHARING IN PAIRS:

Next each participant noted the four best nouns or descriptors on their brainstorming sheets, indicating things they most want to see in the corridor. Splitting into pairs, the participants chose their three most unique ideas to share with the group. Each pair chose their one "best" idea to place on a "sticky wall" at the front of the room. Then they placed their one idea "most critical" to the corridor's future. Any remaining ideas not already mentioned were added. Once all the ideas were placed on the wall, the group worked together to categorize them into Vision Element categories and name the categories.

VISION ELEMENTS:

Naming the categories proved to be challenging, as the many good ideas all seemed related to each other. The following four broad categories were articulated by the group. Because naming the categories took some extra effort, the key ideas from the naming discussion are included in parentheses. The four Vision Element categories the group decided on were:

- **Landmark Redevelopment** (Buildings, Highlighting, Revitalizing, Points of Reference, “Stage”)
- **Ease of Movement** (Cars, Flows, “Play”)
- **People Pulls** (People, Reasons to Come, meandering areas, improve the experience, “Actors”)
- **Sense of Place** (Plants, Hubs, Sense of Places, “Set”)

The idea cards that comprised these Vision Element categories are listed as “Original Data” on the pages that follow.

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT:

Participants broke into four groups to coalesce the ideas for each Vision Element category into a Vision Paragraph with specific Action Steps. The completed Vision Paragraphs and Action Steps for each of the four categories are given on the pages that follow.

SYNTHESIS & PLENARY:

The group reconvened to share and comment on the results of their small group work. Each group offered a concise Vision Paragraph to capture the main ideas of the group and then suggested specific Action Steps in moving toward that vision.

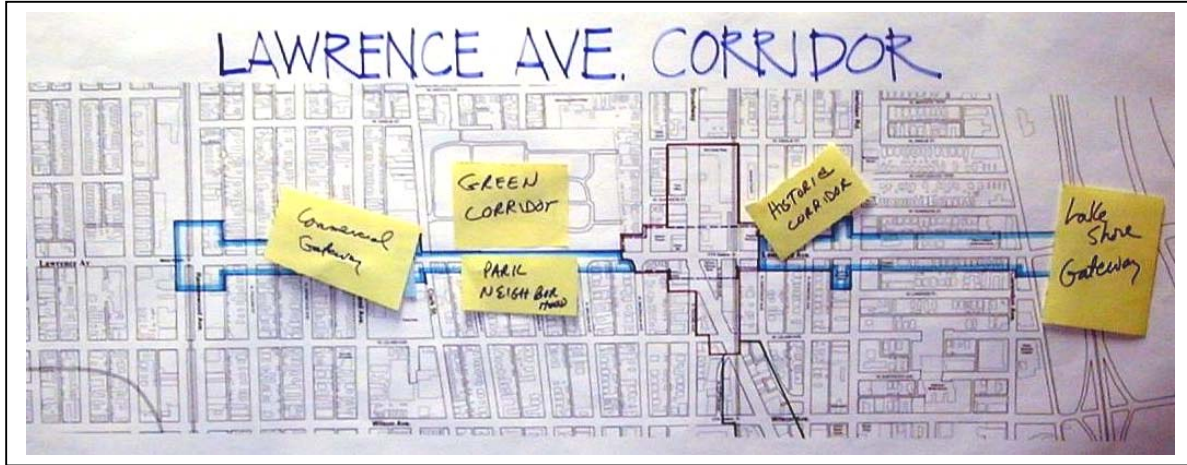
The *history of the movie industry* and the current *global, multicultural character* of the Uptown community emerged as themes in the plenary discussion. The participants strategized on how to promote these themes through physical markers and through local businesses. The proposed Borders bookstore could offer special sections about movie history and multiculturalism. Historic plaques could be mounted on Lawrence Avenue buildings or a Charlie Chaplin statue erected near the Lake Shore Drive exit. The movie industry of today could be highlighted with a film production business incubator or a multilingual film collection library. A contest for artists to capture the global nature of the neighborhood was proposed.

Mohn led the group in a discussion to synthesize their ideas about the varying composition of the corridor. A wall map was provided which visually captured the main ideas from previous Corridors of Vision workshops. The group added more descriptors to the map to describe Lawrence Avenue, including:

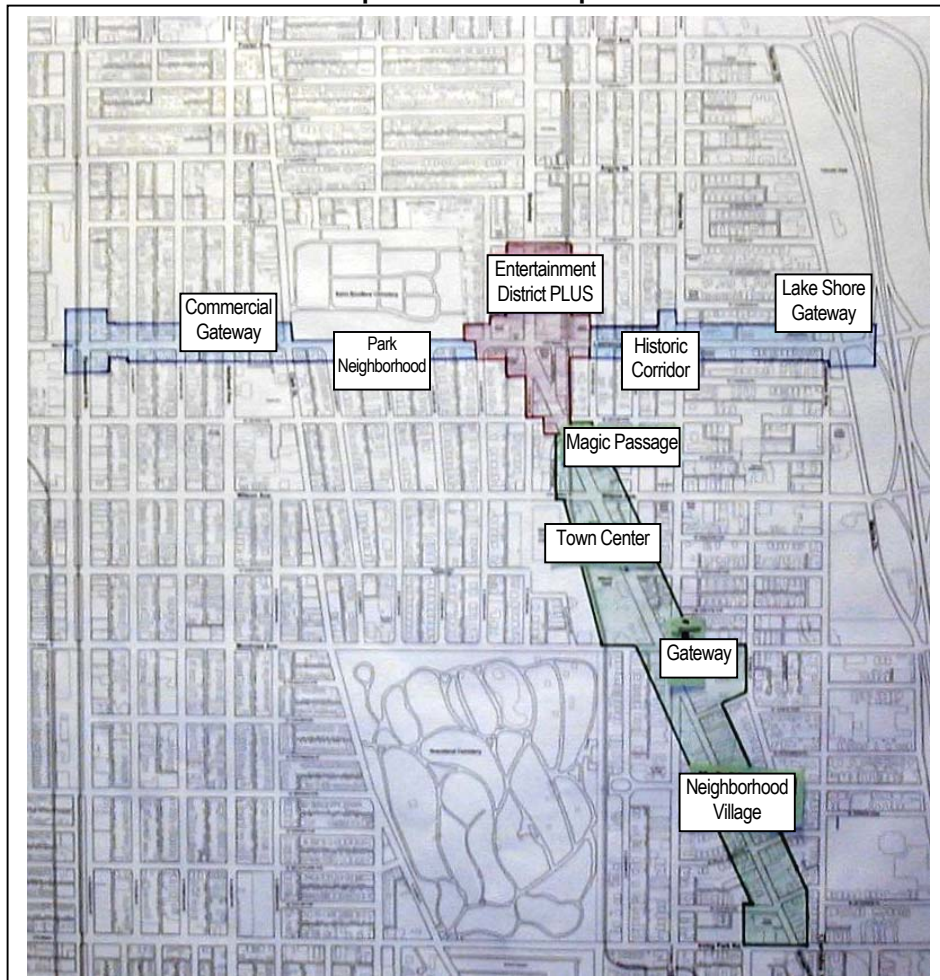
- Lake Shore Gateway (at Lake Shore Drive exit)
- Historic Corridor (Sheridan to Broadway, including Peoples Church to the east)
- Park Neighborhood or Green Corridor (Broadway to Clark, along cemetery wall)
- Commercial Gateway (Clark to Ashland)

The group also took time to evaluate the session and reflect on the Corridors of Vision process as a whole. Several members of the group commented that the Lawrence Avenue corridor was difficult to discuss at first because of its lack of cohesion, but that it really came together with inspired new ideas and actionable goals. The written evaluations are summarized on page 9.

Session 3 Study Area: Lawrence Avenue (Marine Drive to Ravenswood)



Descriptors for Workshops 1-3:



**VISION ELEMENT:****LANDMARK REDEVELOPMENT****VISION PARAGRAPH:**

The Lawrence Avenue Corridor has a distinct character west of Clark and east of Broadway. Our vision for redevelopment east of Broadway would build on the historic character: monumental, built-up to the street wall, focused on evening entertainment and daytime office uses. Our vision for redevelopment west of Clark would allow for larger scale developments, possible demolition where needed, and focused on convenience, value and selection. Both areas offer opportunities for destinations; one is destination “entertainment” and the other is destination “retail.”

ACTION STEP: Talk to Borders (if they decide to locate) about: relating to the theater crowd, staying open late, and a section related to the historic district..

WHEN: If and when a deal goes through
 HOW: Get Borders to talk to Riviera and Aragon.

ACTION STEP: Engage current business owners to consider how they can cater to two different audiences. The first audience would be the evening theater crowd. The second would be the daytime office workers and student population.

WHEN: Present
 HOW: Small focus groups with Uptown Chamber

ACTION STEP: Attracting commerce and development with attention to clientele at various times of the day.

WHEN: Ongoing
 HOW: Showcase of opportunity or developer roundtable. Also, researching demographics, obtaining grants, and highlighting opportunities.

ORIGINAL DATA:

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the Landmark Redevelopment category:

- Big-box anchor opportunities west of Clark
- American Breakfast Restaurant
- Rehab Perkins Building



VISION ELEMENT:
EASE OF MOVEMENT

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Improve the flow of pedestrian and automotive traffic within and through the area. Capitalizing on and improving the existing public transportation and parking infrastructure.

ACTION STEP: Widen streets and sidewalks. Limit street parking to non-rush hour times

WHEN: Now

HOW: With new signage

ACTION STEP: Build a large public parking structure with ground floor retail on open lot at Winthrop and Lawrence.

WHEN: 1-3 years

HOW: Find a private developer, partner with Aragon, Riviera, and maybe Uptown Theatre.

ACTION STEP: Clean up public transportation and construct Lawrence Avenue station.

WHEN: 1-2 years

HOW: City initiated.

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- Transportation/Circulation Plan
- Large, Beautiful Public Parking
- Reduce Number of Traffic Signals
- Auto & Pedestrian Friendly, Better Traffic Flow



VISION ELEMENT:
PEOPLE PULLS

VISION PARAGRAPH:

People pullers with meandering areas and places/reasons to stop: Create “people pullers” on Lawrence Avenue, which include bringing in upscale restaurants, coffee shop, movie theater, ice cream shop and retail stores, plus a historic movie industry museum and landmark buildings with street level historic plaques. Widen pedestrian sidewalks with places to stop and read plaques.

ACTION STEP: Get building owners involved in a reactivated Lawrence Avenue Task Force to clean up and maintain the buildings and street.

WHEN: At this time.

HOW: Task force with Chamber, UPCORP and City of Chicago

ACTION STEP: Retail marketing emphasis by UPCORP and Chamber to get restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlors, etc., onto Lawrence.

WHEN: After the buildings have been cleaned up and the street has a high degree of public safety.

HOW: Building on business contacts on Broadway in Wilson Yard TIF and Goldblatt’s building.

ACTION STEP: Research movie industry here on Lawrence and trace the venues and roles of each building for the purpose of highlighting markers and maybe museum of movie industry.

WHEN: Beginning now

HOW: Contact those whose families have been here a long time. Contact institutions like St. Augustine College, Uptown Historical Society, and Truman College. Find professor / students to take it on.

ORIGINAL DATA:

The following ideas from the initial brainstorming session were grouped together to form the People Pulls category:

- Hubs (Entertainment, El Park & Ride, Supported and individually owned residential)
- New Sidewalks and Storefronts
- Destinations
- Renovated El Station with Theme



VISION ELEMENT:
SENSE OF PLACE

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Create a sense of place: a segmented corridor with commercial and residential properties identified by streetscape elements, markers and gardens.

ACTION STEP: Create sense of safety by adding street lighting and improving sidewalks.

WHEN: After ULI study in November

HOW: Organize a Lawrence Avenue committee to plan and implement improvements. Consider Special Service Area (SSA), CDOT for street improvements.

ACTION STEP: Mark historic district with markers and other historic street furnishings: benches, paving, lighting, and banners.

WHEN: After ULI study

HOW: Through committee, possible SSA, CDOT, etc.

ACTION STEP: Clean up sidewalk and streets.

WHEN: Ongoing

HOW: Through committee, possible SSA, etc.

ACTION STEP: Fix up and improve building facades, awnings and storefronts.

WHEN: Ongoing

HOW: Façade rebate program, historic district tax credits, etc.

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- Convert part of parking lot at Winthrop and Lawrence to park
- Gateway Gardens at LSD exit
- Historic Markers and streetscape
- Eliminate Cemetery wall
- Wide Pedestrian Sidewalks w/ Trees
- Gateway
- Landscape street, Marine to Ravenswood
- Attention to appearance, "Cared For"
- Clean open landscape, clean streets and sidewalks, awnings, banners
- Entrance to Weiss campus at Clarendon

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
CORRIDORS OF VISION – SESSION 3
 LAWRENCE AVENUE

Summary of Evaluative Comments:

The facilitator asked participants to separate their comments into three categories—AHA, BUT, & DRUTHERS.

1. **“AHA” Insights:**

“The new AHA Dimensions I Experienced Were...”

- For the first time I saw the possibility of cohesiveness in a theme for community development.
- The map with colors is building a picture. The Action Groups were ready to create real steps, more than in earlier sessions.
- That Lawrence Avenue was really a series of streets as opposed to one uniform thoroughfare.
- The idea of Lawrence east of the Aragon as a historic walkway with plaques focusing on movie industry then and now.
- The collective effort of several groups refining ideas that might help to realize a mutual goal.
- Allows people to participate. The method is motivating to participate.
- Possibility for including movie industry in the theater district.

2. **“BUT” Concerns:**

“This Was A Good Session, But...”

- I was late and missed part of it!
- Not enough time to develop and refine some of the ideas.
- We still need more conversation time on the clusters to get at what we really intend.
- I feel we rushed through the original idea brainstorming.
- What are the goals? What is expected of this exercise?
- The nature of the subject matter (Lawrence Avenue) made it less cohesive a discussion than the other two sessions.
- The CTA probably has no money for rehabbing the EI station.

3. **“DRUTHERS” Comments:**

“If I Had My Druthers, I’d...”

- Have been more prepared.
- I like what we seem to be doing.
- Do the same.
- Have divided Lawrence into zones with Wilson between Clark & Marine since that is how the series of zones breaks down between Lawrence & Wilson.
- Focus large and medium-scale development west of Clark.
- I think we’re about ready to open this up further to the broader community.