

Uptown

Corridor Development Initiative

Final Report—July 2014





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More information and online appendix:
metroplanning.org/uptown

All photos by MPC unless otherwise noted

Letter from Ald. James Cappleman (46th Ward)

The 46th Ward is a wonderful place to live. Many people make this area home for easy access to public transportation, the close proximity to parks and beaches along Lake Michigan, the arts and entertainment venues, and the ethnic and economic diversity in the community. The Red Line and express buses on Lake Shore Drive provide easy transportation to the Loop for commuters. Lincoln Park, which includes the Lakefront Trail, Montrose Beach and the Sidney R. Marovitz Golf Course are just a short walk away. We have entertainment from large music venues like the Aragon Ballroom and The Riviera Theatre, as well as smaller venues like The Green Mill and Strawdog Theatre. It is one of the most diverse wards in Chicago with over 70 different languages spoken. In many ways, the 46th Ward is like a mini United Nations. Diversity is the most important strength in this ward, but it also provides challenges. Healthy urban communities are ones that address the shopping, entertainment, education, health care, transportation and housing needs of its residents. Doing this takes a great deal of planning; it just doesn't happen on its own.

After taking office in 2011, I organized a number of Transition Teams that created the basis for the original 46th Ward Master plan, published in 2011. This plan incorporated many voices from the Ward and combined them with surveys of retail needs, housing stock, population and infrastructure to create a framework that helped guide the community and me in planning and decision-making. Since then, I have continually updated the Master Plan based on goals we have achieved and feedback from residents. Additionally, I created the 46th Ward Zoning and Development Committee comprised of representatives from over 30 diverse neighborhood organizations throughout the ward. Representatives include members from various block clubs, condo boards, housing advoca-

cy organizations, affordable housing buildings and experts in urban planning and historic preservation. Every resident has at least one representative serving on this committee as each organization sends one representative of their choosing to the Zoning and Development Committee. Anyone from the public is also welcome to attend these meetings.

In 2011 when I first took office, the Wilson Station was the only Red Line station in the ward. It has been voted the crustiest station every year by the *Chicago Reader*. My first priority was to secure funding to get this station rehabilitated. In 2011, I received the good news that the funding had been secured. The \$203 million Wilson Station Reconstruction Project will be one of the largest Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) 'L' station projects in the agency's history. The station will become a stop for CTA Purple Line express trains and be accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A part of this project will include additional space that the CTA is planning to find a contractor to develop.

Last year, we received the bad news from Chicago Public Schools that Stewart Elementary School would be closed. After the community and the other elementary schools in the ward came together to make sure that the former Stewart students had a smooth transition to their new schools, many people wondered what would happen to this historic building. In the spring of 2014, CPS contacted us for feedback on the future of this building.

These two projects are pivotal to the continued development of the transit-oriented Broadway commercial corridor, and community feedback is essential to make sure that we have the best ideas to present to both the CTA and to CPS. To do this, we asked the Metropolitan Planning Council to facilitate a Corridor

Development Initiative process with the focus on these two transit-oriented development locations. We held a series of community meetings to explore how the residents could take their values and ideas for the community and turn them into brick and mortar development proposals. The MPC staff led small groups in creating development proposals and gave them the tools to assess building design, feasibility and how the project would fit into the surrounding corridor. The staff and volunteer experts from the Metropolitan Planning Council were incredibly knowledgeable and experienced in development and urban planning. I can't thank them enough.

This report is a culmination of the work that the residents of the 46th Ward created during the planning process. It should not only be used as a guide for these two projects, but for the larger Broadway corridor. It's an honor to serve a community where residents actively participate in making our neighborhoods a better place for everyone.

Sincerely,

Ald. James Cappleman
46th Ward



Executive summary

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has long emphasized the importance of supporting quality development near transit. Transit-oriented development (TOD) 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. Working with government, community and business leaders across metropolitan Chicago, MPC is pushing for equitable TOD on three fronts:

1. Revising local land use policies, such as the City of Chicago's 2013 TOD ordinance, to encourage greater density near transit;
2. Researching new financing tools to encourage TOD that is accessible to people across the income spectrum; and
3. Engaging communities in shaping their local vision for TOD through our Corridor Development Initiative (CDI).

When MPC learned that two City of Chicago-owned properties adjacent to the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Wilson Station in Uptown would be put up for bid in late 2014, we jumped at the chance to work with Ald. James Cappleman (46th Ward) to engage community stakeholders in shaping a vision for these sites. The two parcels are the former Stewart Elementary School on Broadway (a closed public school, pictured at right); and an empty site adjacent to Wilson Station, near the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Broadway. The CTA is investing \$203 million in the reconstruction and expansion of Wilson Station between now and 2017.

In May 2014, MPC engaged the community in a transparent process for creating exciting, viable development proposals for these two parcels, rooting their ideas in realistic information about what the market can support. Through three public CDI workshops and an online survey, hundreds of participants provided specific recommendations about their vision for these two parcels. We expected—and heard—a wide range of opinions about how to preserve what works in the

neighborhood and improve what doesn't through these two TOD opportunities.

This report details the results of the rich community engagement process and points the way toward securing equitable development that serves the neighborhood near Wilson Station. It is important to note that our collective goal was not to reach consensus on any one vision, but to identify areas of broad agreement about the future of these sites and the Broadway corridor. The results and recommendations from Uptown's efforts also can inform future TOD opportunities across the region, and in metropolitan areas across the nation.



Uptown is fortunate to have two City-owned sites that are prime candidates for transit-oriented development, which improves access to jobs, decreases cost of living and reduces traffic congestion.

Recommendations and next steps

Ald. Cappleman, CTA and CPS have committed to using the results of the Uptown CDI to determine the most appropriate, realistic uses for the land adjacent to Wilson Station and the Stewart School. According to the latest information available, in the second half of 2014, CPS will undertake its disposition process for all 50 public schools closed in 2013. Meanwhile, CTA is planning to open a request for proposals (RFP) disposition process in 2015 to sell or enter into a long-term rental agreement for the land adjacent to Wilson Station. These recommendations should be integrated into both planning and development processes.

If the community's vision for these sites is to be fulfilled, zoning for the Stewart School site must be changed to B2-3 or B2-5 and the RFPs introduced by CPS and CTA must weigh bids based on their ability to respond to the community's recommendations.

MPC will distribute this report widely and continue conversations with the City of Chicago, the Alderman's office, CPS, CTA and the local advisory committee to advocate for a redevelopment plan that best reflects the community's needs and priorities.

Even as Uptown advances its vision to shape these two important, transit-accessible sites, the City of Chicago, greater metropolitan region and urban areas across the country are focusing greater attention on the benefits of well-planned development near transit. Uptown's CDI experience and outcomes should serve as a model for how proactive planning can attract development that meets the needs and desires of local residents and businesses, connect people to jobs and amenities and increase transit ridership. MPC will use lessons learned from this rich community engagement process with Uptown to inform our broader advoca-

cy for policies that support well-planned, equitable transit-oriented development in the greater Chicago region and regions across the country.

Please follow our Uptown work at metroplanning.org/uptown and learn more about our broader transit-oriented development initiative at metroplanning.org/tod.

The following summarizes the primary conclusions of the majority of participants in the Uptown CDI workshops and online survey. For more details, see page 18.

Both sites

1. Dense, mixed-use buildings that fit within the urban fabric of Uptown are preferred.
2. Many participants stated that any new housing built should be targeted to a range of income levels, with at least some portion of the building dedicated to low-income households.
3. Given the proximity of the sites to Wilson Station, developments should only include the minimum required parking spaces.

Stewart School site

1. The existing school building, a beautiful, historic and important structure in Uptown, should be preserved and reused.
2. If the building is reused as a school, the community's strong preference is that it be a public school.

3. If the building is not reused as a school, at least part of the redevelopment should serve the neighborhood, whether as a community, arts or youth center, a farmers market or otherwise.
4. New construction should be planned for the parking lot adjacent to the school, at a scale similar to the school building (about four to six stories).
5. Retail options should be incorporated at the ground level if possible, preferably facing Broadway.

Wilson Station site

1. The redevelopment of Wilson Station offers the opportunity to significantly improve the space under the elevated rail tracks. Working with Truman College and local businesses, CTA should improve lighting and offer a paved, landscaped connection between Truman College and Broadway.
2. Development on the parcel just west of the CTA tracks is acceptable to the community, particularly if it includes retail facing Wilson Avenue and an "eyes on the street" design that emphasizes safety for pedestrians.

The Corridor Development Initiative

The Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) is a participatory planning process that engages communities in proactively planning for real-world development scenarios. Through three public meetings, participants gain a deeper understanding of issues such as density, transit-oriented development, affordable housing and the true cost of development, and create a set of priorities to guide community leaders as they plan for future development in their neighborhoods. Developers can use the CDI report to understand local opportunities and values. Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) partners with communities across Chicago to use CDI to encourage quality, equitable development near transit.

Through an exercise using wooden blocks and aerial maps of the proposed sites, participants have the opportunity to “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 would pan out on the ground. The CDI is not a master planning process but can be integrated with such processes.

Meeting 1 Existing conditions and goals

The first meeting provides an overview of current land use policies and demographic and commercial changes in the community. Participants discuss development opportunities and challenges and set concrete goals.

Meeting 2 Block exercise

At the second meeting, community members explore design and financing options for their ideas through a hands-on block exercise. Participants create hypothetical development options for three specific sites using various wooden blocks that represent different building uses. As community members build their proposals, they are sketched by design advisors, while a real estate advisor calculates development costs, revenues and any financing gaps.

Meeting 3 Development recommendations

The final meeting features a panel of real estate experts and/or developers who respond to the outcomes of the block exercise in light of current market trends. These recommendations are then compiled into a report that community leaders can present to potential developers to provide them with a community-led, feasibility-tested vision.



Uptown and the Broadway corridor

Community demographics

Uptown is one of 77 community areas in Chicago. The neighborhood is defined by a rich history that includes a once-thriving entertainment and theater district. Waves of immigrants have settled here, making its population among the city’s most economically, racially and ethnically diverse. Uptown is located along the CTA Red Line and Lake Michigan, providing great access to transit and recreation amenities. Uptown is one of the few North Side communities with affordable rental housing opportunities, but the market has not kept pace with the need: Between 2000 and 2010, the share of households that are housing cost burdened—meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing—jumped from 38.8 percent to 50.5 percent, according to the Chicago Rehab Network. This trend threatens the neighborhood’s stability and the ability for residents of all incomes to remain in the community.

Development plans and prospects

The Uptown Entertainment District and the Broadway corridor that stretches from Uptown to Edgewater, the adjacent neighborhood to the north, are priorities for the City of Chicago, Ald. Cappleman and other key city and community stakeholders. A plan crafted by the 46th Ward (see page 9) call for a range of strategies to improve housing and recreation opportunities, including improved streetscaping, bike lanes, park space and potential new developments. The plan builds off assets including the Aragon, Riviera and Uptown theaters near Lawrence Avenue and Broadway to make the area attractive for new businesses and developments and to address its many underutilized spaces, while improving the area’s walkability and livability. Plans for the Broadway corridor, the CTA investment in Wilson Station and the opportunity to re-use Stewart School have all generated momentum for development in Uptown.

To sustain this momentum and encourage equitable TOD, MPC and Ald. Cappleman focused on engaging the community to plan for two key sites: the Stewart School, including the parking lot adjacent to the school; and the empty land made available by the reconfiguration of the CTA Wilson Station. These sites are described and mapped in further detail on the following pages.

Uptown by the numbers

- Population **56,362**
 - Housing units **32,541**
 - Median household income **\$40,706**
 - Households earning less than \$25,000 **37 percent**
 - Households in poverty **26 percent**
 - Median monthly gross rent **\$730**
 - Median monthly homeowner cost **\$2,049**
 - Cost-burdened rental households **51 percent**
(Those that spend more than 30 percent of income on housing)
 - Unemployment rate **8 percent**
 - Increase in unemployment since 2000 **45 percent**
 - Weekday boardings at CTA Wilson Station **6,000**
(2013 average)
 - Weekday train volume at Wilson **510 trains per day**
(2013 schedule)
 - Increase in ridership at Wilson since 1999 **40 percent**
(through 2013)
- All data 2010 unless otherwise noted. Source: Chicago Rehab Network, Affordable Housing Factbook.

Wilson Station site

Wilson Station, completed in 1923, is one of the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) most popular stations, serving an average of about 6,000 daily boardings on 510 trains. As with other North Side rail stations, the use of Wilson Station has grown: Over the past 15 years, daily ridership at the station has increased by almost 40 percent.

The station's structure, along with that of the entire North Side Red and Purple lines, has deteriorated over the years. The CTA has committed to the reconstruction of all Red and Purple Line tracks north of Belmont. The Wilson Station renovation is the first step of that process and will include the realignment of the tracks, creation of a new station headhouse, construction of a new entrance at Sunnyside Avenue and renovation of the Gerber Building at the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Broadway. When this \$203 million project is completed in 2017, riders will be able to board both Red and Purple Line trains at Wilson.

The realignment of the tracks will open up several parcels east and west of the tracks between Wilson and Sunnyside avenues. CTA has proposed a TOD project on this land, but has not developed specific site plans, which is one reason why MPC's CDI process was particularly applicable here. Given that pedestrians frequently walk under the tracks between Broadway and Truman College, CTA also has been open to discussing improvements under the tracks.

1—Lot west of realigned CTA tracks

32,590 sq. ft.

60 feet of street frontage

Zoned B1-5, C2-3 and PD, which allow for mix of business and commercial uses

In Wilson Yard TIF

Currently owned by CTA and City Colleges

2—Lot east of realigned CTA tracks

5,520 sq. ft.

30 feet of street frontage

Zoned B1-5 and C2-3, which allows for mix of business and commercial uses

In Wilson Yard TIF

Currently owned by CTA

CTA development constraints

Areas under the track are height restricted. Access to track structure and columns must be maintained. Buildings cannot be attached to track structure. Development must either have a 10-foot setback from the tracks, or access must be maintained on one side of tracks.



Base image: Google Earth Pro

Stewart School site

3—Former Stewart Elementary School

90,400 sq. ft. total on 4 floors

Zoned RT-4, which allows for residential two-flats, townhomes and no mix of uses

In Wilson Yard TIF

Currently owned by CPS/PBC

4—Parking lot

20,675 sq. ft.

Zoned RT-4, which allows for residential two-flats, townhomes and no mix of uses

In Wilson Yard TIF

Currently owned by CPS/PBC

CPS/PBC development constraints

CPS is required to sell the property to the highest "responsible" bidder. All proposals must be adequately financed and sustainable. All properties are sold "as is, where is," and will be conveyed to new owners once the Board of Education has approved the sale. Property title is held by Public Building Commission of Chicago (PBC).

The Graeme Stewart Elementary School, 4525 N. Kenmore Ave., is one of the city of Chicago's most beautiful, historic school buildings. Dwight Perkins, who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and created many of Chicago's noteworthy buildings, including the Lion House at the Lincoln Park Zoo and the fieldhouse at Hamlin Park, 3035 N. Moyne Ave., designed Stewart School and a number of other schools.

Stewart School opened in 1907 and, according to a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) evaluation of the 107-year-old building, it "clearly meets Chicago landmark criteria and should be designated." The building's exterior has been restored, and its interior includes three murals from the 1930s Works Progress Administration period. The school site includes an adjacent parking lot previously used for teachers and staff, as well as a public green and playground partially constructed on the public right-of-way of Kenmore Avenue.

Stewart School was closed in 2013 along with 49 other Chicago schools; it had a 41 percent utilization rate in 2012. According to a CPS analysis, the building requires about \$12 million in repairs to bring the interior up to date. Though the 90,400 sq. ft. building has always been used as a school, it is a strong candidate for adaptive reuse. In addition, the adjacent parking lot is large enough to accommodate a new building.

Adjacent to the Broadway corridor near the soon-to-be-renovated Wilson Station, the Stewart School can remain a community asset.

Community participation

Outreach

MPC worked closely with Ald. Cappleman, as well as representatives from the Chicago Mayor's Office, Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development, CPS, CTA and Truman College. MPC also established a local advisory committee, consisting of the following members, to advise on outreach, implementation and the final report:

- Chinese Mutual Aid Association
- Inspiration Corporation
- Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality: Northside
- Uptown Chicago Commission
- Uptown United
- Voice of the People

With the aid of Ald. Cappleman's office and members of the local advisory committee, MPC conducted outreach throughout the community. Emails were sent through local channels; social media tools including Everyblock, Twitter and Facebook were used to promote the event; news stories were featured in local media, such as DNAInfo and Curbed Chicago; and staff went door-to-door distributing postcards and posters in local businesses, community group offices and apartment buildings. This outreach process was effective in raising public awareness of the workshops and encouraging attendance.

After the first meeting, MPC conducted additional outreach to local community groups, churches and other organizations to make every effort to increase

participation and attract residents and businesses that represent Uptown's diversity. In order to garner additional input from stakeholders who may not have learned about the process or were not able to attend, MPC conducted an online survey that asked similar questions regarding community and site development priorities.

Participation

The three free public workshops on May 8, 12 and 29, 2014, took place in the gymnasium of the Clarendon Park Community Center from 6 to 8 p.m. Attendance ranged between 71 and 100 each meeting. Fifteen percent of total people at the events attended all three events and 22 percent attended two of the meetings. Meeting attendees were generally representative of the Uptown community, though participation by nonwhite households and renters was disproportionately lower than Uptown's population.

To gather input from the Uptown public, MPC provided a survey online for Uptown stakeholders. Between May 30 and June 13, 373 individuals completed the survey, 94 percent of whom live and/or work in Uptown and 80 percent of whom did not have the opportunity to attend the meetings.

Compared with the meeting attendees, those who completed the online survey were less representative of Uptown's overall demographics. Those who responded to the survey were far more likely to be white and middle-aged (between 31 and 50) than the meeting attendees.

This report emphasizes the results of the workshops; however, MPC also incorporated the survey results. Full results of the survey are provided in the online appendix: metroplanning.org/uptown.

Meeting attendance

Meeting 1—May 8, 2014	89
Meeting 2—May 12	71
Meeting 3—May 29	100
Total individual (unique) attendees	171
Attended one meeting	108
Attended two meetings	37
Attended all three meetings	26

Participant demographics

Race	Meetings ¹	Online	Uptown ²
White	65%	85%	52%
African-American	11%	3%	20%
Latino	8%	6%	14%
Asian	6%	3%	11%
Other	8%	4%	3%

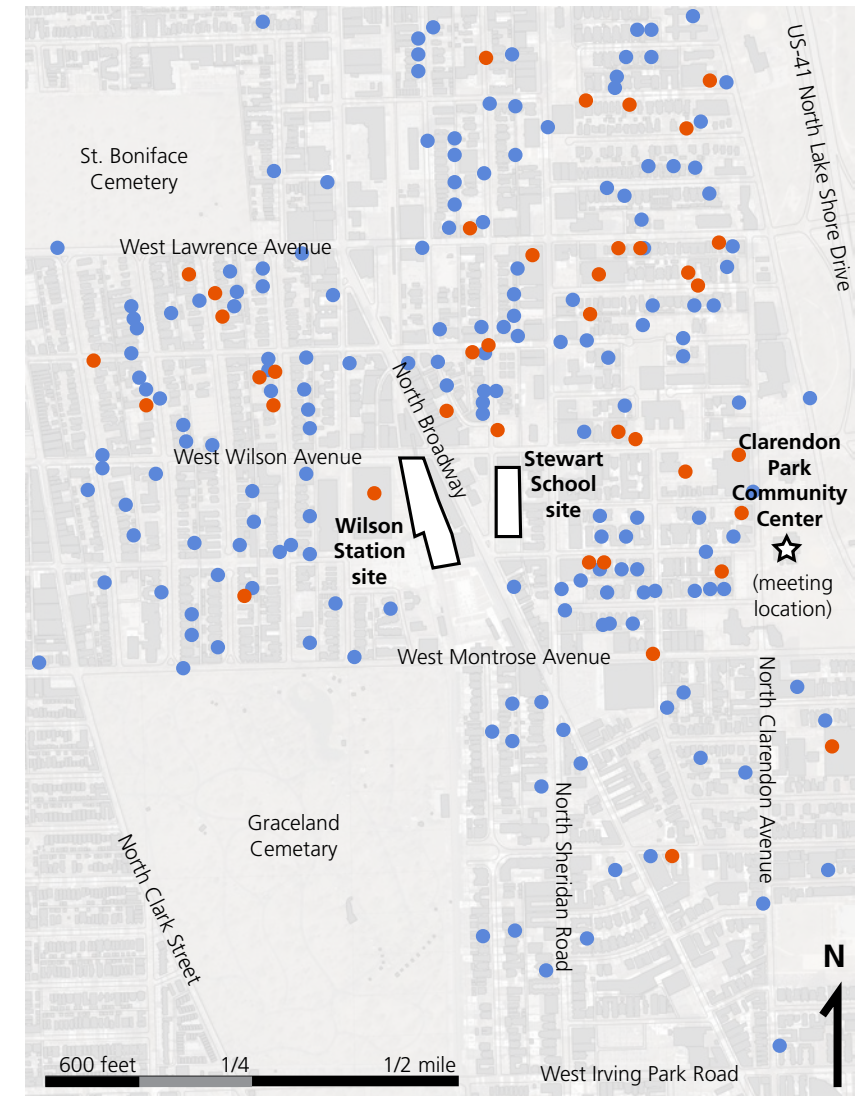
Live or work	Meetings ¹	Online
Live in Uptown	38%	77%
Work in Uptown	16%	7%
Live and work	26%	10%
None of the above	20%	6%

Rent or own ³	Meetings ¹	Uptown ^{2, 4}
Rent	53%	(not surveyed) 68%
Own	47%	32%

Age	Meetings ¹	Online	Uptown ²
0 to 18	4%	0%	14%
19 to 30	27%	19%	26%
31 to 50	43%	59%	36%
51 to 64	20%	16%	15%
65 and older	7%	6%	10%

¹ Meetings 1 and 2 combined; ² 2010 Census; ³ Excluding those who did not answer; ⁴ By household

Where participants live



- Meeting 1 participant residences
- Online survey respondent residences

Base map: ESRI

Parallel plans

In 2013, Ald. Cappleman worked with stakeholders in the 46th Ward to develop a new community-wide plan for the area; this document was used by MPC to understand baseline conditions and overall goals for neighborhood development.

Several local organizations have led very recent efforts examining the future of Stewart School. In 2014, Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality: Northside, a membership-based community organization working on social justice issues, conducted a survey about the future of the school building. Some 837 individuals, representing several of the coalition's member institutions, said that their top goals for the space were affordable housing (26 percent); nonprofit organizations (24 percent); businesses with local jobs (14 percent); and an environmental center (13 percent). Those who completed the survey expressed that the top goal should be to produce more affordable housing for families.

In spring 2014, Uptown United, which represents local businesses, held an idea generation and dialogue session about the school with the assistance of the planning firm Lakota Group. Participants proposed to see uses such as housing, hotels, offices, institutions or retail provided in the school. According to the report, "an affordable component being incorporated into a market-rate project is preferred, while an exclusively affordable project is not."

All of these plans were made available during the workshop process for participants to review.

As this map shows, people who attended the workshops primarily lived in the neighborhoods surrounding the Stewart School and Wilson Station sites. Though there were attendees from other parts of the city, the heavy local presence indicates that the CDI's results are relevant to the community and reflect the neighborhood's concerns.

Meeting 1: Community goals

Although the primary aim of the CDI was to engage community members in creating development plans for the Stewart School and Wilson Station sites, the community clearly communicated a number of needs and priorities that are relevant to all future development in Uptown.

Building off Uptown's strengths

CDI participants overwhelmingly stated that Uptown's diversity and cultural richness are among the community's greatest assets. The immense diversity of culture is considered a pillar of the community upon which to build. Participants noted that preserving historic buildings is critical to future redevelopment. Many participants also recognized that Uptown's strong transit connections and proximity to Lake Michigan were assets to be reinforced. They were sensitive to displacement concerns given the recent growth in unemployment and households making less than \$25,000 a year.

Of those who completed the online survey question on Uptown's greatest strengths, 53 percent noted that diversity is a major strength. Other prominent mentions included access to Lake Michigan (28 percent); excellent transportation (22 percent); a convenient location (19 percent); and the community's history (13 percent).

Schools

Throughout the process, Ald. Cappelman noted that his primary preference for the Stewart School would be to reopen it as a CPS magnet school. This sentiment was not fully shared by the community. Of attendees at the meetings, 56 percent expressed continuing to have a school in the building was "very important" or "somewhat important," while 44 percent were "neutral" or considered the idea "not important" to future development. Of those who responded to the online survey, 44 percent expressed having a school in the building was important, with the rest not committed to the idea.

If the building were reopened as a school, the participants strongly preferred that it be a public school. At the meeting, 59 percent of attendees supported a public school, compared with only 26 percent supporting a private school. Among online respondents, 84 percent preferred a public school.

Affordable housing

A number of attendees at the meeting stated that Uptown needs more well-maintained, safe affordable housing units. Many expressed that the neighborhood's affordable housing and single-room occupancy (SRO) buildings are being threatened by high-end developments and want to see Uptown revitalize and grow without the displacement of current residents. The need for affordable housing was expressed clearly by many attendees throughout the process, and all of the housing proposals designed by participants throughout the workshops included some affordable housing, though many of the projects incorporated units designed for people with a mix of incomes.

Online survey respondents were less emphatic about the importance of affordable housing. Of those who mentioned housing types, 78 percent suggested that they would prefer more market-rate housing over affordable housing; many others stated that Uptown already has an abundance of affordable units.

Community space and programming

Many meeting participants cited a need for more family, youth and cultural programming, and spaces in which that programming could be offered, to decrease crime and give the neighborhood a more positive vibe. In particular, many people expressed the need for programming to engage pre-teens and teens in positive after school activities.

Popular suggestions for community space improvements from the meetings and in the surveys were that Uptown needs a plaza or town square with family-oriented programming and a safe space for children to play; and additional job and skills training programs for the homeless, teens and young adults to lead to employment in fields such as construction, manufacturing and information technologies. Other suggestions included:

- Community theater space with arts and dance programming (24 percent of attendees and 29 percent of those surveyed online);
- Space and programming for youth (11 percent of attendees and 9 percent of those surveyed online); and
- Community gardens or a farmers market (10 percent of attendees and 17 percent of those surveyed online).

Retail and entertainment

Many meeting attendees believe Uptown will thrive with additional retail and entertainment opportunities. Currently there is a lack of retail stores selling clothing, home needs and sporting goods, resulting in residents leaving the community to shop and reducing local spending. Popular suggestions were to attract a convenience store to locate near Wilson Station, improve the storefronts on Wilson Avenue between Broadway and Sheridan Road, attract quality restaurants and introduce a farmers market at Truman College or Stewart School to serve residents and draw people into the area.

Numerous participants stated that Uptown's many entertainment amenities are underutilized and could be improved to bring people into the area. Among those who provided input into how to improve the Broadway corridor online, 34 percent noted the need for better retail and restaurants. Many meeting attendees said they would like to see more users of the Broadway Entertainment District theaters staying in Uptown to dine at the restaurants on Wilson and Argyle. Popular suggested amenities include a movie theater, an ice cream shop and restaurants and cafes with patio seating. At the final CDI meeting, the most popular retail needs noted by participants included a farmers market (21 percent); new restaurants (17 percent); and a coffee shop or bakery (15 percent).

Safety and Placemaking

Based on the response to a range of different questions, a significant number of meeting attendees expressed that the area around the Stewart School and Wilson Station feels unsafe at night due to negative loitering, lack of lighting and gang activity. Attendees said that Placemaking, including creating safe spaces where people can gather outside and be on the street, will improve the area's vibrancy and reduce gang activity. A large segment of the community desires more police visibility and interactivity to address these concerns.

Many attendees noted that the area around Wilson Station is dilapidated, causing people to actively avoid the area. Participants stated a preference for more green space with less litter and a beautified area under the train tracks to attract greater foot traffic to the Broadway corridor. Attendees expressed strong interest in implementing programming under the train tracks, such as a farmers market or food trucks, to encourage people to use this space and to improve access to Truman College, Broadway and Wilson Avenue. Many participants said that they would like to see traffic slowed on Broadway with the addition of bike lanes and bike racks to increase the neighborhood's vibrancy. (The Chicago Dept. of Transportation had already planned to modify Broadway through Uptown. Re-stripping to remove a traffic lane and add a buffered bike lane in each direction was completed shortly after the meetings, in June 2014.)

Business attraction

Many participants expressed that work needs to be done to attract major employers, particularly technology companies or an incubator, to widen the employment base. In addition, many people expressed the need for greater support for small businesses—in the form of shared office space, classes and monetary resources—to maintain the community's unique ethnic stores and to encourage more community members to start small businesses in Uptown. Ideas included a shared makerspace where interested parties pay a fee to have a co-working space that provides equipment, such as 3D printers, a woodworking shop and other tools, to support artisan industries. Many people also stated that the Wilson Station rehabilitation and the reuse of the Stewart School will catalyze more development and business attraction.

The community identified Uptown's diversity and cultural richness as one of its greatest strengths to build upon.

Meeting 2: Scenario development

During the building block exercise in meeting 2 (described on page 4), attendees were given the opportunity to develop whatever ideas they desired, though they were encouraged to be willing to compromise on their concepts to create visions that could actually be implemented. The goal of the process was not to create a specific site plan but to identify concepts that most appropriately matched the community's goals with development realities. These development realities, including real-world constraints developed by CTA and CPS and the benefits and limitations of a range of public subsidies, affordable housing programs and other significant capital sources, are noted in the online appendix: metroplanning.org/uptown.



Analysis and development panel

MPC staff and technical volunteers analyzed each proposed development plan, offering insight into their feasibility, both in terms of site constraints and financing. Volunteers and staff mocked up the plans digitally and inputted them into a real estate pro-forma that MPC developed with U.S. Equities Realty to reflect current Uptown market construction costs, occupancy rates, maintenance costs, affordable housing aid and other financial details. Additional information on the subsidies, rents, revenue and other key factors that were assumed to be granted to the development scenarios can be found in the online appendix.

For each project, MPC produced an information sheet describing the proposal's characteristics and compared them to costs and subsidies that would theoretically be needed to fill the gap in funding for the projects. None of the scenarios initially developed at the second workshop were financially feasible and required compromise and adjustments to be viable from a financial and development perspective.

MPC identified five proposals for more in-depth analysis; these were selected specifically because they are representative of most of the ideas developed by all of the groups. (The remaining scenarios are detailed in the online appendix.) After further analysis, MPC staff presented these proposals to the community at the third meeting, and a panel of developers provided immediate feedback about each proposal. Participants at the workshop were asked to provide input on the five proposals and on the suggested adjustments that would make the projects more financially feasible. Together with the responses from earlier workshops and the online survey, MPC used this feedback to develop the recommendations for site development beginning on page 18.

Five proposals that best represented the community's ideas were selected for detailed analysis.

Stewart School proposals

Scenario 1

This project would renovate the Stewart School and add a mid-rise building to the current parking lot. The school would primarily house a new school and nonprofit uses, but also include residential and retail space. State affordable housing tax credits and federal historic preservation tax credits are available for this project, but as currently designed the project would need more than \$7 million to fill its financing gap. This is primarily a result of the limited number of residential units provided and high amount of nonprofit space.

Financials

Construction and acquisition costs **\$21 million**

Development and operations costs covered by revenues **53 percent**

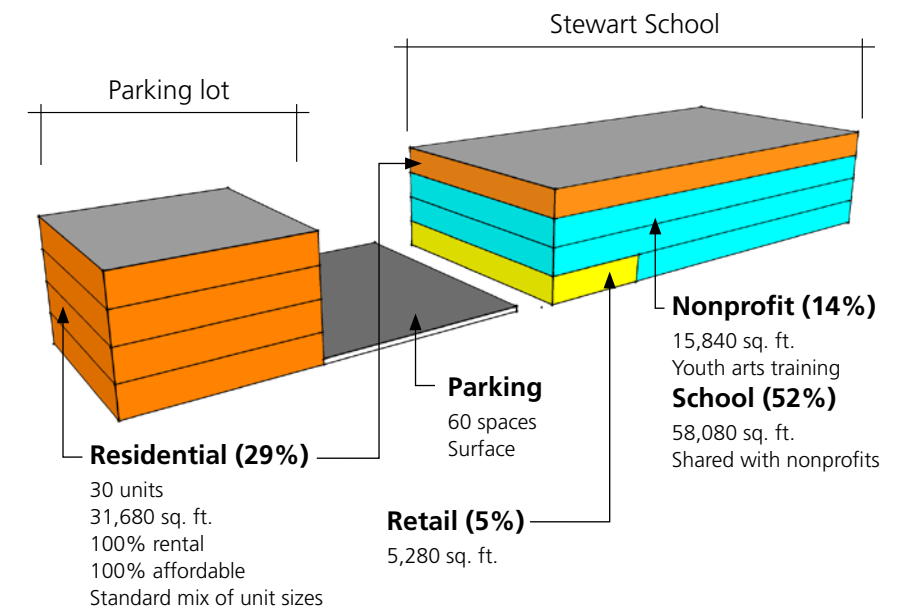
Financing gap **\$7.15 million**

Low-income housing tax credit (4 percent) equity **\$1.6 million**

Historic preservation tax credit (20 percent) equity **\$2.3 million**

Modifications to increase feasibility

An alternative development scenario, which would reduce affordable housing to 50 percent of units and add market-rate units in their place, would reduce the financing gap to \$6.6 million (development finance aims to secure 120 percent of total development costs). Of those who attended the meetings and completed the online survey, more than two-thirds were willing to make this change. A separate alternative, which would increase the size of the proposed parking lot building from 30 to 90 residential units, would reduce the project financing gap to \$6.2 million; this was supported by 57 percent of attendees at the public meeting.



Stewart School proposals

Scenario 2

This project would renovate the Stewart School and fill it primarily with nonprofit uses, though there would be some retail provided in addition. On the adjacent parking lot, a six-story residential building, with green space on top, would be added. This project would cover about 84 percent of its operating costs and debt service through rent revenues, and has a \$5.8 million financing gap.

Financials

Construction and acquisition costs **\$30 million**

Development and operations costs covered by revenues **84 percent**

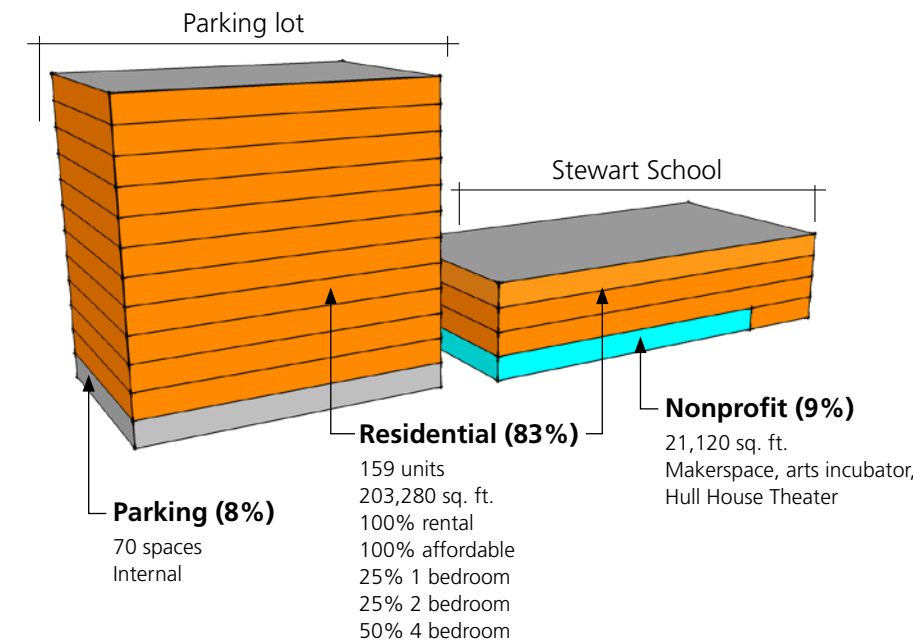
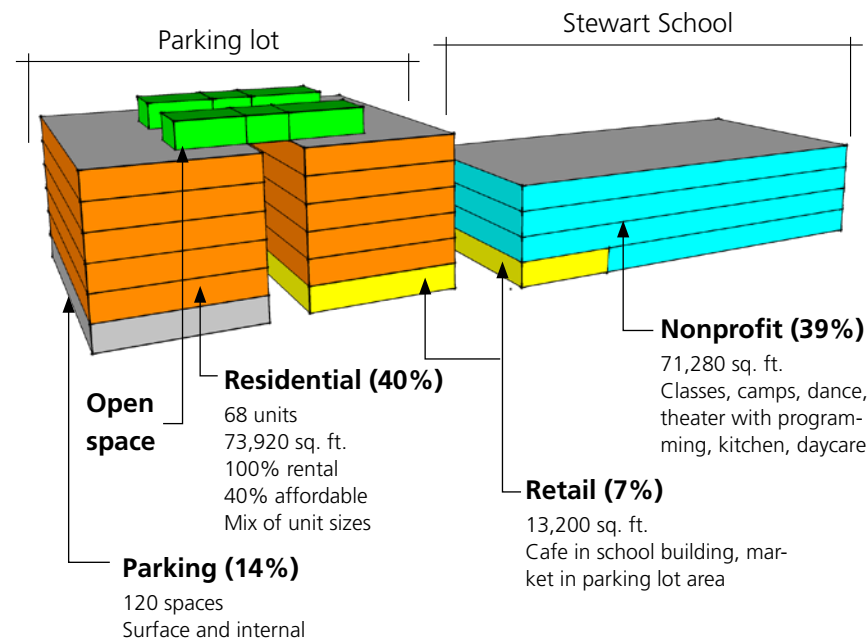
Financing gap **\$5.8 million**

Low-income housing tax credit (4 percent) equity **\$1.6 million**

Historic preservation tax credit (20 percent) equity **\$2.3 million**

Modifications to increase feasibility

An alternative development scenario that would reduce the size of the community space, replacing two-thirds of the proposed space with apartments, would cover 105 percent of operating costs and debt service and reduce the financing gap to only \$2.5 million (development finance aims to secure 120 percent of total development costs). This option was supported by a plurality of meeting attendees and those voting online, 47 percent and 49 percent respectively, though a large number of respondents were unwilling to part with the significant amount of community space provided. Reducing the area devoted to parking from 120 spaces to the 31 spaces required by zoning was proposed by MPC to reduce the financing gap by \$300,000. Two-thirds of meeting attendees said they were in favor of this change.



Scenario 3

This largely residential project would add 159 apartments to a renovated Stewart School and a new, 12-story building constructed on the parking lot. A portion of the school's first floor would be devoted to nonprofit uses, such as a makerspace, an arts incubator or a theater. The project faces a \$12.3 million financing gap because of its large number of affordable units.

Financials

Construction and acquisition costs **\$43.4 million**

Development and operations costs covered by revenues **54 percent**

Financing gap **\$12.3 million**

Low-income housing tax credit (4 percent) equity **\$10.8 million**

Historic preservation tax credit (20 percent) equity **\$2.5 million**

Modifications to increase feasibility

An alternative development proposal, which would reduce the affordable housing component to 50 percent of units and bring in market-rate units to fill the remainder of the project, would reduce the financing gap to \$3.7 million and cover 103 percent of project development and operations costs with rent revenues (development finance aims to secure 120 percent of total development costs). More than 60 percent of both meeting attendees and online survey respondents said they would be willing to accept this change. This \$3.7 million gap could be further reduced if some of the remaining affordable units were converted to market-rate.

Wilson Station proposals

Scenario 1

This project would include two buildings, divided into three masses, of seven to 15 stories. The project incorporates retail, office, nonprofit and residential uses, in addition to open space fronting on Wilson Avenue, between several of the buildings and on the rooftop of the second story of one of the buildings. The project would create a landscaped pedestrian path under the tracks. The project has a \$7.8 million financing gap because it covers only 87 percent of its operating and development costs through rents.

Financials

Construction and acquisition costs **\$37.8 million**

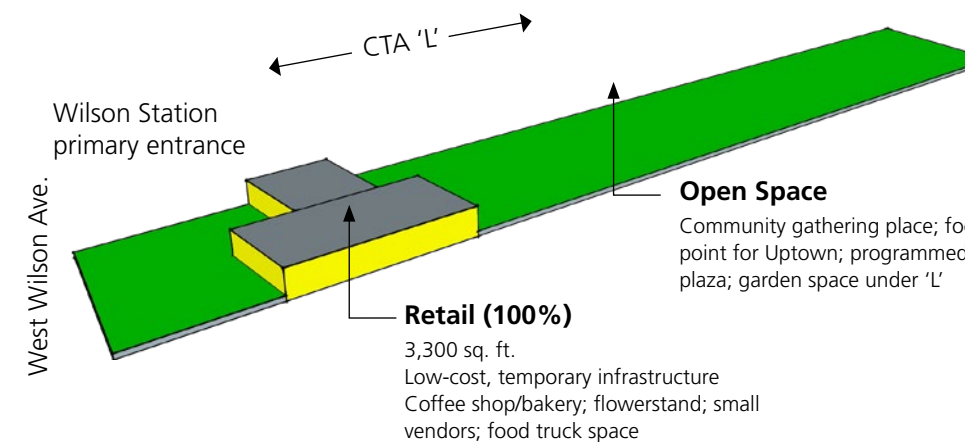
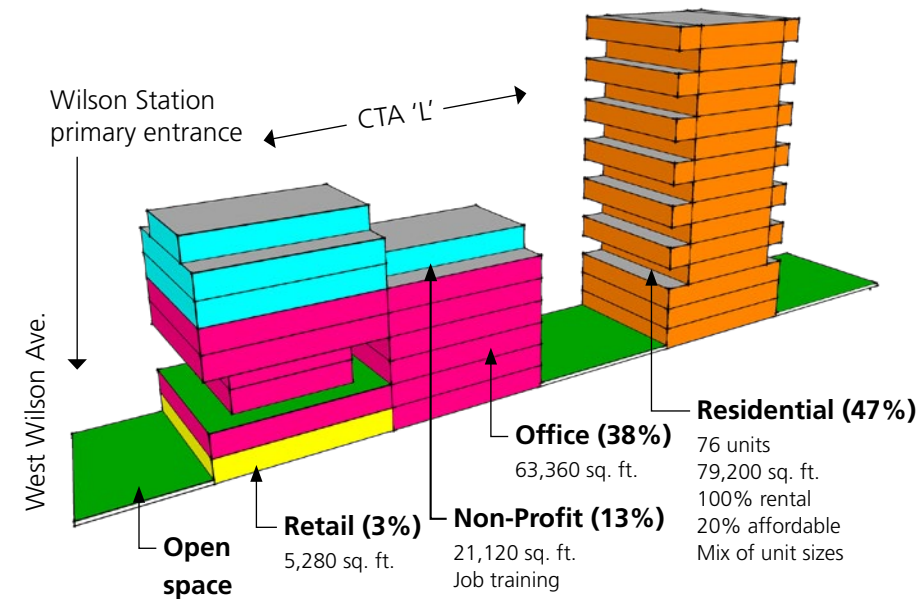
Development and operations costs covered by revenues **87 percent**

Financing gap **\$7.8 million**

Not eligible for affordable housing subsidies because of limited unit count (must have more than 20 affordable units).

Modifications to increase feasibility

An alternative development scenario would replace two-thirds of office space with residential space, and this would cover 95 percent of development and operations costs with revenues and reduce the financing gap to \$5.6 million. A majority of both meeting attendees and those who filled out the survey online, 51 percent and 50 percent respectively, said there was not a need for additional office space in Uptown.



Scenario 2

This project proposes a temporary, small-scale intervention in the area adjacent to the 'L' tracks and under the tracks themselves, designed for community gatherings, food trucks and the like. The project also would include a small, permanent structure for retail.

Financials

Construction and acquisition costs **\$5.3 million**

Acquisition cost alone **\$3.91 million**

Development and operations costs covered by revenues **10 percent**

Financing gap **\$3.57 million**

Modifications to increase feasibility

Because of the high costs of acquiring the land, this low-density project would be difficult to finance. To make it more feasible, the project would either have to incorporate more density or receive reduced-cost use of the land from the CTA. If the space were provided for free use, the financing gap would be reduced to less than \$600,000 and 84 percent of the project's development and operations costs would be covered through rent revenues.

Development recommendations

Following the completion of the three CDI workshops and two weeks of online surveying, MPC staff compiled results from the public engagement process. The physical site development plans that were created during the second workshop and discussed during the third workshop were used as examples of what could be built on the sites under consideration and will be used in negotiations with the City of Chicago, CPS and CTA. While the proposals are community-generated examples that MPC staff assessed for initial feasibility, the next step for achieving real development on these parcels will require real estate expertise around site development, rehabilitation and construction, financing, zoning and legal matters to move these projects forward.

The following recommendations were assembled based on a quantitative and qualitative review of the comments made both at the workshops and online. The RFPs introduced by CPS and CTA, expected for fall 2014 and 2015, should incorporate these recommendations into their scoring mechanisms. Developments that feature space dedicated to community purposes, affordable housing units and multiple uses, and that limit parking, should receive priority.

Both sites

Dense, mixed-use buildings that fit within the urban fabric of Uptown are preferred. Of the 15 proposals developed through the CDI process, all but three were mixed-use, offering some combination of residential, retail, nonprofit and office space. Participants were attracted to the idea of having retail facing the street, and liked the idea of multiple stories of other uses above. All but one of the proposals recommended development on either the parking lot adjacent to the school or the vacant land parallel to the CTA rail line.

Many participants stated that any new housing built should be targeted to a range of income levels, with at least some portion of the building affordable to low-income households. Of the 13 projects initially proposed by community members through the process, four were made up entirely of affordable units, and nine provided some mix of affordable and market-rate units, with an affordable component ranging from 10 to 55 percent. No proposal included only market-rate units. All of the housing proposals for the Wilson Station land and three-quarters of those designed for the parking lot provided a mix of affordable and market-rate housing. When asked about whether they would be willing to reduce the share of affordable units in two proposals for the Stewart School, 60 percent or more of participants at the workshops and people surveyed online agreed.

Given the proximity of the sites to Wilson Station, developments should only include the minimum required parking spaces. Of those who attended the third workshop, about two-thirds said they were willing to reduce parking provided in a proposed project to the minimum required under the zoning ordinance. Reducing parking spaces encourages more people to use public transportation and reduces the cost of development.

Zoning

The community's vision for the Stewart School sites cannot be fulfilled under the current zoning.

To allow the Stewart School site and adjacent parking lot to realize the community's vision, the zoning designation must be changed to B2-3 or B2-5. Either would allow a mix of uses and a significant increase in density, as well as a reduced amount

Dense, mixed-use buildings that fit within the urban fabric of Uptown are preferred.

of parking under the city's transit-oriented development (TOD) ordinance. The site is currently zoned RT-4, which only allows residential uses and restricts floor area ratio (FAR) to a relatively low value of 1.2, making all of the community-created development proposals impossible to implement.

Zoning should be altered in advance of the development to ensure prospective developers clearly understand and incorporate the community's goals into their proposals, and are not obstructed by what would be a lengthy and expensive zoning change process.

The sites adjacent to Wilson Station are appropriately zoned to accommodate residents' proposals. These designations also allow potential developments to qualify for reduced parking minimum requirements under the TOD ordinance.

Stewart School sites

The existing school building, a beautiful, historic and important structure in Uptown, should be preserved and reused. Among those who attended the workshops, there was virtually universal agreement on the importance of preserving the existing Stewart School building. No group discussed demolishing the building, while many others pointed to the building's landmark status as an important neighborhood asset to retain.

If the building is reused as a school, the community's strong preference is that it be a public school. Participants in the workshops and online disagreed about whether it was important for the Stewart School building to be retained as a school. Of the six proposals designed for the building, two pointed to putting a school of some type in the space. Of meeting attendees, 55 percent believed it was important to keep a school in the building, and 43 percent of those surveyed online agreed. When asked about whether the type of school in the space mattered, however, a large majority of workshop respondents said they preferred the idea of a public school there (59 percent) versus a private school (just 26 percent).

If the building is not reused as a school, at least part of the redevelopment should serve the neighborhood, whether as a community, arts or youth center, a farmers market or otherwise. All the proposals that address the Stewart School building included some amount of community or nonprofit space in the building. The clear recommendation of participants was that the building, even if no longer a school, should include some public purpose. Community members had mixed feelings about whether they would be willing to compromise on the amount of community space provided to increase the feasibility

of the development (47 percent of workshop participants and 49 percent of those surveyed online were in favor, versus 45 and 42 percent, respectively). Of the ideas for community spaces, participants were most interested in a community center, arts space (such as for dance, theater or performance) and a farmers market.

New construction should be planned for the parking lot adjacent to the school, at a scale similar to the school building (about four to six stories). Of the eight proposals developed for the Stewart School and adjacent parking lot, seven included a new building on the parking lot, ranging from three to 12 stories. About 70 percent of respondents both at the meetings and using the online survey suggested that they were open to a building on the parking lot, with only about 20 percent opposed. Only six percent of respondents in-person and online suggested they wanted a building less than four stories on that site, with 46 percent of workshop participants and 58 percent of those filling out the online survey in favor of a building taller than six stories on that site.

Retail options should be incorporated at the ground level if possible, preferably facing Broadway. Community members noted clearly in the first workshop meeting that they desired new retail options in the neighborhood, with many focusing on specific retailers such as a restaurant or a farmers market. Five of the proposals for the Stewart School sites included a retail component. Developer feedback in the third meeting emphasized that any new retail in the neighborhood should face Broadway to attract the largest number of customers.

Wilson Station sites

The redevelopment of Wilson Station offers the opportunity to significantly improve the space under the elevated rail tracks. Working with Truman College and local businesses, CTA should improve lighting and offer a paved, landscaped connection between Truman College and Broadway. Five of the seven proposals for the Wilson Station site included significant new open space in the area between the tracks and Truman College, and in the area under the tracks. There is a clear sense that more should be done to make the passages under the tracks more appealing. The current environment is not well maintained and is perceived as unsafe.

Development on the parcel just west of the CTA tracks is acceptable to the community, particularly if it includes retail facing Wilson Avenue and an "eyes on the street" design that emphasizes safety for pedestrians. Many community members proposed dense, multi-level proposals for the land adjacent to Wilson Station, with a mix of uses and buildings ranging from one to 12 stories. Participants noted that a density of residents or other activities, such as retail, in the area could help improve the perception of safety. Though office space was proposed by one group, the majority of workshop participants and those who completed the online survey suggested additional office space was unnecessary in the neighborhood (51 and 50 percent, respectively), compared with only a small share of people who believed it necessary.

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