

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CORRIDORS OF VISION

5TH FACILITATED SESSION

Tuesday, January 29, 2002

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

4753 North Broadway

1st Floor Conference Center

Study Area:

Broadway – Ainslie to Foster

See map in workbook

Participants:

Mary Laura Bushman, Institute of Cultural Affairs - Facilitator

Cindi Anderson, Uptown Chicago Commission

Tomas Bissonnette, Spanish Speaking Bookstore

Eric Cheng, Sun Wah

Kelli Cheng, Asian American Small Business Association

Dr. Solomon Chu, Uptown Chamber of Commerce

Thom Greene, Greene & Proppe

Steve Hartmann, Uptown Chicago Commission

Tam Van Nguyen, Vietnamese Association of Illinois

Jeff Pavia, Combined Insurance

Robert Peterson, Gunnison Block Club

Billy Pham, Asian American Small Business Association

Rick Pluhar, Grand Adell

Peter Porr, Southeast Asia Center

Jennifer Ritter, O.N.E.

Stewart Sheinfeld, Uptown Car Wash

Carol Kokola, Uptown Community Development Corporation

Executive Summary:

At the January 29 session, participants continued the Corridors of Vision process with a session based on Broadway, Ainslie to Foster. Outreach for this session was extensive. Packages were mailed to block clubs, community organizations and institutions. Neighborhood businesses were solicited by mail and in person. Each participant received an assessment workbook with 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 and absorb the look and feel of the corridor.

Based on their notes and observations, participants shared their current impressions and visions for the study area as it exists and as it might exist in the future. Facilitator Mary Laura Bushman

guided the group through a collective brainstorming, sharing in pairs and small group breakout with the objective of focusing on several different Vision Elements, descriptions and Action Steps to carry forward the creative and forceful changes envisioned by the group.

This session was the fifth in a series of Corridors of Vision workshops. The workshop series represents Phase 1 of the Corridors of Vision process. In later phases, UPCORP will share its draft vision for the corridors of Uptown with other community groups, incorporating input and inspiring discussion. With each refined iteration, the visions will grow into a tool with which the community can evaluate 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 previous Corridors of Vision sessions, which were designed and led by Mary Laura Bushman of the Institute of Cultural Affairs, and by Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn. Funding for this session was provided by the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development and by Abell Credit Corporation.

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 connections to the community.

SILENT WALK:

Bushman invited the session participants to imagine taking a silent walk on the subject corridor five years into the future and to envision the buildings currently on Broadway, from Ainslie to Foster. They were asked to record seven to ten attributes/dreams as they might appear five years from now.

SHARING IN PAIRS:

Working with a partner, the participants chose four best or most unique ideas to share with the group. Starting with one best idea per pair, group members placed the idea cards on the wall in front of the room. Then the second, third and fourth best ideas, if not already mentioned, were added. Once all the ideas were placed on the wall, the group worked together to categorize the ideas into Vision Element categories.

VISION ELEMENTS:

The five Vision Element categories the group decided on were:

Beautification and Navigation of Neighborhood
Business Marketing
Pedestrian-friendly Façade Improvements
Perception of Security
Character/Theme

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT

Participants numbered off into five groups, each considering one of the Vision Elements listed above. With the benefit of the Idea Cards, each group collaborated to develop a Vision Paragraph and 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 Vision Elements are detailed on the pages that follow.

SYNTHESIS & PLENARY

The groups reconvened to share and comment on the results of their small group work. Bushman led the group in a discussion to synthesize their ideas about the composition of the corridor and the similar impressions shared by the participants. The participants agreed that

WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

is a description that could be aptly applied to this Corridor.



VISION ELEMENT:

BEAUTIFICATION AND NAVIGATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Our vision for this corridor would not only beautify our neighborhood but also allow for easier navigation. We see the introduction of traffic-calming measures at busy intersections to improve pedestrian safety and discourage speeding. We would like to improve landscaping (not affecting traffic flow) and include new lighting fixtures on lampposts that display the uniqueness of each section and reinforce the unity of the many different ethnicities.

ACTION STEP:

Begin a streetscape project including:

Trees/ greening on main streets and side streets, too;

New lighting, scaled to pedestrians and vehicles;

Traffic calming, especially around Combined Insurance.

WHEN: Can start immediately; possibly tie to concepts in the Entertainment District to the south.

HOW: Community groups collectively petition Alderman to get funding through CDOT for a concept study

Get a grant and hire a design firm to do a preliminary study or plan.



VISION ELEMENT:

BUSINESS MARKETING

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Broad-based, diverse retail – preferably containing some types of national chains, to fill in missing types of businesses – increase interest and sales.

ACTION STEP: Identify possible sites for an "Anchor" –type store.

WHEN: NOW

HOW: Through commercial brokers and the Uptown Chamber.

ACTION STEP: Contact national chains through Uptown Chamber and Upcorp.

WHEN: After approval of the Goldblatt's/Borders project.

HOW: Through City of Chicago Department of Planning and commercial brokers and through Upcorp.

ACTION STEP: Contact existing businesses to see what they feel would complement their businesses.

WHEN: NOW

HOW: One on one contact and/or a survey. Use volunteers from the Uptown Chamber, the ethnic associations and Uptown Chicago Commission.



VISION ELEMENT:**PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS**

VISION PARAGRAPH:

We would like to see a shopping area where pedestrians are encouraged to stroll along the street from store to store. There are many factors that could lead to this, but our topic focuses on the buildings themselves, and how the structures welcome foot traffic. Considerations include façade improvements, presence of the windows and their decoration, and other external aesthetics. Coordination of these activities along the corridor could lead to increased foot traffic and business activity.

ACTION STEP: Organize workshops for business owners to discuss business improvement and incentives.
WHEN: Within the next year.
HOW: Involve City of Chicago, especially façade rebate department, through the Uptown Chamber, Upcorp and AASBA.

ACTION STEP: Establish information clearinghouse to serve as a liaison between businesses and city departments.
WHEN: Immediately
HOW: Disseminate information on rebate programs and other city incentives through the Uptown Chamber and Upcorp.



VISION ELEMENT:

PERCEPTION OF SECURITY

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Although overall crime statistics are improving, there is still a perception that the area is unsafe, fueled in large part by panhandling, and also sections of inadequate nighttime lighting. It is presumed that panhandling occurs primarily for the purchase of inexpensive liquor.

ACTION STEP: Eliminate sale of liquor in small (inexpensive) quantities. Negotiate with area liquor stores not to sell 40 oz. bottles of beer and ½ and full pints of hard liquor.

WHEN: After block clubs organize a campaign.

HOW: Block clubs and Uptown Chicago Commission approach storeowners and offer story of other stores that have agreed to cut small unit sales and have succeeded.

ACTION STEP: Need brighter and more street lighting and physical presence in areas of crime.

WHEN: Start now and continue indefinitely.

HOW: Propose a Special Service Area for funding for security. Through the CAPS program.

Invite the Police Commander to observe and respond.

Request that Streets and Sanitation Department have a staff member on duty just after dark for a weekly drive-around.



VISION ELEMENT:

CHARACTER/THEME

VISION PARAGRAPH:

This corridor begs a theme, an identity and a unifying character. Being in the vicinity of the dominant Argyle ethnic businesses, but also with some African and Caribbean influence near Foster and south of the corridor near Leland and Broadway, and some Latin influence, perhaps a multi cultural theme might be appropriate. A multi cultural theme would be colorful, interesting and unifying.

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| ACTION STEP: | Identify a better, more descriptive name for the area, possibly emphasizing the Asian character of the area. |
| WHEN: | This year |
| HOW: | Hold meetings with area businesses to reach consensus. Once a name is chosen, it could be used in advertising to brand the area. |
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| ACTION STEP: | Design and build a distinguishing entryway to the area. |
| WHEN: | Within five years. |
| HOW: | Investigate how other areas have built their entryways, i.e., the archway in Pilsen, columns along Halsted. |
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| ACTION STEP: | Expand the Bezazian Library branch to make it a multicultural library. |
| HOW: | Through Alderman Smith and San O. |
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| ACTION STEP: | Develop a multicultural/international charter school |
| WHEN: | Within the next ten years. |
| HOW: | Through the Chicago and State Boards of Education and through Southeast Asia Center. |