

UPTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CORRIDORS OF VISION

6TH FACILITATED SESSION

Thursday, May 29, 2003

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

4753 North Broadway

1st Floor Conference Center

Study Area:

Wilson Avenue – Marine Drive to Clark Street

See attached map

Participants:

Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn, Heartland Alliance (Facilitator)

Katherine Boyda, Graceland Wilson

Neighborhood Association

Angus Buchanan, Weiss Hospital

Mike Checuga, Pegasus Theater

Dr. Solomon Chu, Uptown Chamber

Paul Collurafici, Tattoo Factory

Robert Davis, Unique Findings

Tom Drake, The Drake Group

Judy Gall, Alternatives, Inc.

John Green, Emmaus Ministries

Maurice Hamp, EZRA

Dr. Phoebe Helm, Truman College

John Holden, Uptown Historical Society,

Dover Street Neighbors

Liz Holland, Abbell Credit

Angelo Karavites, McDonald's

Bennett Lawson, for Senator Carol Ronen

Alex Levy, Pegasus Theater

Barbara Lorenz, Winthrop Townhouse

Condo Assn.

Heather Meyers, EZRA

David Rowe, Uptown Chicago Commission

Wally Rozak, Uptown Chamber

Rich Schultz, CTA

Helen Shiller, Alderman, 46th Ward

Bob Tack, Lord Companies LLC

Patrick Thompson, Manske,

Dieckmann, Thompson Architects

Mary Young, Jane Addams Hull House Assn.
Mark Zipperer, Buena Park Neighbors
Joyce Dugan, UPCORP Director of
Economic Development
Rebecca Dugan, Volunteer

Executive Summary:

At the May 29 session, participants continued the Corridors of Vision process with a session based on Wilson Avenue, Marine Drive to Clark Street. Outreach for this session was extensive. Over 100 packages were mailed to elected officials, block clubs, community organizations and institutions. In addition, each business in the subject area was delivered a package by hand. Each participant received an assessment workbook with questions centered on five values: accessibility, safety, goods and services, aesthetics and community diversity. Each 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 Sid Mohn 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 sixth 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. Dr. Mohn, an experienced facilitator and UPCORP Vice President, donated his time and materials for the session. Funding for this session was provided by the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development and by Abbell 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 connection to the community, and identified up to three nouns or images that reflect their current impressions of the corridor. These **Current Views** included:

Dynamic
Busy
Dirty
Uninviting
Disjointed
Potentially exciting
Beautiful
Exciting
Loud
Diverse
Melting Pot
Scary
Confusing
Misunderstood
Unplanned
Not cohesive
Eclectic
Gentrification
Getting better quickly
Concrete
Economically diverse
Changing
Tremendous potential
Fractured

SILENT WALK:

Mohn invited the session participants to imagine taking a silent walk on Wilson Avenue area five years into the future and to envision the buildings currently on Wilson Avenue, Marine Drive to Clark Street. 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:

- Broad Economic Development
- Integrated Public Transportation Plan
- Experience of Diverse Community
- Appealing, Compelling Ambience
- Security

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. Mohn 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

“ECLECTRIC” AVENUE

is a description that could be aptly applied to the Wilson Avenue Corridor.



VISION ELEMENT:

BROAD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VISION PARAGRAPH:

To maximize use, viability and success of the Corridor, we need to promote broad economic development through the enhancement of positive businesses and institutions. We need to create broad-based destinations.

- ACTION STEP:** Encourage attractive signage for identity and beautification.
WHEN: NOW
HOW: Chamber of Commerce should work with existing merchants; perhaps create special banners around a theme.
- ACTION STEP:** Recruit broad-based businesses, including restaurants, health club, destination retail and services.
WHEN: NOW
HOW: Broad community outreach, including public officials, Chamber, Upcorp, community organizations, block clubs and residents talking to potential new business owners and tenants, stressing demographics and buying power of the community.
- ACTION STEP:** Capitalize on arts connections to market and promote Wilson Avenue.
WHEN: NOW
HOW: Use vacant space to display community art around a theme.
With participation of neighborhood artists, help retailers to attractively display merchandise.
Create visible identity for existing arts' groups.
Add signage to public transportation to help visitors locate venues.
- ACTION STEP:** Encourage kiosks for small businesses.
WHEN: Five years from now
HOW: If street life is active and safe, they will come.
- ACTION STEP:** Create affordable student housing near Truman College.
WHEN: FUTURE
HOW: Determine extent of need, designate appropriate property near Truman College, which would provide increased market for neighborhood businesses and increased foot traffic.



VISION ELEMENT:

INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Develop an effective, attractive transportation hub, integrating the el and other modes, to increase inbound/outbound/throughbound use of public transit and serve a rapidly developing retail community. This requires an intentional approach to transit-oriented development and acknowledgement of parking needs.

ACTION STEP: All community to inform the CTA of community demand for access to new or rehabbed stations at Wilson and at Sunnyside (addresses Wilson Yard and Truman College).

ACTION STEP: Conduct Truman College survey for fall students re: "What it would take to use the CTA."

ACTION STEP: Hold community meetings re design of new or rehabbed Wilson Avenue station in 2003.

ACTION STEP: CTA review of existing bus and rail connections for optimum use and traffic control.



VISION ELEMENT:

EXPERIENCE OF DIVERSE COMMUNITY

VISION PARAGRAPH:

There is a need for diverse businesses and services to develop over the next five years. This can be accomplished by providing goods and services for a broad spectrum of housing options and maintaining middle income housing.

ACTION STEP: Limit the expansion of national and locally based “chain” retail/commercial businesses to increase and maintain the variety of unique retail options available to Uptown residents.

WHEN: Next 2-3 years.

HOW: Continue to recruit via brokers, realtors, retailers, and neighbors.

ACTION STEP: Create an international festival of food and music to draw Uptown residents together and highlight Uptown to those outside the community.

WHEN: Next 3-5 years.



VISION ELEMENT:

APPEALING, COMPELLING AMBIANCE

VISION PARAGRAPH:

Promote Wilson Avenue to project an inviting ambiance for an economically and culturally diverse neighborhood.

-
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| ACTION STEP: | Clean and maintain sidewalks. |
| WHEN: | NOW |
| HOW: | More containers, regular sweeping, establish SSA |
| ACTION STEP: | Create consistent landscaping |
| WHEN: | ASAP |
| HOW: | Use appropriate historic planters
Plant greenery, flowers
Incorporate local arts into the theme |
| ACTION STEP: | Expand Community Festival to draw people to the neighborhood to sample diverse food, arts and entertainment. |
| WHEN: | 2004 |
| HOW: | Work with Truman College, City's Department of Cultural Affairs and existing arts groups from the Uptown neighborhood. |
| ACTION STEP: | Consistently integrate art into signage, not only providing information but also sharing a sense of community. |
| WHEN: | ASAP |
| HOW: | Work with CTA, Streets & Sanitation and other City Departments and community businesses. |
| ACTION STEP: | Reconstruct transit center to support local restaurants and businesses. |



VISION ELEMENT:

SECURITY

VISION PARAGRAPH:

The objective is for pedestrians and drivers to feel the same level of safety and Security they feel on other major thoroughfares on the North Side.

ACTION STEP: Allocate regular, visible, consistent, measurable and accountable police patrols of the area.
WHEN: As soon as possible.
HOW: Convince police officials and elected officials to give Wilson Avenue priority in the re-allocation of police beats.
New beats impacting Wilson Avenue should include car, bike and foot patrols.
More residents and businesses need to report crime.

ACTION STEP: Encourage property owners to take steps to increase safety and cleanliness in front and in back of their properties, on all faces of their buildings.
WHEN: As soon as possible.
HOW: Community residents and organizations should apply pressure to recalcitrant property owners.
Expand the façade rebate program to include public safety measures.

ACTION STEP: Install ornamental and functional streetlights.
WHEN: As soon as possible.
HOW: Pressure governmental officials for allocation of resources.

ACTION STEP: Eliminate loitering.
WHEN: As soon as possible.
HOW: A concerted effort by elected officials, social service agencies and police to eliminate loitering and to control the conduct of their clients.
Increased focus on known loiterers and troublemakers.

