

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (UPCORP)

CORRIDORS OF VISION**4th FACILITATED SESSION**

Monday, July 30, 2001

8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

4753 North Broadway

1st Floor Conference Center**Study Area:**

Sheridan Road – Foster to Montrose

*See attached map.***Participants:**

Mary Laura Bushman, Institute of Cultural Affairs (Facilitator)

Tomas Bissonette, Spanish Speaking Bookstore

Victor Cypher, ViCor Development

Bonnie Fuqua, Weiss Hospital

Heidi Nelson, Chicago Health Outreach

Curt Roeschley, Uptown Center Hull House

Patrick Thompson, Manske-Dieckmann-Thompson

David Wejroch, LaSalle Bank

Judy Yablonski, Lakeside Area Neighbors

Erku Yimer, Ethiopian Community Association

Jill Zimmerman, Alternatives, Inc.

Simone Zurawski, Margate Park Block Club

Mimi Slogar, UPCORP Executive Director

Jennifer Connors, UPCORP Project Coordinator

Wally Rozak, Uptown Chamber of Commerce

Clinton Stockwell, UPCORP & Hull House Intern

Workshop Summary:

As a part of a series of “Corridors of Vision” workshops, UPCORP’s Board and Planning Committee members were invited to help craft a vision for the Sheridan Road Corridor. Additional invited guests included representatives of block clubs, businesses, and institutions located on or near Sheridan Road. A couple weeks before the session, each invited 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 to observe activities during 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. Led by experienced facilitator Mary Laura Bushman of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), 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. Bushman, a member of the UPCORP Board of Directors, donated her time and materials for the session.

Process:

1. Introduction
2. 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:

The facilitator began by introducing the process, reviewing our work so far on the Broadway and Lawrence corridors, and encouraging the group to reflect on their “homework” of visiting the Sheridan Road Corridor. Participants introduced themselves and shared one upbeat image or word they associated with the potential or current Sheridan Road Corridor. These images included:

- A Zipper – Bringing things together
- Everchanging
- Respect for historic / community preservation
- Forefront
- North as vibrant, South as shabby & scary
- Living World
- Safe for kids
- Transitional / Mixing older residential & strip retail
- Lively (e.g., Boys & Girls Club)
- Tall Buildings
- Untapped Assets (history & green space)
- Uptown’s back door
- Small shops responsive to neighborhood
- Extremely diverse, increasingly diverse
- Valuable / Visible from the lake

INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING:

Bushman invited the participants to identify key elements in designing the future of Sheridan Road. She asked brainstorming questions and suggested some key sites in the corridor. The participants jotted notes to themselves about the changes they envision, then starred the top three or four ideas they would like to see implemented.

SHARING IN PAIRS:

Splitting into pairs, the participants discussed their ideas and chose three or four favorite ideas to write on idea cards and share with the group. The facilitator asked each pair to send up their one most innovative idea. She placed the idea cards on a “sticky wall” at the front of the room. Then each pair sent up a card for the idea that seemed hardest to do. The group worked together to categorize the ideas into Vision Element categories. Any ideas that were not already mentioned were added and placed into the category where they best fit.



Mary Laura Bushman helps the group to categorize their ideas for Sheridan Road.

VISION ELEMENTS:

The five Vision Element categories the group decided on were:

- Services that Build a Village
- Community-Scale Retail
- Pedestrian Oriented, “Friendly”
- Renaissance, Preservation of Identity
- Physical Continuity, “Lush Promenade”

The idea cards that comprised these Vision Elements are listed as “Original Data” on pages 5-9.

VISION PARAGRAPHS & ACTION STEPS:

The participants broke into five groups, each group taking on one of the above topics to develop further. The small groups worked 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). Action Steps included suggestions on when, how and by whom the action could be taken. The completed Vision Paragraphs and Action Steps for each of the five categories are given on pages 5-9.

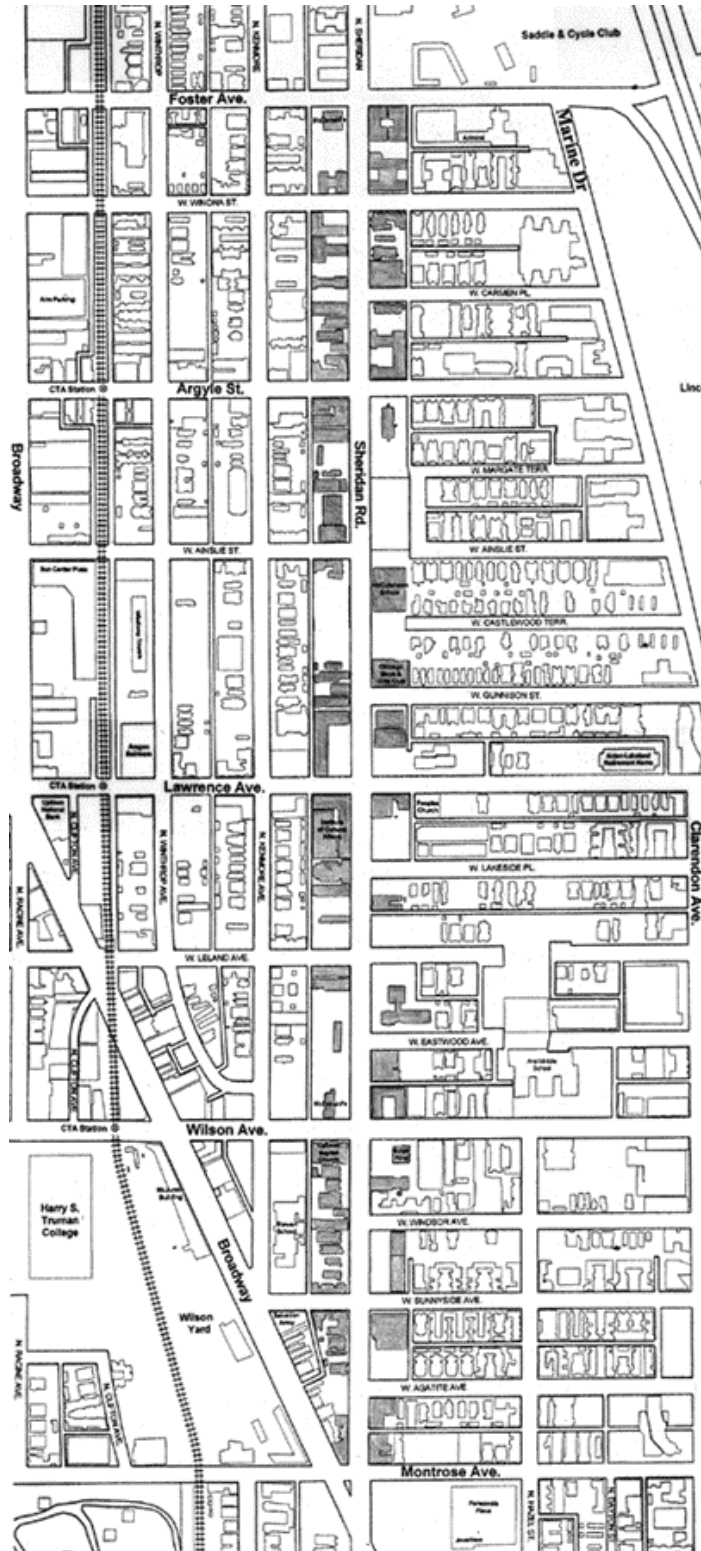
PLENARY:

The group reconvened to share and comment on the results of their small group work. Some common elements between the groups included doing a market needs assessment and building relationships between service providers, businesses, and residents. The focus was on an inviting, neighborhood-scale district that responds to the community’s needs for services and commercial activity.

As a final exercise, the group threw out ideas for “images that hold the corridor”—exciting themes that when you see it, you want to help create it. Some of the words and phrases mentioned included: Promenade, Village, Back Yard, Lakefront Village Promenade, Diversity, Zipper, Seam, New Village, Uptown Village Walk, and International Village. The group settled on Uptown Village Promenade (“Zipper”).

The group also took time to evaluate the session and reflect on the Corridors of Vision process as a whole. A common comment was a request for more time at the next session. Several people commented on the friendly, interactive, cooperative feeling of the group. The written evaluations are summarized on page 10. All participants were very positive about the experience and expressed their enthusiasm for the Corridors of Vision process.

Session 4 Study Area: SHERIDAN ROAD – Foster to Montrose





VISION ELEMENT:
SERVICES THAT BUILD A VILLAGE

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Existing services are not integrated and they address the needs of only a sector of our population. New approaches and relationships are needed between community and social service providers to build a sense of a village and provide integrated social services.

ACTION STEP: Needs assessment of the population. Review the survey.

WHEN: Starting January 2002, taking a year.

HOW: Form a task force, look for resources, outreach to affordable developers

ACTION STEP: Take action steps based on assessment of services needed for the entire population. Identify who can provide these services.

WHEN: 2003

HOW: Social service task force with Chamber of Commerce, local block clubs, and alderman's office.

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- Focus on Community (kids, services, etc.)
- Lawrence to Leland Social Service Center: parking, short order restaurant, activities to reduce loitering
- Neighborhood Community-Building, Quality of Life, Social Service
- New approaches and relationships between community and social service providers
- Summer Events



VISION ELEMENT:
COMMUNITY-SCALE RETAIL & BUSINESS

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Community-scale retail means to tie the businesses and retail development to the needs of the residents. This could include areas to meet and greet neighbors, such as sidewalk cafes and small businesses, reflecting the diversity of the community and building on existing physical assets.

ACTION STEP: Create a retail inventory—occupied and vacant—of what is there now.

WHEN: 1-2 years

HOW: Through UPCORP and/or Alderman Mary Ann Smith's task force on Argyle Street.

ACTION STEP: Feedback from community about needs in this market.

WHEN: 1-2 years

HOW: UPCORP to lead, collaborating with city officials and other organizations

ACTION STEP: Relationship-building with current business owners, merchants, property owners.

WHEN: 1-2 years

HOW: Through Chamber of Commerce and UPCORP

ACTION STEP: Develop plan for retail attraction, building on current community assets and current residents' interests in developing new businesses. Grassroots business development for Uptown.

WHEN: 3-5 years

HOW: UPCORP, Chamber, and Hull House lead a collaboration

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- Commercial use & parking tied to residential, wide sidewalks for meet/greet, cafés, etc.
- Build on community retail assets north of Argyle, great historic buildings
- Business improvement, eateries, small businesses
- Businesses that serve the residents



VISION ELEMENT:
PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED – “FRIENDLY”

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Evolve Sheridan corridor into a pedestrian artery that serves needs within the community (as opposed to a destination for people outside the neighborhood) specifically meeting needs of residents and workers. Create perception of safety especially for children and seniors. Provide the opportunity and setting for community interaction.

ACTION STEP: Manage traffic flow

WHEN: Within next year +/-

HOW: Traffic study to quantify north-south and intersecting east-west traffic. Implement pedestrian safety measures and traffic calming opportunities. Led by Dept. of Planning & Development, both Aldermen, and community groups.

ACTION STEP: Fill in vacant lots and underutilized properties (strip malls & fast food).

WHEN: Immediate & ongoing

HOW: Develop scenarios (plan) for key properties & promote to developers. Encourage residential development, built to sidewalk, with active uses on first floor.

ACTION STEP: Increase pedestrian use of street.

WHEN: Ongoing

HOW: Businesses to serve neighborhood residents & workers. Variety—avoid excessive duplication. Improve streetscape. Move heavy auto traffic generators to more auto-oriented streets.

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- No more “auto corners” (strip retail, fast food, etc. on street corners)
- More pedestrian traffic
- Walk-to stores, some catering to seniors, limit the parking
- Improve traffic flow, especially near Montrose



VISION ELEMENT:

RENAISSANCE / PRESERVATION / IDENTITY

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Create identity based on historic past and vibrant future that can be used as a model that can be replicated in other neighborhoods to be accomplished over the next five years.

ACTION STEP: UPCORP establishes team of residents, architect, professional designer, marketing individuals, and developers.

WHEN: Now is the time to begin.

HOW: Begin by identifying a facilitator who will work with Aldermanic offices to identify critical steps to be followed and developed.

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- Build on historic past, present, artistic/architectural issues
- General building clean-up and cleanliness on grounds



VISION ELEMENT:
PHYSICAL CONTINUITY – “LUSH PROMENADE”

VISION PARAGRAPH:

The following are elements of creating physical continuity: traditional street lamps, street-level friendly architecture, restored buildings, street paintings to give illusion of green space, plaza style retail/commercial, landscape differentiation, architectural cohesiveness.

ACTION STEP: Street lamps, street plantings.

WHEN: 1-2 years.

HOW: TIF funds for infrastructure improvements.

ACTION STEP: Plaza style retail/commercial, street-level friendly architecture

WHEN: 1-10 years

HOW: Developers, UPCORP, community groups, individual zoning considerations

ACTION STEP: Restored buildings, architectural cohesiveness.

WHEN: 1-10 years

HOW: Developers, community groups, individual zoning considerations

ORIGINAL DATA:

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

- “Boulevard”-quality streetscape – a lush promenade
- Integrated streetscape renovations, gateway motif
- More green, particularly south of Lawrence
- Higher density residential, wide street can handle traffic, people & sidewalks, 20-foot sidewalks
- No more vacant lots, create continuous low street wall

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
CORRIDORS OF VISION – SESSION 4
SHERIDAN ROAD – Foster to Montrose

Summary of Evaluative Comments:

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

Reflecting on Sheridan as a “community” center. The vibrant interactions among everyone present. Diversity of backgrounds and interests working together to create a collective image of what this corridor could be. Creating the beginning of a vision for Sheridan Road Corridor. Brainstorming, negotiating, discussing the character & potential of Sheridan Road from Montrose to Foster. Sharing ideas, number of ideas generated. Coming up with the name of the corridor. Sheridan as the informal backyard zipper. Discussing Sheridan Road of the future. The challenge of bringing the community of Uptown together. The visions and image.

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

Interactive, Friendly. Great group interaction. People were open and felt comfortable expressing their ideas and questioning the ideas of others. Cooperative. Need more businesspeople and institutional stakeholders from the street. Energetic, enthusiastic. Participatory, everyone sharing ideas. Friendly, cooperative, focused. Better than I thought it would be. Everyone wants things to look nice, serve the community and be a place you are proud to live. Responsive & alert – good and fruitful session. Interactive and relate well. Good, positive, participatory.

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

Keep the interaction. Group process moved well. More of the same, to get members of the community talking to one another. Discuss & brainstorm. Good structure/process. Have Mary Laura run them. System used works effectively. Continue the same.

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

The only thing that I would change is the amount of time; I think the group would benefit from another half-hour. Do not treat each street or corridor as a discrete entity; not every street can be its own “destination” area (i.e., the zipper notion). Hold more than one session to get broader representation. More UPCORP Board members! Allow more time for group sessions. More time, too rushed, needed a break, more time to network. Have more time for each working group. Do one for Argyle Street.

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

Try to integrate the various corridors into a cohesive whole. Act on the action steps. More interaction with community groups to provide some clarification and detail. Overview, integration of all corridors. Formalization & implementation of ideas shared. Putting plans into action, i.e., UPCORP/Chamber doing something to draw/promote business in Uptown. Making sure that someone is designated to follow-thru or coordinate the follow-thru of the ideas. Bring aldermen, investors, “powerbrokers” together to come up with a plan for implementation. UPCORP reps process our suggestions and recommendations for next steps. Talk with Aldermen about results. Second meeting; timeline & priorities established. Write the highlights of the discussion and distribute it to all participants.