

Rogers Park

Corridor Development Initiative

Report—March 2021



See pages 18 to 21 for four proposals for the site that reflect the community's priorities.



Credit: City Open Workshop, Wyzendale & Smith Group.

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HOWARD STREET

HOWARD
STATION



ASHLAND AVE

N ROGERS AVENUE

More information and online appendix:
metroplanning.org/rogerspark

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Left: Google.

Letter from the 49th Ward Alderwoman

In the 49th Ward, we see a community made up of strong activism and a belief that we all must do our part to protect one another. Like all neighborhoods in Chicago, we are suffering from the devastating effects of COVID-19. Our businesses are struggling. Our residents face economic challenges, including keeping up with living costs or being newly unemployed. Our feeling of social connectedness has been broken. However, Rogers Park continues to fight. The 49th Ward was one of the first communities in the nation to form a response team to help address the impacts of COVID-19. In addition to pressing pandemic and economic issues, we continue to face development pressure. Pre-COVID, our office began receiving numerous proposals for the only publicly owned, vacant land in our ward. In keeping with the neighborhood's tradition and culture that is steeped in coming together to tackle a problem, we decided to partner with the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) to conduct the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI), a participatory planning process for community stakeholders. We wanted to get out ahead of any future private proposals, and this process provided us this opportunity. We knew that a robust process centered on lifting up locally impacted community voices was absolutely necessary to build trust, empower residents, and make good decisions about our public resources.

This important piece of city-owned land is at the corner of Howard Street and Ashland Avenue in a part of the 49th Ward and Rogers Park that we call the "North of Howard" neighborhood. We thank the Peterson Garden Project and members of the refugee population for their utilization of this land while it currently remains without a private owner. Many of our social service institutions are also located in this area, as well as historical cultural institutions and other vital community organizations.

These institutions provide excellent services to those in need and serve as a major asset to the 49th Ward's sustainability. Howard Street is lined with many Black-owned businesses that uplift the community, whether it be through providing delicious food, personal services like haircuts, or a place for community life to thrive. The North of Howard Area has also gone through many struggles, as it is a place where historically much poverty has existed. As the northernmost part of Chicago at the border with Evanston, it's also an area that is overlooked in City planning and development. Due to all of these considerations, we knew that a true community developed approach to this site was a must to reach a population that, in the past, has been marginalized, deprived of resources, and ignored.

The CDI model takes a deeper approach to public participation. The process equips participants with the knowledge and skills to create scenarios for development grounded in creativity and market realities. However, this was not a smooth process. Like the rest of the nation, we undertook this process during the unprecedented time of the novel coronavirus pandemic. This pandemic challenged us to be innovative and resourceful. MPC rose to that challenge at every step, and it is thanks in part to the flexibility of their process that we were able to succeed. We were able to reach critical parts of the population that are normally difficult to reach through the use of community partner-driven surveys that met people where they were. This was one of many alternate options we explored during this difficult time. We specifically thank those who helped put their time, health, and emotional well-being on the line during this process to better the community.

This report documents the community efforts, needs, and goals that will serve as a guiding force for any decision to be made for this site. This report will also serve as a public record for potential developers. We thank all who participated in the CDI process. We hope you will continue to provide input as we release a Request for Proposal (RFP).

Sincerely,



Maria E. Hadden
Alderwoman
Chicago's 49th Ward



Equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) advocates that people of all incomes experience the benefits of dense, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs. eTOD supports thriving neighborhoods by improving access to jobs and amenities across the city and suburbs, decreasing cost of living, and reducing traffic congestion and air pollution by centering the residents who might be most impacted by development.

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) advances equitable policy-making and has an extensive track record of working with government, community, and business leaders across metropolitan Chicago to:

- Revise local policies to encourage greater density and affordable housing options near transit;
- Research and recommend new financing tools to encourage eTOD; and
- Engage communities in shaping their local vision for eTOD through our **Corridor Development Initiative (CDI)** and other forms of technical assistance.

In 2020, the 49th Ward Alderwoman Maria Hadden invited MPC to lead an inclusive, site-based planning process for community members to help shape the future of the city-owned lot located at the corner of Howard and Ashland, a few steps away from the Howard transit hub. The property will undergo a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, led by the City through the Department of Planning and Development, and informed by community priorities for redevelopment.

From October to December 2020, MPC brought the Corridor Development Initiative to Rogers Park to align conversations on investments near Howard Street and Ashland Avenue, while leading community members through a process to create viable development proposals. In collaboration with volunteer experts in development and design, MPC helped stakeholders understand the potential benefits of a reimagined space and encouraged the community to explore all available options. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic taking place as this CDI unfolded, MPC, in partnership with local stakeholders, adapted our traditional outreach approach to prioritize the health and safety of the participants, volunteers, and staff.

This report documents the results of the CDI engagement process. It is important to note that the goal was not to reach consensus on any one vision, but to identify areas of broad community agreement about the future of the site.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES/VALUES OF THE CDI ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Equity as a process and outcome.

The CDI process sought to ensure the voices of the people who would be most impacted by the development of the site were at the table. Ongoing conversations and meetings led by the 49th Ward Office with developers, community members, and the City will continue after the production of this final report. By incorporating community-led recommendations during this preliminary phase of the process, we aimed to create accountability and ensure proactive engagement.

Plan with communities, not for communities.

We respected the knowledge and assets of community members by working closely with the 49th Ward to establish an advisory committee of neighborhood residents and stakeholders who helped tailor our approach to outreach, shaped content for meetings, and served as ambassadors for the project.

Cultivate collaboration.

The CDI sought to cultivate collaboration between community members, public agencies, and developers. Community members are better equipped to participate in advocacy and decision-making when they have worked to establish guiding principles for development supported by quantitative and qualitative data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through a combination of in-person and virtual public meetings, DIY at-home kits, three online surveys, and intercept questionnaires, over 200 participants shared their ideas, concerns, and opinions about what is needed in the community. Neighbors, business owners, and institutional partners participated in small group discussions, building block exercises, and polling to craft specific recommendations that considered market realities, economic impacts, and how the design could improve the health of residents and preserve green space. Highlights from the recommendations include:

- Maximize retention of **publicly-accessible community garden**, balanced with economic feasibility.
- If existing green space is displaced, develop a plan to **ensure the residents who use the land may continue to benefit**. Reserving a portion of the site for a community garden would depend on economic feasibility of any proposed development.
- Locate new construction at site boundaries to **maintain the Howard streetscape**.
- Provide a **community-based economic generator**, such as an incubator, community space, urban farm, etc.
- Introduce a **residential component** to the site, with a mix of market-rate, affordable, and unit sizes.
- City should explore **offsetting land acquisition cost** for development.
- **Leverage residential sq. ft.** to pay for other uses on site.
- Consider efforts to **attract retail and commercial tenants** that are aligned to the neighborhood aesthetics and will **strengthen the local business corridor**.

HOW THIS REPORT WILL BE USED

49th Ward Alderwoman Maria Hadden will consult with the City based on the results of this report to help determine the most appropriate and realistic uses for the land. The 49th Ward has identified priorities that emerged from the CDI process, including preserving green space, creating communal spaces, and effectively using the land to strengthen the local business corridor.

The City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development intends to issue an RFP in 2021 to select a development team who will purchase and redevelop the property. The 49th Ward Office commits to hold a series of public meetings and outreach after the RFP is released to offer the community opportunities for transparency and feedback. The intent is to have the CDI report and recommendations included in the RFP to provide potential developers insight on what community members have identified as important considerations for future development. Final proposals will be weighted based on their ability to respond to the community's recommendations and other core requirements of the RFP.

MPC will widely distribute this report and continue conversations with the local advisory committee to advocate for a plan that best reflects the community's needs and priorities. The CDI experience and outcomes serve as a model for how proactive planning can produce development that meets the needs and desires of local residents and businesses; connects people to jobs, amenities, and experiences in different communities; and increases transit ridership for a diverse community with varying needs.

Learn more about MPC's transit-oriented development work at metroplanning.org/tod, more about equitable transit oriented development at elevatedchicago.org, and more about this specific initiative at metroplanning.org/rogerspark.



The Corridor Development Initiative

The Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) is a participatory planning process, led by MPC, which engages communities throughout the Chicago region in proactively planning for real-world development scenarios. Participants gain a deeper understanding of issues such as density, transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and the true cost of development.

Through a series of interactive workshops, participants create a set of priorities to guide community leaders as they plan for future development in their neighborhoods. They start with an exercise using wooden blocks and aerial maps of the selected sites, where they “build” what they would like to see and test whether their projects are financially feasible. Participants then work together to consider development options and explore how their ideas might perform on the ground.

The CDI is not a master planning process but can be integrated with such processes. Developers can also use this CDI Report to understand local opportunities and values.

The Rogers Park CDI process, which took place in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, included the following meetings:

VIRTUAL MEETING 1

OCTOBER 1, 2020

Existing Conditions and Goals

The first meeting provided an overview of current land use policies, demographics, and commercial changes in the community. Participants learned about development opportunities and challenges and provided visioning through online polling

VIRTUAL, IN-PERSON, AND DIY AT HOME “MEETING 2”

OCTOBER 2-14, 2020

Design Workshops

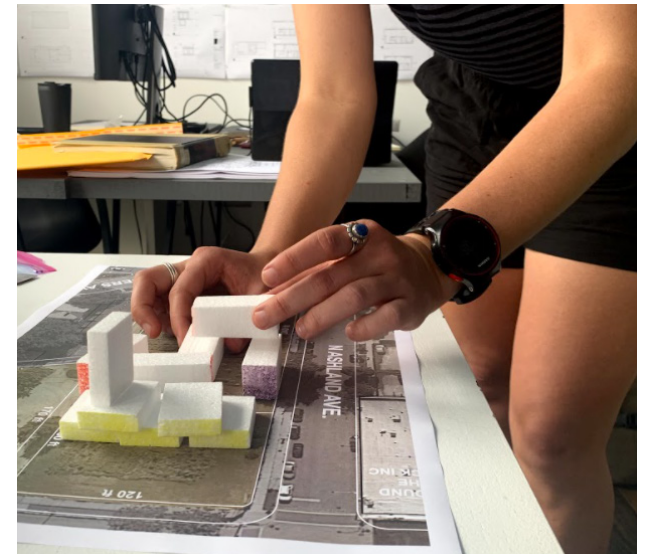
Next, community members explored design and financing options for their ideas through design exercises in partnership with CityOpen, a pro-bono design consulting organization. These workshops took place either in the comfort of their homes (DIY kits), at an in-person session through hands-on block-building, or virtually through an online design platform called SketchUp. Participants created hypothetical developments using various wooden (or virtual) blocks that represented different building uses. As community members built their proposals, they were sketched by design professionals while a real estate advisor estimated and discussed development costs, revenues, and any financing gaps.

VIRTUAL MEETING 3

NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Development Scenarios

The final meeting featured a panel of practitioners to discuss the concepts created in the design workshop and weigh in with their experience executing similar projects. The panel responded to questions, shared local examples, and reflected on the potential challenges and success of proposed concepts in light of current market trends. The planning team polled stakeholders to prioritize recommendations, which are compiled into this report to provide developers and other stakeholders with a community-led vision for the site.



A demonstration of the at-home DIY kits from City Open Workshop..

Highlights from the Rogers Park CDI



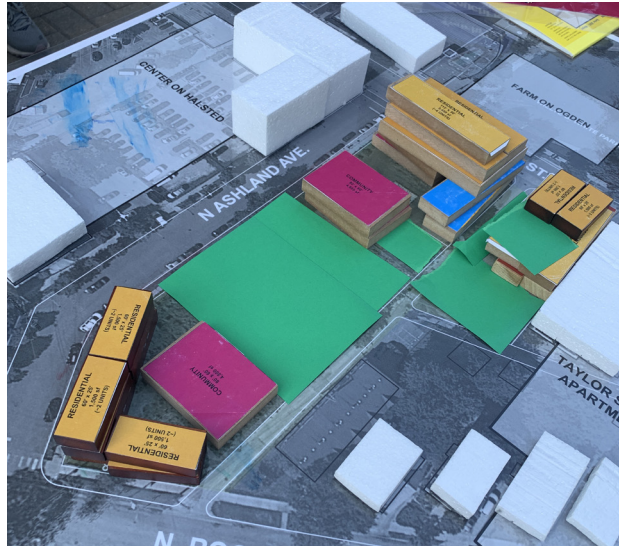
A tour of the site and the surrounding area led by local community groups.



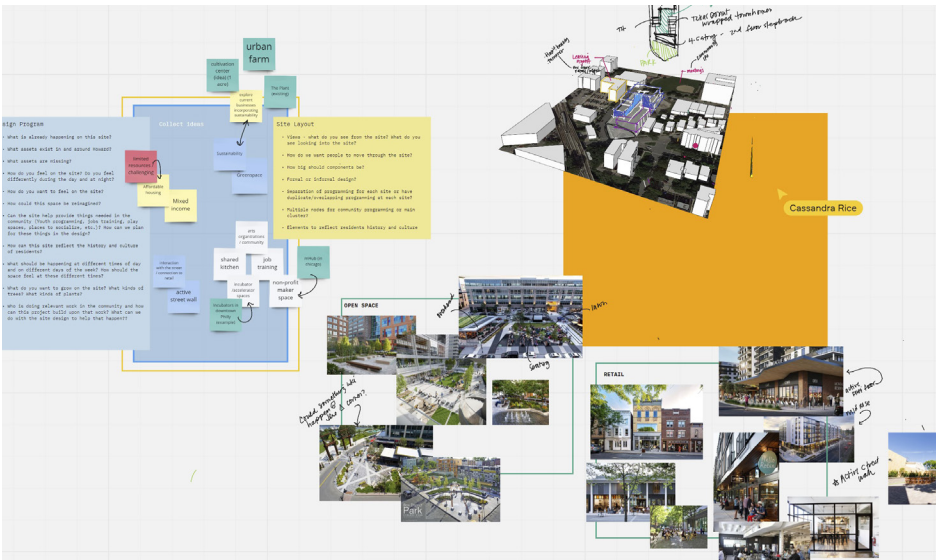
Submissions from the at-home DIY kits.



Highlights from the Rogers Park CDI



Hands-on block-building exercise at Gale Community Academy.



Idea board from the City Open Workshop Virtual Design Charette.



A working SketchUp model from City Open Workshop Virtual Design Charette.

Neighborhood + Site Details

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Rogers Park is one of the furthest north of Chicago's 77 community areas, and was annexed by the city in 1893. The neighborhood is home to just under 55,000 residents whose population reflects similar demographics to Chicago as a whole. Rogers Park is home to Loyola University's Main Chicago Campus, and is directly adjacent to the Lake Michigan shoreline to the east. The community is well served by Chicago's transit network—bisected by the UP-North Metra Line and the Red and Purple Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) lines.

As of 2018, 43.9 percent of Rogers Park residents were white non-Hispanic, 20.6 percent were Hispanic or Latino, 26.3 percent were Black, 5.4 percent were Asian, and 3.8 percent were all other categories. A majority of residents reported household income below \$49,999, with 31.9 percent less than \$25,000 and an additional 26.1 percent below \$49,999.

As of 2018, residential vacancy in Rogers Park was approximately 12 percent, and of the remaining 24,000 non-vacant units, roughly three-quarters were renter-occupied.

According to data from the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, Rogers Park is a generally affordable community that has a substantial number of low- and moderate-income households. There has been a recent growth in the number of higher-income households, as well as a drop in the share of units renting for below \$900 as a percentage of total rental units in the neighborhood*. This has raised concerns that the neighborhood may be experiencing a loss of affordability.

Rogers Park by the numbers

Population	54,872
<i>Change since 2010</i>	<i>0.2%</i>
Housing units.	24,282
<i>Change since 2010</i>	<i>9.4%</i>
Median household income	\$40,591
<i>Change since 2010</i>	<i>-12.1%</i>
Median monthly gross rent (2010)	\$804
<i>Change since 2000</i>	<i>4.9%</i>
Median monthly owner costs (2010)	\$1,882
<i>Change since 2000</i>	<i>5.5%</i>
Unemployment rate (2018).	6.7%
<i>Change since 2010</i>	<i>-0.8%</i>
Average daily boardings at Howard CTA Station (2018), all lines	4,778
<i>Change in daily boardings at Howard CTA Station, 2010 to 2018</i>	<i>-13%</i>
Average Weekday Boardings Rogers Park Metra Station (2018), all lines	1,393
<i>Change in daily boardings at Rogers Park Metra Station, 2014 to 2018</i>	<i>-7%</i>

Sources: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Community Data Snapshot, 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates, Chicago Rehab Network Housing Fact Sheet, Chicago Transit Authority Annual Ridership Reports, 2018 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts: Summary Results

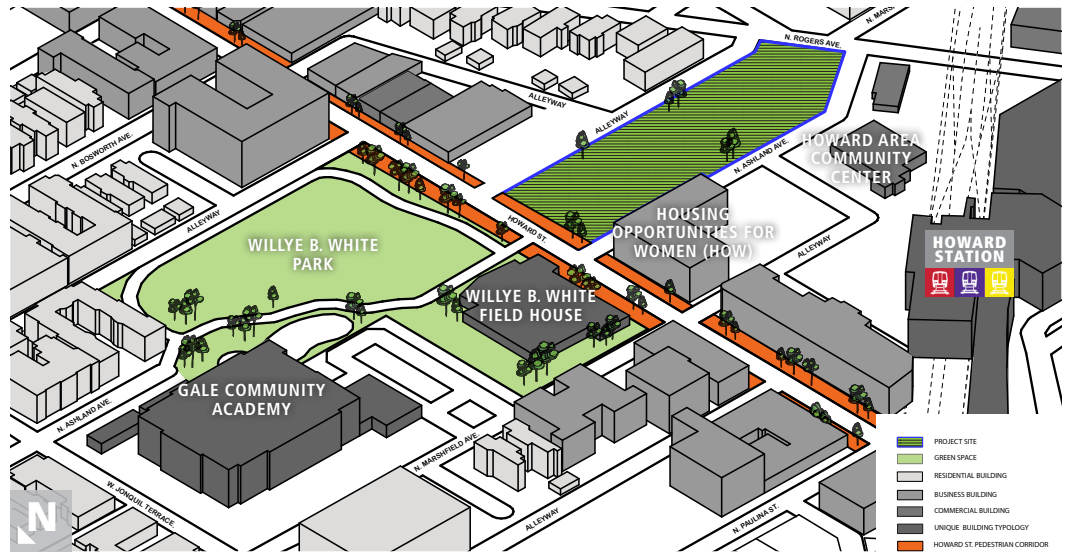
*The Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University (IHS) uses \$900 as a proxy for measuring affordable rent for a household earning 150 percent of the poverty level. This metric is informed by IHS's calculation of affordable housing demand. For additional information on affordability factors, see the methodology for the Institute's 2019 State of Rental Housing in Cook County report.

SITE DETAILS

Howard Street is the northern boundary of the current site and delineates the border between Chicago proper and neighboring Evanston west of Paulina Street. Historically, Howard Street was a thriving theater district prior to shifting to a commercial and retail corridor in the mid-20th Century. Over the decades, the area has suffered from lack of investment and retail and residential vacancies. However, the blocks directly surrounding the Howard CTA station remain active, offer neighborhood amenities, and have potential for development. The CDI site (see aerial) is approximately one acre and is bound by Howard Street, Ashland Avenue, and Rogers Avenue. It sits across Howard Street from Willye B. White Park and Fieldhouse and Gale Community Academy. The site is a part of a transitional zone around the Howard Street CTA Station with big-box retail to the west, smaller-scale retail along Howard Street moving east, and multi- and single-family residential to the north and south.

The site is currently occupied by the Hello Howard Community Garden, which operates as a 'pop up' community garden under the Peterson Garden Project. Hello Howard has been active since 2014 and has about 250 raised beds—26 of which are dedicated to Grow2Give and another 30 for Howard Area Community Center refugee programs. Presently, most of the produce is donated to the Howard Area Community Center, which serves thousands of low-income clients, including many newly arriving refugees. The produce from several other beds are donated to other non-profit projects.

Prior to the site's current use as a community garden, a since-demolished industrial printing facility required the City to undertake minor remediation of the land upon purchasing the parcel in the early 2000s. No additional remediation of the site is needed for development. The site is 500 feet (or one-tenth of a mile) away from the Howard CTA Station, well within the minimum distance to allow for transit-oriented development under city ordinance. This area is part of the Special Service Area #19 and is not eligible for TIF benefits.



1552-1608 W Howard Street (Highlighted in black stripes and blue outline above)

47,260 sq. ft. | Zoned B3-5 | Owned by the City of Chicago

Community Participation

OUTREACH STRATEGY

MPC worked closely with the 49th Ward Office to develop a community outreach strategy. Initial meetings were held with key city government partners, including the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Department of Housing, Department of Transportation, and Chicago Transit Authority. The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) also collaborated to provide community-level health impact assessment data. This information provided insight on how the community of Rogers Park compares to the rest of the city on key public health indicators such as access to green space, access to stable and affordable housing, and mental and social well being. Through surveying, priorities were identified by community members in these areas.

Meetings were also held virtually with institutional stakeholders to coordinate information on past planning efforts, and new and future development that would impact the Howard and Ashland intersection.

To ensure the outreach strategy resulted in significant attendance and community participation, MPC assembled an advisory committee of local stakeholders. This group met twice prior to the CDI workshops to provide feedback on meeting content, advise on local outreach opportunities and best practices, promote meetings, offer knowledge on past planning efforts and Rogers Park's sociopolitical landscape, and disseminate information and surveys for additional outreach. MPC also consulted these advisors throughout the project for feedback on the draft version of this report.

The advisory committee consisted of representatives from many local organizations:

- A Just Harvest
- Family Matters
- Gale Community Academy LSC
- Good News Partners
- Housing Opportunities for Women
- Howard Area Community Center
- James Sneider Apartments
- ONE Northside
- Peterson Garden Project
- Rogers Park Business Alliance
- Rogers Park Builders Group

OUTREACH METHODS

MPC worked with the advisory committee to conduct robust outreach, including the methods detailed here. Several community organizations, including A Just Harvest, Family Matters, and Gale Community Academy provided additional support and resources for leading on-the-ground outreach. These organizations received stipends for their contributions. The primary objective was to invite area residents and stakeholders to participate in the public meetings held between October and December 2020. Most of the engagements were virtual due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. The original timeline was extended to reflect the need to reach populations that were more challenging to engage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual Meetings

Given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings that were traditionally in-person were adapted to be virtual. They were hosted on Zoom, live streamed on the Alderwoman's Facebook page, and recorded on YouTube. The virtual materials are available on MPC's and the Ward office's websites.

Informational Videos

Several "101" videos were produced to provide more context on the project, including [an introduction to the CDI introduction process](#); [why the health of Roger Park residents matters](#); discussion on the risk of displacement; and information on eTOD, zoning, and affordable housing.

Emails

MPC sent promotional emails to the advisory committee for wider distribution through their networks to ensure the community knew about upcoming meetings and surveys.

Online Announcements

MPC used social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, to promote the meetings. The social media posts ranged from informational videos to meeting live streams.

SMS Updates

Community members could opt-in for text message updates relevant to the project, coordinated by the 49th Ward Office. Updates were regularly shared about upcoming meetings and open surveys.

On-the-ground outreach

MPC staff and volunteers distributed flyers in the nearby residential units and businesses of the Howard Corridor. MPC made efforts to connect with additional community organizations, such as A Just Harvest and Family Matters, to do extensive, on-the-ground intercept surveying.

In-Language Outreach

All surveys were translated into Spanish and Swahili. The virtual and in-person meeting opportunities had Spanish interpreters to translate materials.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Kits

Fifty take-home kits were created by CityOpen Workshop and disseminated through the 49th Ward Office. Community residents, including some students from Gale Community Academy, reserved all available kits within two weeks of opening registration. About half of the registrants submitted their kits back, including ideas ranging from a water park to mixed-use development to a full garden.

Surveys and Focus Groups

To gather input on the process from the Rogers Park community, MPC designed online surveys that were distributed to meeting attendees, as well as to others who had not had the opportunity to attend the meetings. Targeted focus groups through Rogers Park Business Alliance, ONE Northside, and Rogers Park Builders Group, as well as intercept surveying in English, Spanish, and Swahili through A Just Harvest and Family Matters were conducted. Survey responses also informed the recommendations.



3 ONLINE WORKSHOPS
+ 3 IN PERSON
WORKSHOPS



MEETING PARTICIPATION

Six different community meetings took place between October 1 and November 12, 2020. The Zoom meetings were live-streamed through the 49th Ward Office's Facebook page and recorded. Each community touch-point involved over 100 participants.

Between the first and third meetings, MPC conducted additional outreach to ensure residents of the North of Howard community had the opportunity to provide input. See the tables on the following page for more

data on the breakdown of meeting participants. During each of the townhall meetings, MPC used Menti polling to interactively engage attendees, collecting demographics and development preferences. This information was supplemented with online surveying through SurveyMonkey after the meetings. All of this quantitative data, in addition to more qualitative community input, informed the conclusions of this report.

Participants and demographics*

Race/Ethnicity	Meeting 1	Meeting 3	Online Surveys	In-Person Surveys	Weighted Average
African-American	8%	16%	11%	61%	28%
White	70%	69%	64%	17%	49%
Asian	8%	6%	5%	1%	4%
Latino/Hispanic	6%	2%	7%	11%	9%
Two or more	5%	4%	10%	2%	5%
None of the above	3%	2%	3%	7%	5%

Live or work	Meeting 1	Meeting 3	Online Surveys	In-Person Surveys	Weighted Average
Live in Rogers Park	57%	52%	74%	50%	62%
Work in Rogers Park	2%	4%	5%	6%	5%
Live and work	27%	29%	17%	35%	26%
None of the above	15%	15%	3%	10%	8%

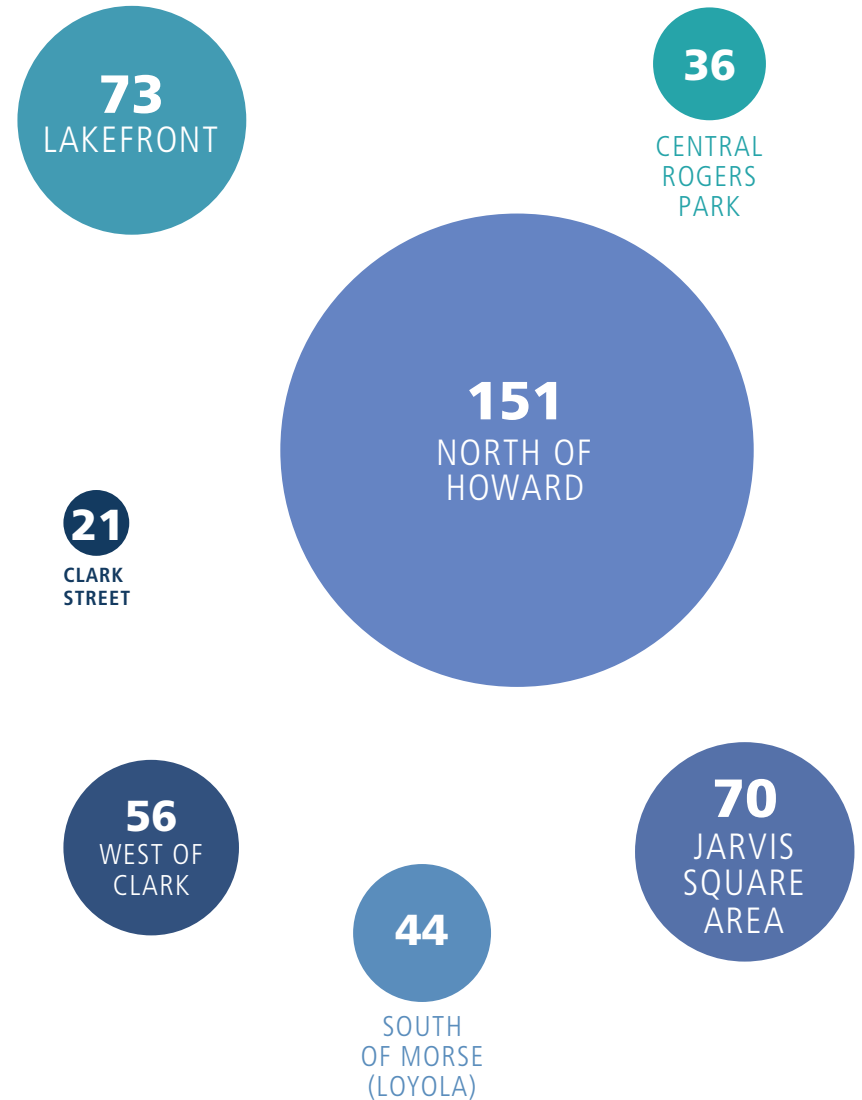
Rent or own	Meeting 1	Meeting 3	Online Surveys	In-Person Surveys	Weighted Average
Rent	41%	30%	51%	81%	58%
Own	50%	57%	41%	9%	33%
Neither	9%	13%	8%	9%	9%

Age	Meeting 1	Meeting 3	Online Surveys	In-Person Surveys	Weighted Average
0 to 18	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%
19 to 30	17%	15%	21%	18%	19%
31 to 50	45%	40%	54%	40%	47%
51 to 64	27%	33%	20%	27%	24%
65 and older	11%	13%	5%	11%	9%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

*Data on this page on the following pages are a combination of in-meeting Menti polling and online and in-person survey responses.

Where participants live



Community Values

Our community values high-quality **jobs** and opportunities for our youth through **job-training** programs, **maker spaces**, and **youth activities**.

We seek a **community space**—whether that is green space, an urban farm, a green roof, or a public square. We desire a **place to gather**.

Our community needs **affordable housing** and **mixed-use development**, which could include restaurants or a market that provides **access to healthy food**.

Throughout this planning process, community members voiced a number of different goals and objectives for the future use and programming of the site. The guiding values below capture these goals and should be used to create a framework to help the community review proposals brought forward for the site. While development proposals will likely not be able to incorporate all of these items, these values should be front and center during the review process.

Economic Justice

This site is in an area within the 49th Ward that has historically faced economic challenges, which have been further exacerbated by the pandemic. As a result, the community wants to see a use on this site that will provide an economic benefit to residents. This could include a facility that provides jobs or skills development to the unemployed and underemployed.

Social Integration

The community desires a place that serves all ages and backgrounds during all seasons. Many participants voiced that existing institutions and open spaces in the area felt closed off to community members due to sign-up requirements or offerings that did not serve their interests. Youth activities should also be central to future uses, programming, and proposals for the site.

Equitable Access

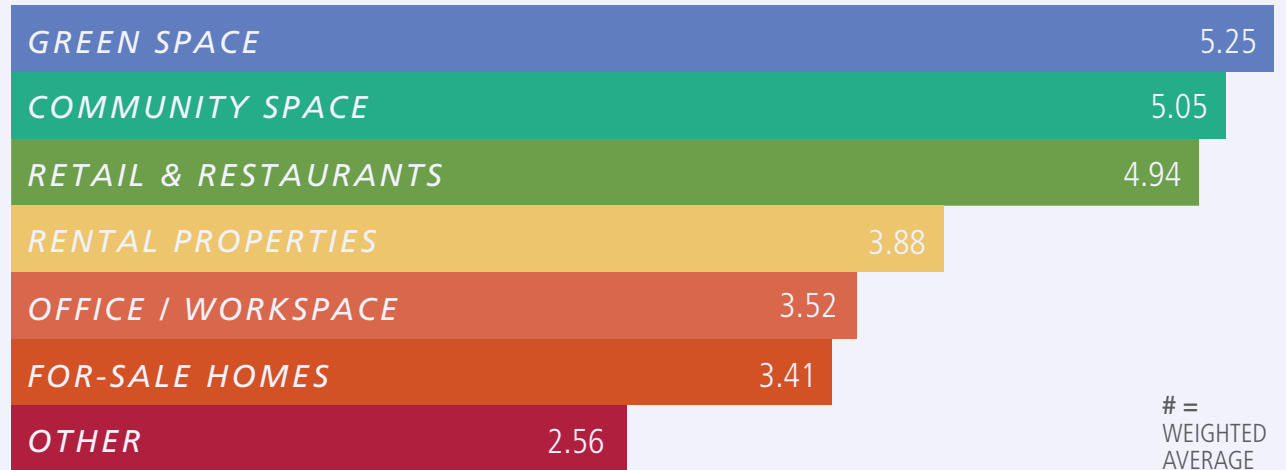
Community members found it critical that this site reflects the needs of the neighborhood. Fears of gentrification and the challenges of obtaining affordable, healthy food were concerns voiced often throughout the process. When evaluating any proposal, equitable access to essential items like affordable groceries and housing for all will need to be kept in mind.

What We Heard

SITE PRIORITIES

Respondents from online and intercept surveying indicated that they prefer a green and/or community space at the site. This could include a shared garden space with an economic incubator (such as a farm stand, CSA, composting, or kitchen that incorporates the food from the garden). It should be noted that the desire for retail and restaurants on the site came in third, over rental properties, office and workspace, and for-sale homes.

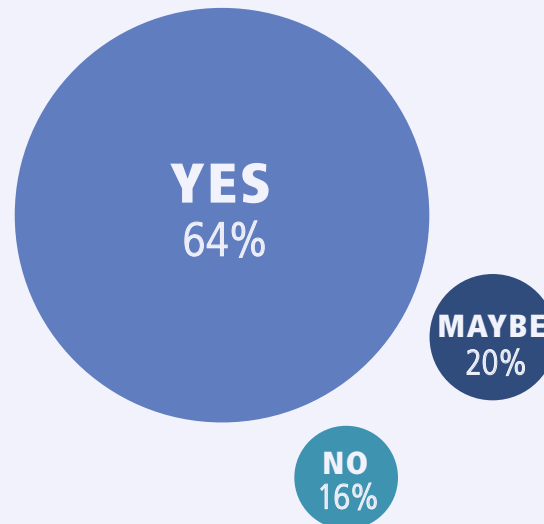
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF AT THE CORNER OF HOWARD & ASHLAND?



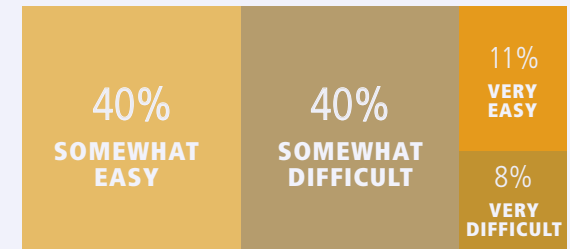
COMMUNITY HEALTH

Health and wellness was an identified priority for the community throughout this process. In partnership with Chicago Department of Public Health, initial surveys incorporated questions on the perceptions and attitudes about access to healthy foods, fitness activities and spaces, mental health services, and social spaces. Access and availability of crucial community services is vital for healthy and thriving communities. Over half of respondents indicated that access to healthy food is somewhat to very difficult. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that there is a need within the community for places to gather with friends, family, and neighbors.

DOES ROGERS PARK NEED MORE PLACES TO GATHER WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND NEIGHBORS?



FINDING HEALTH SERVICES IS:



ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD IS:



REIMAGINE & ENHANCE THE GARDEN

Many respondents indicated a desire to reimagine and enhance the current garden. Community enhancements to the garden may include rooftop garden options, shade/rain shelters, outdoor cooking areas, fire pits, communal seating, and stages for local performances and group fitness. Recent gardens have included children-friendly nature play opportunities, outdoor classrooms, and art installations.

AMENITIES:
(i.e., food + beverage, childcare, youth programs, etc.)

ONLINE SURVEYS

GARDEN AS AN ECONOMIC GENERATOR

Residents would like to see economic activity related to the garden that could be utilized by local and city residents at large. Urban farm is simply a term to describe the production of food through agriculture in a city. The site could benefit from economic generators such as a farm stand, community-supported agriculture (CSA) crop-sharing subscription service, composting service, or kitchen that serves or incorporates the food from the garden. These opportunities often can employ special populations, including youth or formerly incarcerated individuals.

ECONOMIC GENERATORS:
(i.e., grocery store, retail, urban farm, job training, etc.)

ONLINE SURVEYS

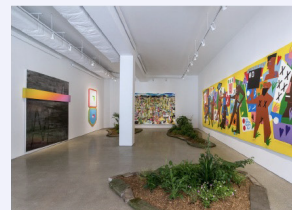
MOST LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED:



GREEN ROOF



YOUTH PROGRAMS



CULTURAL/GALLERY SPACE



FOOD + BEVERAGE

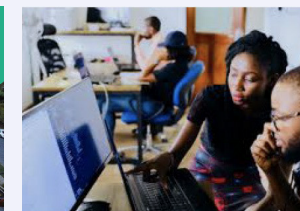
LEAST LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED:

1. AMAZON LOCKERS
2. LAUNDROMAT
3. BASKETBALL COURT / RECREATION
4. DOG PARK

MOST LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED:



URBAN FARM



JOB TRAINING/
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



MAKER SPACE



MARKET/GROCER

LEAST LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED:

1. BOUTIQUE GYM
2. SALON
3. RETAIL
4. COFFEE SHOP / CAFE

Scenario Development

PROCESS

The feedback process between October and November provided insights into how over 200 residents feel the site should be developed. The project team heard a wide range of ideas, and paired the most prevalent ones with market-based feasibility. This allowed the community to see their ideas come to life, while balancing those with what may be financially feasible from a development perspective.

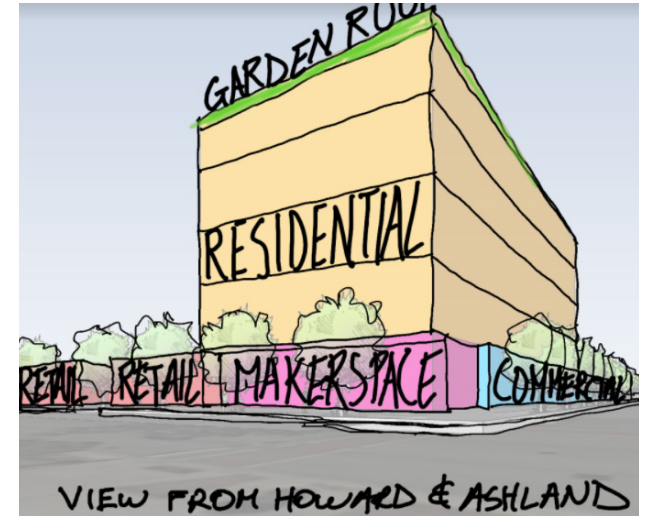
The following four development scenarios are presented only as general ideas and are not final development proposals in any way.



FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS:

Before outlining the four scenarios developed by community residents during the second meeting, some high-level financial assumptions were established to clarify how construction cost was calculated as well as some of the development challenges inherent in the scenarios.

- Construction cost and potential revenue generation are based on local development trends in Chicago.
- Estimated cost of land acquisition is assumed to be approximately \$1.5 million based on a 2014 assessment estimate. There is precedent for the land to be sold at a discounted rate dependent upon the specifics of future proposals.
- Contingent upon future use, additional financial incentives could be pursued such as low-income housing tax credits; but for the purposes of the following scenarios non-traditional funding was not assumed.
- Development cost is the hard construction cost only.



Concept rendering from the City Open Workshop Virtual Design Charette.

Existing Scenario: Full Garden



A considerable amount of community and resident feedback was related to maintaining the community garden as it exists. Each of the four scenarios include community garden, open space, or green space in some capacity, but there are potential feasibility concerns to consider regarding maintaining the entire site as a community garden (see Feasibility & Challenges to the right.)

This scenario could also include future minor improvements and enhancements, such as green houses or more formalized community gathering spaces. Community gardens exist in many sizes, forms, and levels of complexity and formality throughout the city. While the existing community garden is of an “allotment” type where each user is given a plot, other types or hybrid models should be considered with support from residents and users.

Project Financials:

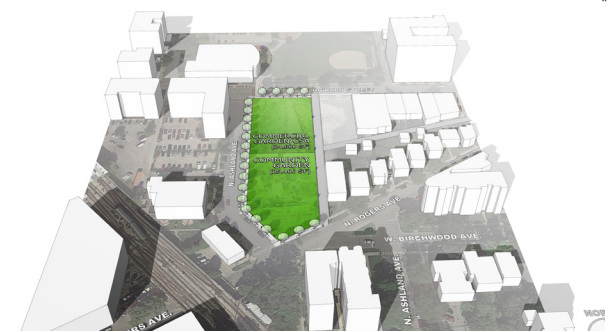
- Maintenance Cost: Est. \$30,000/year
- Land Acquisition: Est. \$1.5 million (2014)
- Opportunity Cost*: High

Feasibility & Challenges:

- Land acquisition/donation
- Land would need to be purchased and donated
- Likely would require a heavy discount or tax abatement from the City
- Unclear how to acquire funding for future operation and improvement costs
- Limited monetary return on investment: absence of tax generating use on site

Potential Health Impacts:

- *Gardens and Green Space*: improved air quality, increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for physical activity
- *Sense of Community*: improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place



Images: City Open Workshop, Wyzendale & Smith Group.

GARDEN
57,500 SQ. FT

**Opportunity cost represents all associated costs with a decision, both implicit and explicit. For example, your decision to go for a walk may not have any direct financial costs to it. Yet, there are opportunity costs associated with that decision. The time spent walking could have been spent on income earning purposes, so you may have lost money. Alternatively, the time spent walking could have improved your health and reduced stress, and therefore reduced health costs down the line.*

Scenario 2: Garden + Urban Farm/Incubator + Residential



This scenario maintains approximately 50 percent of the site area as an unspecified mix of community garden and urban farm. The development would be new mixed-use construction incorporating commercial and residential uses. New construction on site would mostly be located to the north along Howard Street to allow for visibility, maintain the street edge, and maximize solar exposure for the garden/urban farm component. The commercial space (shown in blue) could serve as support or programming space for the urban farm/community garden, with residential units stacked above. The retail boxes (shown in red) may serve as support spaces for a farmers market or sales component.

Project Financials:

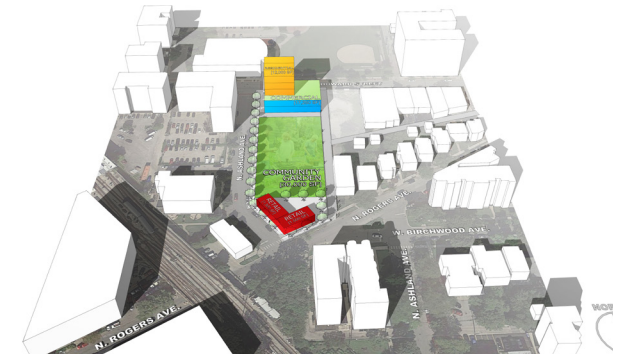
- Hard Construction Costs (benchmark range)*: \$7.8M - \$10.0M
- Land Acquisition: Est. \$1.5 million (2014)
- Opportunity Cost**: Medium

Feasibility & Challenges:

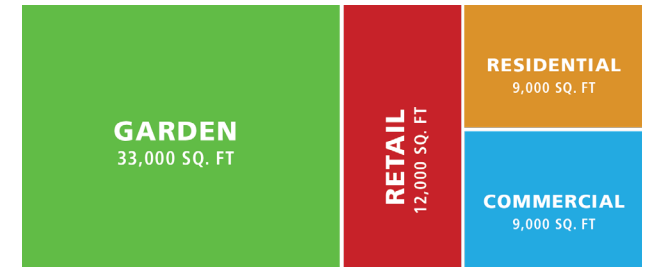
- No on-site parking included in development, but could be added by future developer for additional cost. May be required by city ordinance
- Relatively low density may lead to lack of interest from potential developers/tenants without other financial incentives in place
- Residential component will likely need to scale up to be financially viable
- Co-operator needed for Urban Farm/Incubator

Potential Health Impacts:

- *Gardens and green space*: improved air quality, increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for physical activity, improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place
- *Incubator*: opportunities for employment
- *Stable and Affordable Housing*: improved mental and physical health, reduced substance use, increased food security, improved health care access
- *Sense of Community*: improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place



Images: City Open Workshop, Wyzendale & Smith Group.



*Source: CityOpen Development Consultant

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TOP CONCEPT

PARTICIPANTS ARE MOST EXCITED ABOUT THIS CONCEPT, AND BELIEVE IT WILL HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON COMMUNITY HEALTH

Scenario 3: Garden + Mixed Use Community Space + Residential



This scenario would maintain approximately 40 percent of the site for community garden space with mixed-use community space, retail, and residential new construction along Howard Street. Similar in massing and layout to Scenario 2, this scenario also includes a hardscape plaza on the adjacent vacant lot that would be open to the public and available to future tenants. This plaza, as shown, is situated on the currently vacant parcel east of the site, which could be acquired as part of the RFP. The ground floor is split between small-scale retail spaces facing Howard Street and approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of community space facing the garden, with residential units stacked above.

Project Financials:

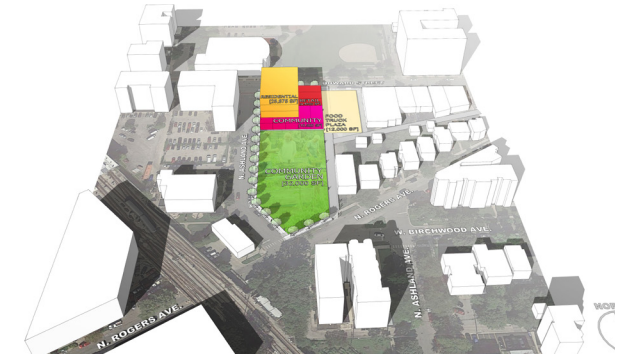
- Hard Construction Costs (benchmark range)*: \$9.9M - \$13.5M
- Land Acquisition: Est. \$1.5 million (2014)
- Opportunity Cost** : Medium

Feasibility & Challenges:

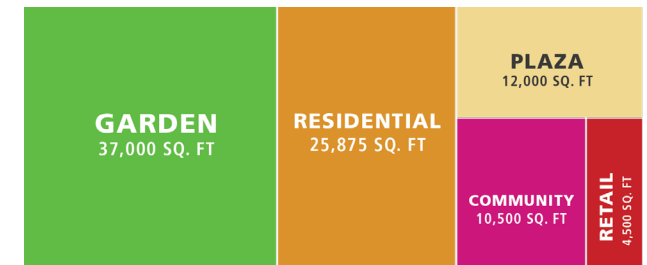
- No on-site parking included in development, but could be added by future developer for additional cost. May be required by city ordinance
- Additional residential density would likely be needed to subsidize rents for commercial/community spaces
- Relatively low density may lead to lack of interest from potential developers without other financial incentives
- Co-operator needed for community spaces

Potential Health Impacts:

- *Gardens and green space*: improved air quality, increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for physical activity, improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place
- *Retail*: increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for employment
- *Stable and Affordable Housing*: improved mental and physical health, reduced substance use, increased food security, improved health care access
- *Sense of Community*: improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place



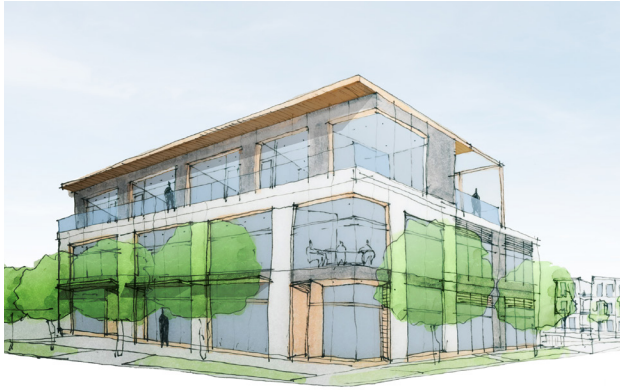
Images: City Open Workshop, Wyzendale & Smith Group.



*Source: CityOpen Development Consultant

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Scenario 4: Garden + Mixed Use Retail + Residential



Scenario 4 would maintain approximately half of the area for community gardening or open green space, with commercial and retail along Howard Street and low-rise residential along Rogers Avenue. The retail in this scenario could be larger, anchor-type retail such as low-cost grocery store Aldi, with commercial office tenant space above. Unlike previous scenarios, the residential portion (shown in yellow) would be located along Rogers Avenue to the south and match the existing surrounding buildings in scale and context.

Project Financials:

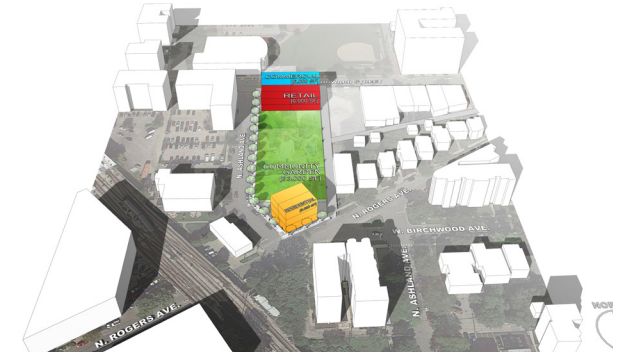
- Hard Construction Costs (benchmark range)*: \$7.3M - \$10.2M
- Land Acquisition: Est. \$1.5 million (2014)
- Opportunity Cost**: Medium

Feasibility & Challenges:

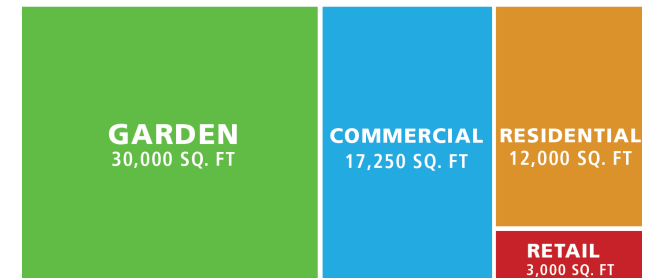
- Separated residential development could attract small developers but subdividing the site would be ideal
- Commercial and retail as loss leaders are typically subsidized by residential rents
- Challenging to identify retail tenant
 - » No on-site parking for anchor retail tenant
 - » Surrounding vacancy and adjacency to other big box retail

Potential Health Impacts:

- *Stable and Affordable Housing*: improved mental and physical health, reduced substance use, increased food security, improved health care access
- *Community Space*: improved mental health, strengthened social connection and sense of place
- *Gardens and green space*: improved air quality, increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for physical activity, improved mental health, reduction in crime, strengthened social connection and sense of place
- *Retail*: increased access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for employment



Images: City Open Workshop, Wyzendale & Smith Group.



*Source: CityOpen Development Consultant

**Opportunity cost represents all associated costs with a decision, both implicit and explicit. For example, your decision to go for a walk may not have any direct financial costs to it. Yet, there are opportunity costs associated with that decision. The time spent walking could have been spent on income earning purposes, so you may have lost money. Alternatively, the time spent walking could have improved your health and reduced stress, and therefore reduced health costs down the line.

Development Input

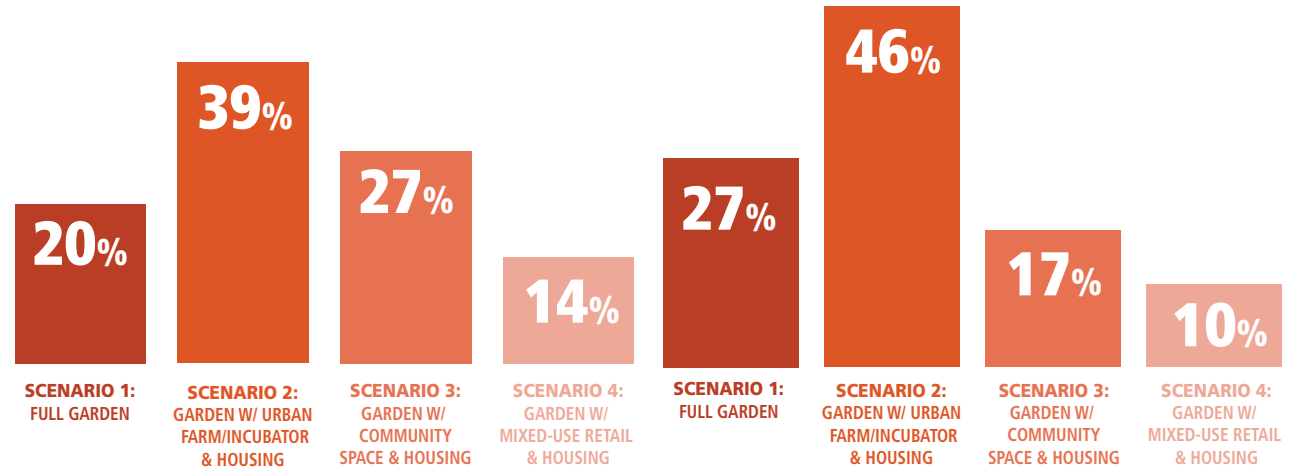
Residents provided additional input during and after the third meeting, which was hosted through a townhall format. Local practitioners who have worked on projects similar to the most popular concepts that emerged from the engagement process were on-hand to share their perspective on making the various concepts a reality. In addition to this virtual forum, stakeholders could give their feedback on the four scenarios through online polling, surveying, and intercept surveying paired with a scenario voting dot exercise in English, Spanish, and Swahili.

Preferred Direction

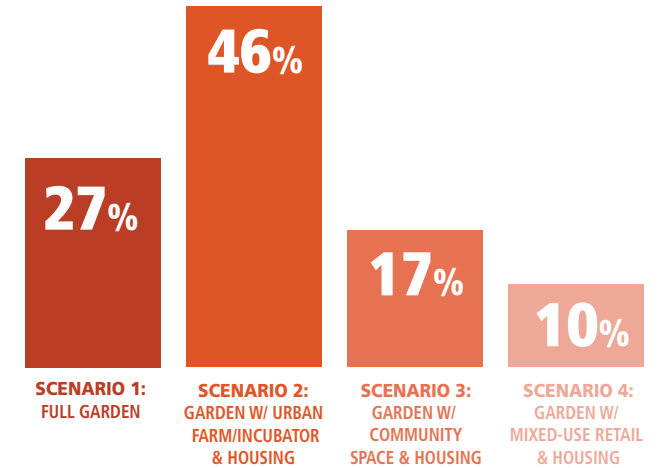
Workshop and survey participants generally indicated a preference to maintain the garden for economic generation and add vertical density to address the need for affordable housing. Many participants voiced the importance of low- and moderate-income housing to prevent displacement. There should be a mix of unit sizes and affordability, which reflects the community. Some former residents have left because rents were high and unit sizes were not appropriate for families.

Overall, participants indicated that they would like to see a creative mix of uses for the site, including a safe and welcoming community space.

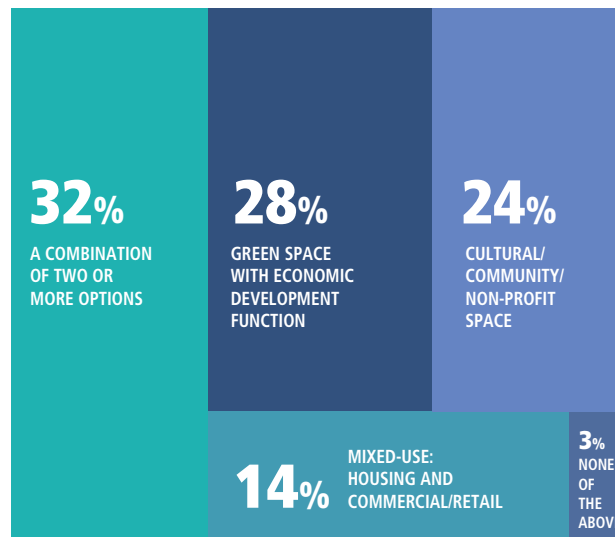
Which scenario are you most excited about?



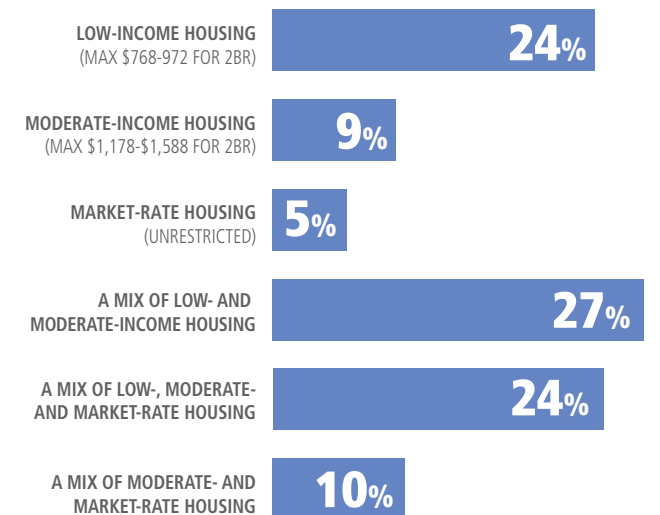
Which of the four scenarios do you think will have the biggest positive impact on community health?



What uses are a top priority for the site?



What type of housing is needed at this site?

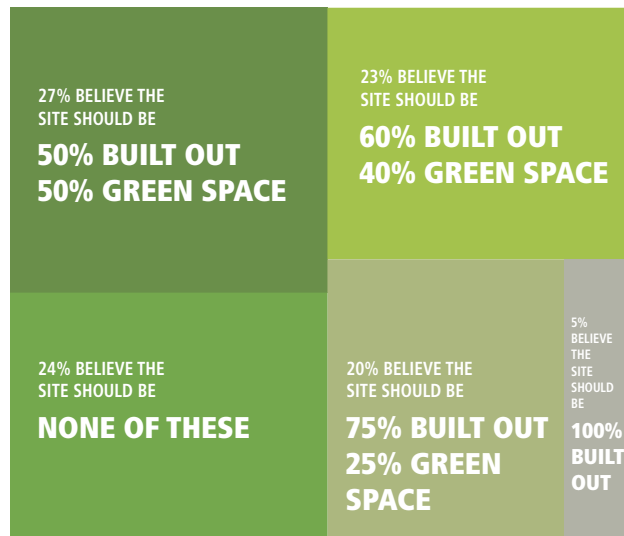


Site Build Out + Building Height

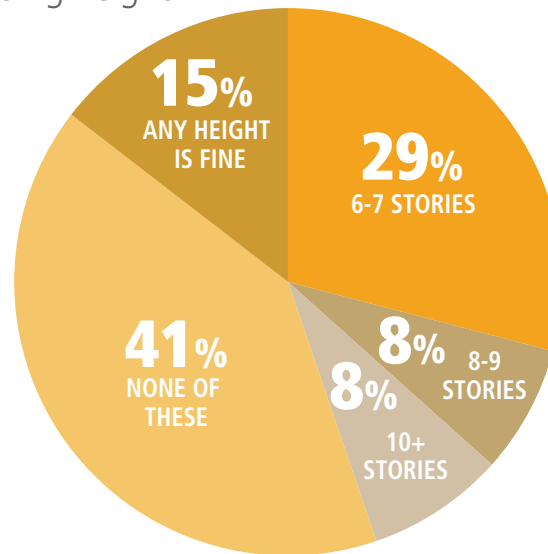
The total site is 1.05 acres or 45,700 sq. ft. An average community garden in Chicago typically ranges about 10,000-15,000 sq. ft. which is less than 1/3 of the size of the entire site. If development were to occur, a majority of respondents could imagine half or more of the total land to be utilized.

Preferences on building heights were mixed, with 29 percent indicating a preference of 6-7 stories, 16 percent preferring 8-plus stories, 15 percent with any height, and 41percent indicating that they did not prefer any of the listed options.

How much of the site should be developed?



What is your preference on building height?



"People need more fresh produce and learning tools on how to plant your own crops."

"The community needs more housing and work opportunities."

"We need a safe place for kids and young people to start their own business."

We need places for young people so they can stay safe and work together."

"Gardening is one of the most powerful ways we can foster mental health and spiritual well being."

Parking

About as many people prefer no parking to those that indicated a preference for some dedicated parking for the development's tenants. 21percent of participants would like to have some parking made available to the public.

Given that it is a TOD site, parking can be limited. Further considerations will be made to accommodate the desire for community space and vertical build.

What is your parking preference on the site?



Recommendations

ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY VALUES ARE EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT THE NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

The scenarios outlined in this report provide context for what is possible on the site, but are only one facet of a variety of factors to consider when developing and reviewing proposals. The following values should be front and center during the review process:

Economic Justice: create a use on this site that will provide an economic benefit to residents.

Social Integration: design a place that serves all ages and backgrounds during all seasons.

Equitable Access: foster equitable access to essential items like affordable groceries and housing opportunities for all.

ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO CONSIDER AND INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

These guidelines consider market realities, economic impacts, and how site design could improve the health of residents and preserve green space.

- Maximize retention of **publicly-accessible community garden**, balanced with economic feasibility.
- If existing green space is displaced, develop a plan to **ensure the residents who use the land may continue to benefit**. Reserving a portion of the site for a community garden would depend on economic feasibility of any proposed development.
- Locate new construction at site boundaries to **maintain the Howard streetscape**.
- Provide a **community-based economic generator**, such as an incubator, community space, urban farm, etc.
- Introduce a **residential component** to the site, with a mix of market-rate, affordable, and unit sizes.
- City should explore **offsetting land acquisition cost** for development.
- **Leverage residential square footage** to pay for other uses on site.
- Consider efforts to **attract retail and commercial tenants** that are aligned to the neighborhood aesthetics and will **strengthen the local business corridor**.

NEXT STEPS

This report is a compilation and summary of the results from the engagement process. The 49th Ward Office, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Department of Housing (DOH), and other city agencies will work to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for developers in the spring of 2021, where there will be additional opportunities for feedback from the community. Any development proposal will go through the DPD and Plan Commission approval processes, and the community values highlighted in this report will be used to create a review framework.



Acknowledgments

The Rogers Park CDI would have been impossible without considerable support from the volunteers who gave their time, expertise and skills, including the community advisory committee. MPC also thanks its funders who generously support this work.

Alderwoman Maria Hadden, 49th Ward Office
Chicago Department of Housing (DOH)
Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

Advisory Committee

A Just Harvest
Family Matters
Gale Community Academy LSC
Good News Partners
Housing Opportunities for Women
Howard Area Community Center
James Sneider Apartments
Peterson Garden Project
Rogers Park Business Alliance
Rogers Park Builders Group
ONE Northside

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Practitioner Panel

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Eliza Fournier, Chicago Botanic Garden - Windy City Harvest
Wendell Harris, Chicago Community Loan Fund
Ben Helphand, NeighborSpace

Funders

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The Chicago Community Trust
Dr. Scholl Foundation
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John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
JPMorgan Chase Bank
People's Gas
PNC Bank
Polk Bros. Foundation
U.S. Bank and Trust

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