

Community
Building
Initiative



Developing Vibrant Retail in Bronzeville



Metropolitan Planning Council

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MPC's work in Bronzeville is part of its Community Building Initiative, which supports communities throughout the Chicago region in customizing solutions to local development challenges, testing and refining new policies and strategies, providing models for other communities, and creating a network of regional partners and resources.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
The Local Retail Market	7
Corridor Recommendations	9
47th Street	10
43rd Street	14
51st Street	16
Strategy Recommendations	18
References	28

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Developing Vibrant Retail in Bronzeville

Executive Summary

When the Bronzeville Alliance, a coalition of local community organizations, invited the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) to help staff and provide recommendations to its Bronzeville Retail Initiative, MPC jumped at the opportunity to support coordinated retail planning, retention, and recruitment efforts in this community. This work advances and complements Reconnecting Neighborhoods, a partnership between the City of Chicago, Regional Transportation Authority, the consulting firm HNTB, and MPC's Community Building Initiative, to forward retail, transit and pedestrian improvements around the Plan for Transformation in the Chicago's Mid-South, Near West, and Near North neighborhoods.

Charged with guiding the Bronzeville Alliance toward its goal of vibrant retail corridors, the Bronzeville task force analyzed reams of past plans and market data, toured the community, and interviewed more than 75 residents and stakeholders.

The task force's chief conclusion was that, over time, the local market can support one primary retail corridor, and that corridor should be 47th Street due to its:

- Higher existing concentration of retail;
- Strong anchor institutions (such as Harold Washington Cultural Center, Little Black Pearl), and potential new developments planned on major intersections; and
- Good access, both by car (from the Dan Ryan Expressway to the west and Lake Shore Drive to the east) and by public transit (CTA Green Line and buses).



In addition to the 47th Street Corridor, the task force encouraged ongoing retail and development recruitment efforts for clusters of retail at 51st Street and the Green Line, and 43rd Street and Cottage Grove/43rd Street and the Green Line.

In addition, the task force recommended an array of specific strategies to further the Bronzeville Alliance's work:

- **Form a cross-ward economic development arm (CWEDA)** to serve as a driver for development and central hub of economic development information for the community. The Renaissance Collaborative, an existing community development corporation in Bronzeville, would create this economic development arm as an extension of its work. The CWEDA would strengthen local retail capacity and partnerships and build upon the work of existing organizations, such as the Quad Communities Development Corporation, 51st Street Business Association, and Renaissance Collaborative. This partnership should explore the possibility of acquiring and banking property for future development.
- To build new capacity and partnerships, the task force urged the Alliance to **establish a public cross-ward agreement** and commitment between 3rd and 4th Ward Aldermen, formally engage nearby institutions, and establish a new, complementary Special Service Area along 47th Street in the 3rd Ward.
- Another high priority identified by the task force was to **address both real and perceived safety challenges** through targeted interventions to address unwanted loitering and unsightliness by working with existing organizations such as the Concerned Citizens of Bronzeville as well as other community-based block clubs and local chambers of commerce.
- Finally, in order to support existing and new businesses and attract new spending to the community, the Bronzeville Alliance should work to **cluster businesses**, enhance the opportunities for a **mix of uses** (retail, office, and residential), **increase residential density**, and **create and attract new draws to the area**, such as open spaces, plazas and entertainment on vacant land throughout the Bronzeville community.



Introduction

Project Scope

In late 2009, the Bronzeville Alliance (the Alliance) asked the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) to assist in the development of a targeted retail plan for the Bronzeville community on Chicago's South Side. The Alliance identified three commercial corridors on which to focus retail recruitment, commercial retention, and viable complementary uses, based on their proximity to transit assets, rich histories, and current retail activity. They invited MPC to help refine the plan and staff initial implementation efforts. MPC brought together 13 experts in various aspects of economic development: retail brokerage, market analysis, financing, and community-level implementation. On Aug. 9 and 10, 2011, these volunteers met in Bronzeville to address the following:

- **Review the vision and develop a strategy:** Based on the corridor map and the Alliance's goals, have we created an effective foundation for retail development? Given the community's broad retail vision, what is the optimal nature and configuration of retail along 43rd, 47th, and 51st streets?
- **Assess the capacity of each corridor:** Where should Bronzeville's initial focus lie in each corridor? How can the neighborhood best build upon its rich history, creating an identity that can be marketed and supported?
- **Identify resources to develop capacity:** What models and other resources can help refine Bronzeville's vision and execute a successful retail development strategy?
- **Identify priorities:** What can be done quickly and what must be done immediately?
- **Assess organizational capacity:** Who is doing what now and who should be doing what in the future? Which groups have the greatest capacity to take on specific tasks, or could scale up quickly to do so?

Bronzeville Overview

Located on the South Side of Chicago, the Bronzeville area includes the neighborhoods roughly bounded by 18th Street on the north, 67th Street on the south, the Dan Ryan Expressway on the west, and Cottage Grove Avenue on the east. In the first half of the 20th century, Bronzeville became the center of Black Chicago, serving as a key gateway for African-Americans migrating from the South to seek better opportunities. It also became Chicago's center for black music, commerce, and culture, attracting patrons from across Chicagoland and beyond. The community experienced significant population loss between 1950 and 2010 from initial out-migration due to the lifting of restrictive covenants, major shifts in public housing, the ongoing suburbanization of jobs, real or perceived lack of safety, and lack of quality schools. However, today it is rebounding with leadership from committed residents, community organizations, business owners, and elected officials.

The Bronzeville Alliance is a group of Bronzeville residents and organizations committed to the economic, social and cultural redevelopment of this historic community. Organized in 2008, the Alliance brings together a variety of stakeholders to develop coordinated strategies addressing five key issue areas: crime and grime; education and training; green jobs, health, and the environment; housing; and retail, hospitality, tourism, and transportation. Bronzeville has lost more than 75 percent of its population since its heyday in the 1950s (from roughly 300,000 in 1950 to roughly 75,000 in 2010, according to the 2010 Census) yet remains zoned for a level of commercial activity that it can no longer support. Recognizing the need for targeted, strategic retail recruitment and retention, the Alliance created the Bronzeville Retail Initiative (BRI) in 2009. Their vision is to "facilitate development of vibrant, walkable, retail corridors that builds on Bronzeville's rich retail and entertainment history, while serving the needs of modern-day residents and destination shoppers, and providing local employment and ownership opportunities."



Bronzeville Retail Initiative members created this map to demonstrate suggested themes and nodes along the three corridors. This map was ratified at a community meeting on May 21, 2011, and task force members used it as guidance for their recommendations.

BRI's focus is on creating vibrant, walkable retail corridors on 43rd, 47th, and 51st streets that build on Bronzeville's rich retail and entertainment history, while serving the needs of current and future residents and destination shoppers, and providing local employment and ownership opportunities. Building off the presence of the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) Green Line, the Alliance's plan emphasizes the use of transit-oriented development (mixed-use residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transportation) as a tool to increase density, focus retail, and improve the pedestrian experience along these corridors.

naissance Collaborative, Centers for New Horizons, Concerned Citizens of Bronzeville, and Urban Juncture. Both Ald. Pat Dowell (3rd Ward) and Ald. Will Burns (4th Ward) have been key partners and advisors. In addition, the Alliance's work is now supported by the City of Chicago Dept. of Housing and Economic Development and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which is engaged in developing a plan that will result in land use and zoning recommendations for the retail corridors. The plan can be used as a model by the city as it re-examines its own retail strategy and seeks to concentrate retail to maximize economic impacts.

Local resident Leana Flowers chairs BRI, and its core members include Quad Communities Development Corporation, 51st Street Business Association, Re-

before



Chicago Transit Authority

East-West Corridors

The east-west corridors of 43rd, 47th, and 51st streets in Bronzeville are fondly remembered as the one-time economic and cultural backbones of the community; during the community's heyday in the 40s and 50s these thoroughfares offered a wide variety of retail, entertainment and cultural assets. Today, several newly renovated buildings pepper the area, including the iconic Sutherland Hotel at 47th and Drexel Boulevard, which once welcomed guests like Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong, Dizzie Gillespie, and Etta James. Other new buildings and anchor businesses include Jokes & Notes, a successful comedy club at 47th and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (King Drive); Little Black Pearl, a state-of-the-art youth arts and educational institution at 47th and Greenwood; Le Fleur de Lis, a Creole restaurant adjacent to the 43rd Street Green Line El station; and the new H-Dogs upscale hot dog restaurant and Uncle Joe's Jamaican restaurant at 47th and King Drive. Neighborhood branding has been incorporated along many sections of the corridors, particularly along Cottage Grove in the 4th Ward, where a Special Service Area has installed and maintained banners, planters and murals; and, along 47th and King Drive in the 3rd Ward, where significant investment has been made in streetscaping, signage, and large arts installations to celebrate the area's jazz and blues history. The Bronzeville sign at McCormick Place and the Stevenson expressway also supports this history and identity.

A walk or drive down the corridors today reveals a wide variety of retail uses as well as a significant number of vacant lots. Retail is diffuse, making the identification of businesses from the street as well as access, both for residents and visitors, difficult. These factors, as well as pockets of deteriorated properties and unwanted loitering, often make them challenging and uninviting to walk. The CTA Green Line serves more than 3,500 riders in the community every week-day with a station traversing each of the three corridors. However, the stations need upkeep, and adjacent development is sparse. Community residents have voiced that the stations are uninviting; business owners are concerned the stations, combined with persistent loitering, deter customers. It should be noted that in early November 2011, the CTA completed station improvements at the 43rd Street Green Line station, providing a much-needed facelift.

after



Chicago Transit Authority

The 43rd Street CTA Green Line station before (above) and after (below) renewal in 2011.



North-South Corridors

Three major north-south streets intersect the corridors: State Street connects them at the far west, and King Drive and S. Cottage Grove Avenue run through the centers. While the focus of this initiative is the three east-west corridors, the intersections at State Street, King Drive, and Cottage Grove Avenue provide significant opportunities for anchor development.

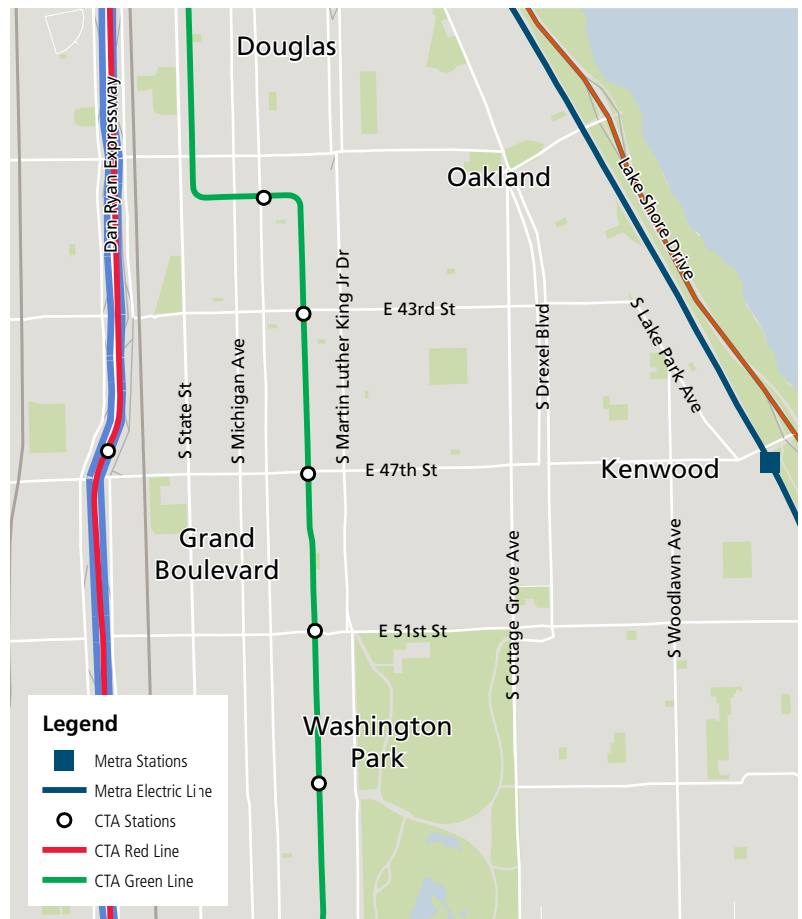
- **State Street** has a significant number of sizeable, vacant lots largely due to demolition of Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) high-rise public housing buildings. Its Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Count of 7,300 cars per day is fairly low. However, the adjacent Dan Ryan Expressway serves 240,800 cars per day near the 47th Street exit, providing a key opportunity to draw drivers from the expressway to the corridors. Much of the development along State Street has been driven by the CHA Plan for Transformation, with two major redevelopment efforts: Legends South at 43rd and State Street and Park Boulevard at 35th and State Street. The Illinois Institute of Technology is another significant anchor at 35th Street. The corridor also encompasses major community parks, as well as a number of Chicago Public schools and technical/vocational training institutes. State Street was identified in past studies as most appropriate for large-format stores, a concept being forwarded through Capri Capital's Metropolis development at 39th Street.
- **Dr. Martin Luther King Drive** is part of the Chicago Boulevard system and boasts many beautiful historic greystones and brownstones. Existing and new retail is mostly concentrated at the north end of the boulevard, around 35th Street. However, 47th and King Drive (photo, top right) has seen significant new development in recent years, including the Harold Washington Cultural Center which has the potential to be a major cultural hub for the area. King Drive's AADT count ranges from 9,700 to 15,000 cars per day; the higher end of that range is found in the northern portion of the study area at around 43rd Street.
- **S. Cottage Grove Avenue** has been the focus of a redevelopment initiative driven by the 4th Ward aldermanic office and Quad Communities Development Corporation, which formed in 2003 to advance community development in the South Side neighborhoods of Kenwood, Oakland, Douglas, and Grand Boulevard. These efforts – new branding and marketing, streetscape initiatives, street cleaning, business development and programming – have attracted several new businesses, including a major new commercial development planned for the corner of 47th and Cottage Grove (bottom right photo), which supports 9,000 cars daily.



The Local Retail Market

The 43rd, 47th, and 51st Street corridors touch five Chicago neighborhoods: Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Oakland, and Washington Park (see map at right). Two neighborhood market studies have been completed in the last three years: the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) MetroEdge market research group completed a retail scan of the area in January 2010; and the Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF) commissioned a market study of the State Street corridor completed in November 2009. The results provided the following insights:

- **Income:** Middle-income households are on a steady rise, contributing to an overall diversification of neighborhood incomes.
- **Investment:** New investments exceed \$470 million since 2005.
- **Safety and environment:** Violent crime has decreased by 20 percent since 2004, while vacant lots have been reduced by half since 2006.
- **Retail opportunity:** Bronzeville boasts \$175 million worth of concentrated buying power per square mile, which exceeds the City of Chicago's average of \$168 per square mile. General merchandise, home supply, restaurants and clothing stores remain high-opportunity retail categories.
- **Capacity:** Organizations like QCDC and 51st Street Business Association provide expertise and on-the-ground capacity to support developers and business owners interested in the market (see chart below).



Convenience Trade Area Adjusted Float* – 2009¹

Category	Demand (millions)	Supply (millions)	Float (millions)	Adjusted Float (millions)
General merchandise stores	104	18.4	85.9	85.6
Building material, garden equipment & supply dealers	55.3	2.69	52.61	45.8
Food service & drinking places	80.7	31.2	49.5	28.9
Electronics & appliance stores	19.8	1.4	18.4	17.1
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	43.2	25.2	18.0	15.9
Furniture & home furnishing stores	17.9	2.16	15.74	15.2
Miscellaneous store retailers	17.0	1.39	15.61	13.8
Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	15.7	3.87	11.83	9.31
Health & personal care	50.3	31.7	18.6	4.79
Food & beverage stores	109.0	82.3	26.7	-2.3

*Retail float is a measure of the amount of unmet retail opportunity in the study area, and is calculated as the difference between buying power (demand), and retail sales (supply). Adjusted float takes into account competing retail destinations within 2.5 miles, based on the size of the store and distance of the store from the convenience area.

- **State Street:** State Street's deeper lots provide greater opportunity for large-format retail than the other corridors, yet also present a need for increased density.
- **Developer needs:** Developers surveyed by CCLF indicated that they need certain elements in place to successfully market to new businesses, including an entity that is focused on land acquisition and assembly, a master plan, and a commitment to keeping streets clean.

When combined, the population of these five neighborhoods totals 75,643 and housing units total 41,059.

Community Survey Results

Over the last few years, residents and stakeholders have been surveyed several times about this retail area, including:

- *Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail* survey, conducted during the same-titled community meeting on May 21, 2011. Only those who attended this meeting, focusing on the 43rd, 47th, and 51st street corridors, took the survey; as a result, it yielded 30 responses.
- The *Renaissance Collaborative Bronzeville Economic Redevelopment Survey Report* was completed in January 2011. In total, 710 residents and 25 business owners completed surveys. The survey focused on 43rd Street and its outlying shopping corridors, 35th Street to the north, 47th Street to the south, and the area between State Street and King Drive.
- The Chicago Community Loan Fund study found that "many stakeholders envisioned the State Street corridor as a mix of neighborhood/convenience retail, franchise businesses, restaurants and big box stores serving local residents that need convenience retail as well as regional neighborhoods that would patronize State Street as a 'Destination Retail' hub, similar to the Roosevelt Road corridor in the South Loop."

47th Street

Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail survey respondents said they visit this corridor more often than the other two corridors (51 percent said at least once per week), primarily (50 percent) to get food. Respondents repeatedly cited Michael's Fresh Market, Simply Soups and Salads, Z&H MarketCafe, McDonald's, Walgreens, and Little Black Pearl as destinations.

43rd Street

36 percent of *Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail* respondents cited they go to 43rd Street more than once per week; 70 percent go for food. Respondents specifically cited Bronzeville Coffee House, Ain't She Sweet Café, Norm's Bistro, JJ's Fish and Chicken, Alice's BBZ, and Agriculture as frequent shopping destinations.

51st Street

71 percent of *Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail* survey respondents reported they almost never shop along 51st Street. The 51st Street Business Association and CMAP surveyed business owners and building conditions on 51st Street between August 2010 and April 2011, which revealed that 62 percent of businesses on the corridor are family-owned and most of the commercial buildings are in fair or poor condition.

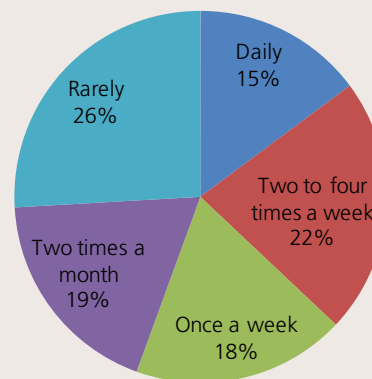
Retail selection and variety

For all three corridors, *Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail* survey respondents said they do not visit more often because few stores interest them.

Safety

For all three corridors, the Renaissance Collaborative survey results showed 87 percent of respondents felt either "somewhat safe" or "very safe" shopping in the area during the daytime. 50 percent felt "somewhat safe" to shop during the evenings, and 48 percent felt either "not at all safe" or "not very safe" during the evenings.

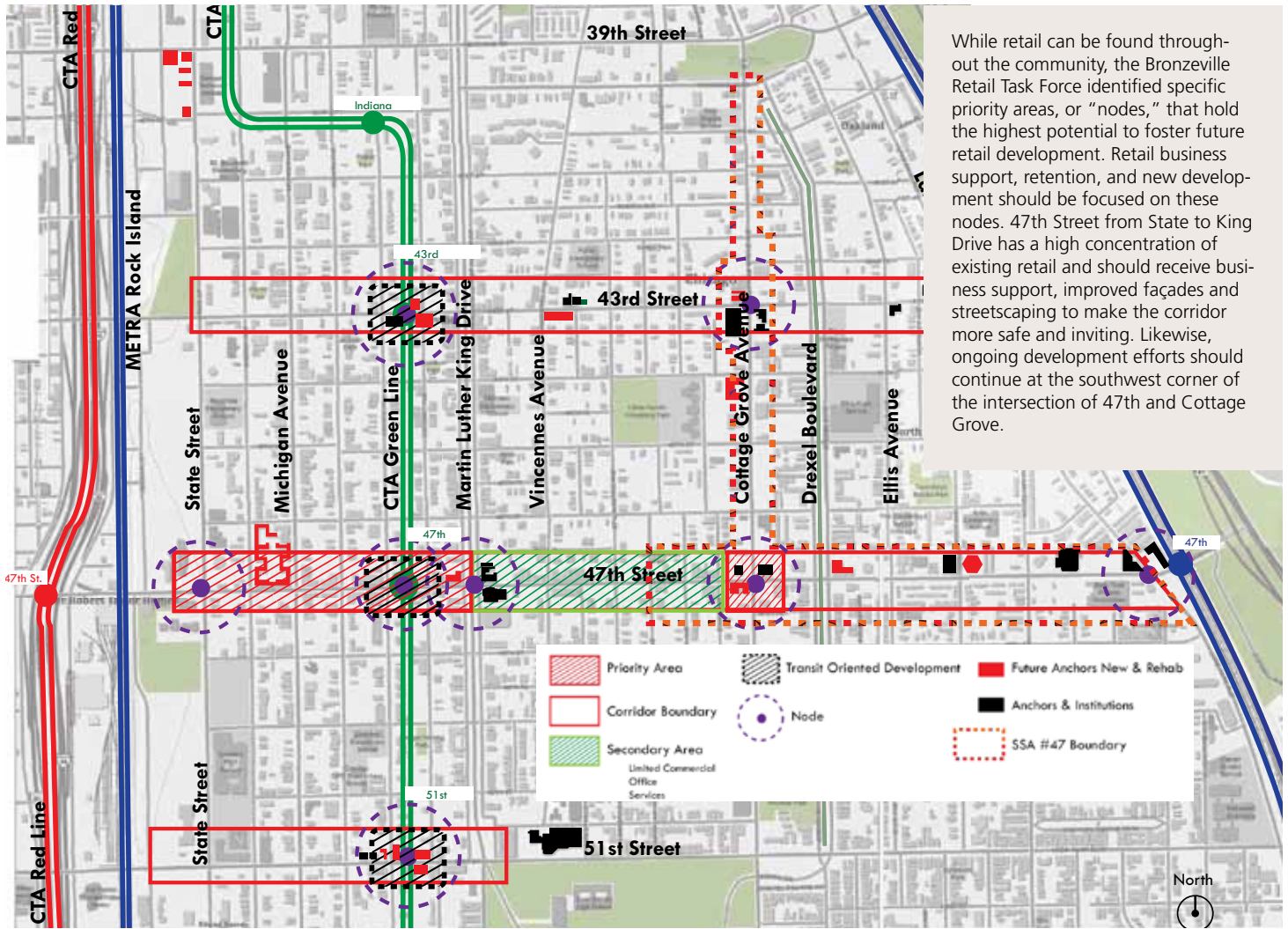
How often do you shop in the three corridors?



results from *Defining the Future of Bronzeville Retail*

Together, the neighborhoods have lost 17,452 residents over the last decade.² More broadly, the City of Chicago lost 200,000 residents during this same time period, 89 percent of which were African-American. Across Chicago, African-American neighborhoods were hit hard by population loss. In these five neighborhoods in particular, the loss may be further explained by the significant and ongoing CHA redevelopment efforts. With five Plan for Transformation sites located here – Oakwood Shores, Lake Park Crescent, Jazz on the Boulevard, Legends South, and Park Boulevard – this area has the largest concentration of public housing redevelopment in the city, totaling 7,873 new units once fully constructed (635 units had been completed as of the end of 2010, according to the CHA's 2010 Annual Report). Almost all the developments are not yet complete or fully leased. Therefore, the impact this transition has had on overall population loss is significant, as residents were relocated before and during construction. As new units become available, trends should begin to reverse; yet given that the new developments are not as dense as those that were torn down, there will still be a net population loss. These are issues that Bronzeville Alliance was established to address.

Corridor Recommendations



While retail can be found throughout the community, the Bronzeville Retail Task Force identified specific priority areas, or “nodes,” that hold the highest potential to foster future retail development. Retail business support, retention, and new development should be focused on these nodes. 47th Street from State to King Drive has a high concentration of existing retail and should receive business support, improved façades and streetscaping to make the corridor more safe and inviting. Likewise, ongoing development efforts should continue at the southwest corner of the intersection of 47th and Cottage Grove.

Dave Walker, W A L K Studio LLC

MPC’s Bronzeville Retail Task Force considered all of these factors, as well as conducted more than 75 stakeholder interviews, before developing the following recommendations for the Bronzeville corridors.

Establish Cross-Ward Economic Development Arm

A key point across all three corridors was the need to establish a cross-ward economic development arm (CWEDA) that builds off the existing knowledge and expertise of an existing organization. Why cross-ward? Currently, a business owner interested in the area would have a hard time learning the best options in the community, as information sources focus on smaller geographies (4th ward only, or 51st Street only, for example). The task force thus strongly recommends creating a central retail development hub to serve as a one-stop shop for potential business owners and investors.

Cluster Complementary Businesses

These recommendations also are based on the retail development premise that the key to success is clustering complementary businesses, which capitalizes on spending that occurs when people who come to a destination for one purpose – say, pizza – see a related opportunity nearby – say, an ice cream shop – and decide to spend money there, too. The concept is based on pedestrian behavior: Typically they like the opportunity to walk and shop at different stores

before returning to their home or car. Thus, for Bronzeville a successful corridor is a pedestrian-friendly corridor that offers many different quality options for the consumer. As one Bronzeville Retail Task Force interviewee stated, “Clustering is the way to go. That is a great way to grow. Not clustering rips out the energy that people like of being around other people.”

Retail in Bronzeville has not always followed this pattern, and some businesses have suffered as a result. As one Alliance member pointed out, “We do not have a high concentration of retail. We have it dispersed. Each little business is a destination instead of collectively being a destination.” Task force members affirmed the Bronzeville Retail Initiative’s premise that clustering is a key strategy to strengthening existing and attracting new businesses. Implementing this strategy will require strategic zoning and, at least initially, guiding businesses to certain areas and away from others.

Recruit Neighborhood-Serving Retail

Finally, there was consensus among the task force that all three corridors are most appropriate for attracting and supporting smaller neighborhood-serving retail, such as coffee shops, clothing stores, and smaller restaurant formats. The local character as well as most lot depths will not support large-format stores, such as a grocery store or Target.



47th Street

Corridor Overview

The MPC Bronzeville Retail Task Force agreed that, due to market realities, enough retail demand exists to support one strong, locally oriented, multi-block retail corridor, and came to the unanimous conclusion that 47th Street presents the best opportunity for the following reasons:

Significant existing assets and supportive infrastructure: 47th Street boasts the largest concentration of existing businesses, is home to a number of historically significant buildings, links to key financial resources and incentives, and already has experienced meaningful investment in the way of new development, technical support, beautification, and signage.

Excellent access: 47th Street is located in the heart of Bronzeville and is connected to the CTA Green Line and Red Line. 47th Street is the only corridor in the study that provides direct access to and from the Dan Ryan Expressway to the west and Lake Shore Drive to the east, which accounts for its larger traffic counts relative to the other corridors; the AADT count is 131,000 cars per day.

Greatest potential to spur development throughout Bronzeville: Given its size, accessibility, visibility, and more consistent and complementary land use, a successful 47th Street has the most potential to spur an overall retail resurgence in Bronzeville.

Existing institutional and organizational capacity: Thanks to the efforts of Wendell Grandville, QCDC, and others, much already has been done to reach out to and support existing retailers along 47th Street. With an existing Special Service Area (SSA) on 47th Street in the 4th Ward and an adjoining 3rd Ward SSA in the application process, significant opportunity exists to formalize the involvement of local business and property owners in corridor improvements.

Greatest likelihood to build and improve on successful retail co-tenancy: The area already is starting to attract a broader mix of retail, with old stores investing in façade improvements and new stores offering different products. In addition, the concentration of retail between King Drive and Indiana Avenue provides an important base to build upon by adding more complementary retail opportunities.

Opportunity to become a regional draw: 47th Street has potential to draw visitors from outside of Bronzeville due to institutions such as Little Black Pearl and the Harold Washington Cultural Center, as well as future possibilities such as a potential Muntu Dance Theater.

Future development initiatives: 47th Street contains many future development opportunities, both for rehab and new construction; the Sutherland Hotel, formerly a prominent jazz lounge, is scheduled to be rehabbed, and Shops and Lofts at 47th and Cottage is scheduled for completion in 2013 and is expected to offer a number of residential and retail options. Other possibilities include the redevelopment of the Rosenwald, and a new breakfast/brunch restaurant, Peaches, at King Drive which could further strengthen the corridor.



“47th is the best place to start filling in teeth.”
 — MPC Bronzeville Task force interviewee

Some 190 individual parcels exist between the Dan Ryan and S. Lake Park Avenue. Roughly 50 percent of the lots on 47th Street are vacant; approximately 87 percent of these are owned by the City of Chicago, most of which are located in the five blocks between King Drive and S. Champlain Avenue. In addition to empty lots, vacant and unkempt properties contribute to safety concerns in parts of the corridor.

47th Street has a wide range of retail offerings. Many urban clothing stores are clustered around the CTA Green Line station. Further East, mid-sized stores such as Bally's Total Fitness, Walgreens, Michael's Fresh Market, Footlocker, and GameStop are clustered near S. Lake Park Avenue. Other retailers include Save-A-Lot Foods on 47th Street and S. Cottage Grove Avenue, and Zaleski and Horvath MarketCafe. While the aforementioned Little Black Pearl is not a formal retailer, its open and brightly lit street frontage allows for a clear view of the arts displays and events that take place there.

The prominent 47th Street intersections of King Drive and S. Cottage Grove Avenue have significant momentum. The King Drive intersection has received notable streetscape investment over the last decade and is home to the Harold Washington Cultural Center. However, while envisioned as a hub for retail

and culture for the community, this corner has experienced several setbacks. The financial and political struggles around the Harold Washington Cultural Center have prevented the venue from living up to its promise of an education and entertainment facility and anchor for the area's revitalization. In January 2010, a fire in the building at the northeast corner of the intersection forced the closing of several promising businesses, including the supper club Blue 47. However, the Jokes and Notes comedy club and Jamaican Consulate survived the fire and, in 2011, two new restaurants have opened in the building – H-Dogs, a gourmet hot dog café, and Uncle Joe's restaurant.

Shops and Lofts at 47 is a planned anchor development at the corner of 47th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue that has seen several fits and starts over the last six years due to the economic downturn. Originally proposed as a mixed-use condominium development with retail on the ground floor, the latest plan is that Shops and Lofts will provide 72 apartments and 55,000 sq. ft. of retail space. Demolition is complete, the land is cleared for redevelopment, and negotiations are underway with an anchor tenant.



Financial Incentives

The majority of 47th Street is located within the boundaries of three Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, the 47th and State TIF, 47th and King TIF, and 43rd and Cottage TIF. 47th Street is completely within Enterprise Zone 2 and Chicago Empowerment Zone 3, offering additional business incentives. Part of 47th Street, from St. Lawrence to S. Lake Park Avenue is supported by Special Service Area #47, a special taxing district run by business and property owners to fund and manage improvement programs.

Historical Significance

Historically significant buildings include the Sutherland Hotel at 47th and Drexel; the home of Robert S. Abbott, founder of the *Chicago Defender* located at 47th Street and King Drive; and Michigan Boulevard Garden Apartments, also known as “the Rosenwald,” a large, originally privately subsidized housing project. This significant site on the western edge of 47th Street was constructed by Sears, Roebuck and Co. President Julius Rosenwald in 1927. The Rosenwald was home to celebrities such as musician and producer Quincy Jones and boxer Joe Louis, as well as to the first African-American library in Chicago. This property has been vacant for more than 20 years and will require significant investment to redevelop, yet currently has an interested investor looking into revitalizing the property.

Recommendations

While the task force strongly agreed that 47th has significant retail potential, it also agreed that much needs to be done to reach this potential.

- Beautify and improve safety throughout the corridor:** The task force agrees this is job number one. Even with the jazz and blues markers along the corridors and large treatments at King Drive and Cottage Grove Avenue, 47th Street still has many challenges to overcome in becoming more inviting to visitors. The sidewalks are narrow, businesses still use security gates, and littering and unwanted loitering prevail in many sections. A streetscape guidelines strategy is needed that promotes a clean and vibrant corridor.
- Create a 47th Street Urban Design Master Plan and conduct a parking study:** This plan should provide recommendations about zoning, open spaces/plazas, design guidelines, development phasing strategies, and the need and appropriate locations for on- and off-street parking to support existing and future retailers without taking away from the corridor’s walkability.
- Allow flexibility and update zoning:** While 47th Street offers the best opportunity for a retail corridor, it still will not be able to support retail uses exclusively along its entire length. In general, flexible zoning should be applied in areas that are not close to the intersections to allow for parking and other land uses such as residential and office.

As CMAP and the City of Chicago develop their Bronzeville land use recommendations, they should consider Pedestrian Zoning for 47th Street; retain-



ing B-1 Zoning at key, high-priority retail nodes and intersections; and implementing B-2 and B-3 Zoning to allow for more flexibility, walkability, and the market to drive expansion. (See sidebar, right.)

- Shore up the intersections at Cottage Grove Avenue and King Drive:** When built out, these two intersections will serve as the catalysts for the entire corridor and surrounding neighborhood. Shops and Lofts at 47 continues to move forward, and two new restaurants have opened at the northeast corner of 47th and King.
- Rejuvenate the Harold Washington Cultural Center:** Related to developing the King Drive intersection, this major institution at the southeast corner of 47th Street and King Drive is in foreclosure and at risk of not meeting its potential to draw people into Bronzeville for entertainment and cultural activities and provide vital youth programming. The 40,000 sq. ft., \$19 million center was opened in 2004 and completed final construction in 2006. The center includes a 1,000-seat performing arts theater, multi-use resource center, computer lab, and music school. With City Colleges of Chicago identified as the new mortgage holder, the center must secure a new tenant and undergo a retrofit to maximize its performance space and become the neighborhood anchor it should be.
- Attract a wider variety of retailers:** Urban apparel dominates much of the retail offerings on 47th, particularly near the Green Line station. These stores have sustained the 47th Street corridor for many years. However, through the interview process, surveys, and community meetings, many felt that the offerings did not serve them. As work is done to attract more infill retail uses, there is a great opportunity to focus on attracting retailers that offer a greater selection of products and serve a wider variety of clientele. Balancing the retail offerings and coupling them with façade improvements to existing stores will create a corridor that is inviting and welcoming to a wide spectrum of residents and visitors, while leveraging the core strength of the existing businesses.

Zoning Districts for Consideration

B-1 is the **Neighborhood Shopping** district designation intended for compact neighborhood retail development at intersections of two or more major streets or in a cohesive linear fashion around key nodes.

B-2 is the **Neighborhood Mixed-Use** district designation that provides a range of development options for those streets where the market demand for retail and service uses is relatively low. By allowing ground-floor residential uses by right, the B2 district is intended to help stimulate development along under-developed streets.

B-3 is the **Community Shopping** district that should be applied in areas conducive to destination-oriented location, such as 47th and State Street. It is designed to accommodate a very broad range of retail and service uses, often in the physical form of shopping centers or larger buildings than found in the B1 and B2 districts.

Pedestrian Zoning districts are intended to preserve and enhance the character of streets and intersections widely recognized as Chicago's best examples of pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. A close example is 53rd Street from Kenwood to Hyde Park Boulevard in Hyde Park. The regulations are intended to promote transit, economic vitality, and pedestrian safety and comfort.



43rd Street

43rd Street benefits from direct access from the Dan Ryan Expressway and 43rd Street CTA Green Line to the west. Approximately 190 parcels exist along 43rd Street from the expressway to S. Lake Park Avenue, and 7,000 cars pass through the corridor daily. 43rd Street includes a wide variety of land uses, from residential to retail, and is bookended by Metcalfe Park on the west end and Price Lit and Writing Elementary and Robinson Elementary schools on the east. Of the three corridors, 43rd Street has the most sparsely scattered retail. It also has one of the highest percentages of vacant land, comprising some 57 percent of all of the parcels. A majority (89 percent) of these are city owned, presenting a good opportunity for land assembly in priority areas.

Several unique retail clusters can be found along 43rd Street, including the three businesses between Vincennes and Forrestville avenues – Ain't She Sweet Café (which relocated in 2011 from 45th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue to be clustered near other retail); Agriculture, a men's clothing boutique; and the Bronzeville Coffee House. There are plans to open a Generations Bank across the street from these businesses on the south side of 43rd Street. Norman Bolden, a local entrepreneur, has opened two up-scale businesses one block from each other between Ellis and Greenwood avenues: Room 43 (an event venue) and Norman's Bistro. This investment attracted Fort Smith, a new women's boutique, and Faie African ART, a local art gallery, which both located next to Norman's Bistro. There also has been a focused redevelopment effort spearheaded by QCDC at the intersection of Cottage Grove Avenue and 43rd Street, resulting in The Connection, a martial arts and facility rental; and a dialysis center that will include approximately 1,800 sq. ft. of retail space. Three CHA Plan for Transformation developments intersect 43rd Street: Legends South (2,696 units) along State Street, Jazz on the Boulevard (137 units) along S. Cottage Grove Avenue, and Lake Park Crescent (497 units) along S. Lake Park Avenue.

Financial Incentives

The majority of 43rd Street is within four Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts: the 47th and King TIF, 47th and State TIF, 47th and Halsted TIF, and 43rd and Cottage TIF. 43rd Street is completely within Enterprise Zone 2 and Chicago Empowerment Zone 3, offering additional business incentives.

Historic Significance

Historically significant buildings along the corridor include The Forum, built in 1899 and located at 43rd Street and Calumet Avenue, which served as a meeting and entertainment hall for jazz and a variety of political groups; and the Chicago Landmark-designated First Church of Deliverance at 43rd Street and Wabash Avenue.



Recommendations

One of the 43rd Street Corridor's biggest challenges is its length coupled with its sparse development pattern. As previously mentioned, several new businesses cater to a middle- to upper-income crowd; however, the corridor is neither consistent nor walkable, deterring potential customers who do not wish to drive to isolated retail destinations. While organizations such as QCDC will continue to serve these and the other new businesses by providing marketing and technical support, the MPC Bronzeville Retail Task Force recommends targeting near-term retail recruitment efforts around two nodes on 43rd Street:

- 43rd and the Green Line Station:** A key transit node, this retail area requires station improvements (completed as of November 2011), increased security, wayfinding signs, the rehabilitation of the Forum building (recently purchased by a new, local developer), and constructive places to gather (also known as positive loitering), such as found at the Bronzeville Community Garden on 51st Street (see sidebar).
- 43rd and Cottage Grove:** Much already has been put in place to revitalize this important corridor, including banners, signage, art and several new, responsible businesses. QCDC should continue to lead efforts to support and recruit businesses, as well as work with Ald. Will Burns (4th Ward) to challenge specific businesses owners to improve business practices.

Bronzeville Community Garden



Spearheaded by a local leader who is also a BRI member, the Bronzeville Community Garden was established on formerly vacant land at 51st Street and Calumet Avenue as a vehicle to educate and engage Bronzeville residents on sustainability, conservation, health, food and nutrition. The garden includes a Chef's Pavilion, a Public Performance Patio, a butterfly sanctuary, an art exhibit, a communal dining table, several chess/checkers stations, and about a dozen gardening beds. Located on a high-traffic commercial corridor, the garden is intended to remain a community asset, but may move according to development opportunities. Rather, the garden's organizers see it as a catalyst to the area's revitalization by providing a positive place to gather, socialize, and learn through community gardening and other activities.



51st Street

The majority of 51st Street from S. Lake Park Avenue to the Dan Ryan Expressway is residential. Two retail nodes bookend the corridor. The western portion of 51st Street near the Dan Ryan, the area of focus for BRI, sees a noteworthy AADT count of 20,600 cars daily. This area between the Dan Ryan and King Drive has about 60 parcels, 13 of which are vacant. Six of the vacant lots are city owned.

Small-scale retail development is popping up along 51st Street, mainly around the Green Line station. SOS Security is expanding and redeveloping its property to include an atrium (pictured at left) and restaurant at the northwest corner of 51st Street and Prairie Avenue. Urban Juncture, Inc. is creating Bronzeville Cookin', a unique dining destination at the northeast corner of 51st and Prairie Avenue that will include four locally owned and operated restaurants celebrating the cuisines and cultures of the African Diaspora. Urban Juncture also has been the lead partner on the Bronzeville Community Garden at the southeast corner of 51st Street and Calumet. In addition, Cain's Barber College is planning on remodeling and expanding its site just west of King Drive. One of the most significant needs along this portion of 51st Street is façade improvements, which is being spearheaded by the 51st Street Businesses Association through the City of Chicago Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Small Business Improvement Fund.

The largest retail concentration is located to the east of the BRI focus area in the Hyde Park neighborhood near S. Lake Park Avenue, including large retailers such as Village Foods grocery store and Pancake House (since moved to 47th Street) in the Lake Village Shopping Center, and smaller retailers like Edible Arrangements. Plans are underway to redevelop Lake Village Shopping Center, including a Whole Foods Market, which signed a lease in early 2011, and a small theater. This eastern portion of 51st Street serves the Hyde Park market, which has more disposable income than Bronzeville; in general, Hyde Park residents do not tend to shop regularly in Bronzeville. To the west, businesses such as Hyde Park Liquor, Cain's Barber College, SOS Security, and Red Apple Food & Liquor (under the CTA Green Line El station) pepper the corridor between King Drive and the Dan Ryan Expressway. Washington Park and residential land uses prevent retail east of King Drive until Cottage Grove Avenue, where a Walgreens anchors a small strip mall.

Financial Incentives

The western portion of the 51st Street retail corridor is located within the boundaries of two TIF districts, the 47th and State TIF and 47th and King TIF. Its northern boundary is within Enterprise Zone 2 and southern boundary is within Enterprise Zone 6. This portion of 51st Street also is served by Chicago Empowerment Zone 3, offering additional business incentives. The eastern portion of the corridor, in Hyde Park, is located within the 53rd Street TIF.

Historic Significance

Historically significant buildings include the Pate-Comiskey House at 51st Street and Michigan Avenue, designed by famed Chicago architect George Maher and owned by former White Sox owner Charles Comiskey; and the 100-year-old Great Lakes Elks Lodge, located at 51st Street and Prairie Avenue.



Urban Juncture

Bronzeville Cookin', a development planned for 51st Street at the CTA Green Line station, would feature restaurants that celebrate the various cuisines of people of African descent.

“51st Street has a vision, a key player to pull off the projects, a business association, and is closer to University of Chicago.”

— MPC Bronzeville Task force interviewee

Recommendations

51st Street as a retail corridor is geographically constrained due to Washington Park. The park’s presence helps define a focused retail node around the CTA Green Line station, which is starting to see activity. The MPC Bronzeville Task force recommends the following strategies for 51st Street, spearheaded by the 51st Street Business Association:

- **Beautify and improve safety:** 51st Street has struggled with unwanted loitering and uninviting retail facades. This is slowly changing as SOS Security and Cain’s Barber College begin to improve and expand their businesses, and the Bronzeville Community Garden (see sidebar on page 15) provides a positive space for residents to congregate. The 51st Street Business Association should continue to work with local businesses to access Small Business Improvement Funds (SBIF) to improve the façades and create a consistent look and feel, with focused efforts around the CTA Green Line. In addition, given that SOS Security is located on the corridor and provides security services, this can potentially be formalized through a contract with a Special Service Area, which has been approved by the city and is in the process of being established.
- **Develop a Station Area Plan for the 51st Street CTA Green Line station:** Similar to what was done for the 43rd Street station, the 51st Street Station area would benefit from design guidelines, a site specific market analysis, and recommendations for station improvements.
- **Make Bronzeville Cookin’ a reality:** Urban Juncture owns property located both to the east and west of the CTA Green Line Station with plans to create a “unique dining destination and culinary incubator that celebrates the ‘cuisines, cultures, and communities of peoples of African descent.’” The venue (pictured above) will offer four locally-owned and operated restaurants, from a jerk chicken shack concept to a soul food supper club. Widely supported by the community and elected officials, the project has secured TIF commitments and is in the process of filling the remaining financing gap.

Strategy Recommendations



Marketing

Put History in Context

As the task force interviewed local businesses owners, nearly every one cited the area's history and/or familial ties to the community as the main reasons they choose to do business in Bronzeville. The community's history is important and vital. However, when creating a full retail corridor on 47th Street or bringing in a big box on State Street, history will not be a driving factor for national retailers. The Bronzeville Alliance must apply a balanced approach to attracting new retail and focus on providing the data and information that will help retailers feel comfortable about the retail market potential.

To foster local pride and commitment from residents and entrepreneurs and attract visitors, it is critical to market and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Bronzeville. The great work of the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership and Bronzeville Tourism Visitor Information Center must continue to establish Bronzeville as an international cultural destination, which will in turn further retail interest. In addition, fostering retail that will serve key niches in the community, such as a jazz and blues club or bringing the Bronzeville Children's Museum to 47th Street, should be top priorities. But for national retailers, local aldermen and Bronzeville Alliance should welcome these investors, while offering opportunities for them to fit into the broader historic and cultural context. Examples of this are the jazz and blues-themed McDonald's in Hyde Park and offering suggestions and incentives through SBIF and SSA programs to put in signage and treatments that fit the theme and history. Establishing design guidelines will help with this strategy.

Finally, engaging these businesses in supporting broader corridor improvements, such as banners, unique lighting, and street treatments, can all provide important ways for them to support the unique retail corridor identity.

Cultivating Pride through History

When the Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE) began their blues festival in rural Mississippi in 1978, the goal was to increase knowledge of and pride in the blues as a distinctive form of the Mississippi Delta's arts and culture. Over time it has become the Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival, a week-long affair that provides a nearly \$3 million annual boost to the local economy. In addition, the event has made the area a draw, by attracting tourists from every continent and news coverage from the three major networks and *The New York Times*, and by becoming the site of the U.S. Postal Service's unveiling ceremony for its Blues Stamp Series.⁴





Sell Success

Interviewees and task force members alike stressed the importance of telling the story of what is going well in Bronzeville. SSA managers and business associations need to use every avenue available to trumpet successful businesses, announce events, and draw people to the area. As one interviewee stated, Bronzeville needs an “aggressive campaign to make this neighborhood a place to go, live and invest.” The Rogers Park Business Alliance, for example, sends out a twice-weekly email blast of happenings on their business corridors, uses social media to promote events and, when a particularly strong story arises, employs a PR firm to help them get the word out to media.

Form Partnerships

Another way to strengthen Bronzeville through marketing is to partner more deliberately with nearby entities. The Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), for instance, is located just a few blocks north of 43rd Street, and while there are many examples of collaborative efforts between the community and IIT, these partnerships can be deepened and better focused on local retail priorities. The blocks south of the campus had for decades been densely populated with public housing. The CHA Plan for Transformation has dramatically altered the density and make-up of the area, by demolishing the high rises and building multiple mixed-income communities in their place. IIT has played a key role in this revitalization, helping to lure significant retail to the corner of 35th Street and State Street, and providing incentives for employees to purchase homes in the new developments. The area has experienced massive changes in the built environment; as one IIT professor told the task force, her students don’t remember the corner of 35th and State streets without a Starbucks. Despite the transformed landscape, ingrained habits have largely remained – at least in part due to a lack

of knowledge of destinations south of 35th Street. Task force members recommend deliberate actions to motivate IIT faculty, staff, and students to venture further south. For instance, the proposed CWEDA could approach IIT with incentives for faculty and students, such as restaurant discounts with school ID, the opportunity to hold major events at historic venues such as the Parkway Ballroom, and agreements to cater locally for meetings and events on campus.

Task force members noted potential partnerships and marketing opportunities with other local institutions as well, such as University of Chicago, Illinois College of Optometry, and the 35th Street police headquarters. The point is to create awareness of what the area has to offer, break down barriers of the unknown, and create a pattern of movement that establishes a “new normal.”

Create Exports and Establish Draws

The concept of creating exports emerged from a discussion about the need to create true economic development in Bronzeville. True economic development means bringing new money into the local economy, rather than simply creating opportunities for local people to spend locally. Of course, attracting a grocery store to an area that had been lacking one is important, because 1) people need a place to buy groceries; and 2) a strong commercial tenant can serve as an anchor to wider community revitalization. However, local residents already spend money on groceries somewhere, so in a sense this is not “new money.” New money actually “grows the pie” by creating demand for items or a service that previously did not exist. To grow an economy, a product must be exported.³ In other words, new people must come into the area to buy a product or services, thereby expanding its demand. The question for Bronzeville then becomes, what products or services can be exported to attract new money that wasn’t previously being spent in the community?

Task force members suggest building on the area's history as a music mecca to draw tourists to music venues, and creating a destination by developing Urban Juncture's Bronzeville Cookin' project on 51st Street at the CTA Green Line station.

Another way to create a "new normal" is to establish new reasons for people to come to Bronzeville. Many Chicagoans know of Bronzeville's rich history, but are less aware of what the area offers today. The Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council has sought to combat that lack of information by promoting tourism using history as a draw. For example, the council recently helped develop and promote an exhibit housed at both a local gallery and multiple sites throughout the community that combined smart phone apps with installations that showcased oral histories, archived text, historic images, and video clips to draw people to the area while educating them about its rich history.

Task force members also recommend capitalizing on an important aspect of Bronzeville's past – jazz and blues music – by temporarily repurposing vacant land on and around State Street for an outdoor music festival. The CWEDA could organize it as an event in conjunction with city and community partners, creating a yearly revenue source for local economic development and establishing a new face of Bronzeville – a place that is welcoming for people to visit and shop. Since the task force met, the City announced several Chicago Gospel Fest concerts will take place in Bronzeville. As one interviewee stated, "We need a really aggressive campaign to make this neighborhood a place to go, live and invest. When the money comes back, investors will be looking at the safest places, the cleanest places, and places with the best investment. We need to create the sizzle. If we can do that, then we can make all these other things happen."

Create Vibrant Public Places

Placemaking is the act of creating, sustaining and sharing vibrant public places. It involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementa-

Festival Draws New Visitors

In July 2011, a three-day music festival featuring the Dave Matthews Band was held at the former site of the U.S. Steel South Works plant. While the site is an ideal lakeside location, it had not been used since the plant shut down in 1992. The groundbreaking festival opened up a part of the city to many young people who otherwise never would have traveled there. As Ald. John Pope (10th Ward) noted, "This is a great opportunity for us as a community ... Let's make sure we're put on the map, make sure people realize the South Side doesn't end at the Museum of Science and Industry."⁵

tion strategy, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can bring immediate benefits to public spaces and the people who use them.

A large part of creating an attractive public place has to do with improving walkability. Are sidewalks inviting to foot traffic? Are there places to sit and greenery or public art to enjoy? Are intersections safe for pedestrians? Many interviewees stressed the importance of creating walkable corridors in Bronzeville. As one interviewee stated, "When people moved here, they imagined a walkable community with plenty of options in retail."

One tool to help with placemaking is the Place Audit, through which a group of residents and stakeholders examines an area, observes its use patterns, interviews users, and brainstorms short and long-term improvements as well as possible partnerships. We recommend the use of Place Audits at key locations such as the corner of 47th Street & King Drive. Vacant land throughout the corridors also should be seen as potential development opportunities for temporary public spaces, plazas, outdoor seating, or simple urban agriculture gardens.⁶

Promoting the Perception of Safety



Rogers Park Business Alliance

The Rogers Park Business Alliance recognized that much of the challenge around safety is perception. While they addressed clear and present safety issues in Rogers Park with the installation of 28 security cameras on Howard Street, Clark Street, and Morse Avenue – which local police officers have used on multiple occasions for crime investigation – the alliance also recognized the potential to improve the public's perception of safety by selling the neighborhood's successes. The alliance began sending out press releases and attracting media coverage to promote positive aspects of Rogers Park. Within the first year alone, the community and its partnerships also drew thousands of people to the neighborhood by hosting two nighttime festivals (the 2009 event is pictured above). These not only have encouraged positive nighttime activity but also have promoted businesses to stay open later, a form of "natural surveillance" for community safety that is encouraged by Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles. Crime in Rogers Park is now slowly but steadily declining.⁷ Bronzeville should consider similar strategies for "positive loitering."

Safety and Density



Safety

Business owner interviewees repeatedly stressed their own and their customers' complaints about "negative loitering" and illegal activities on sidewalks, vacant lots, and in and around particular establishments. Other stakeholders concurred that concerns about safety along the corridors is a major deterrent for would-be shoppers; as one stated, "You can build all the retail you want, but if it's not safe, people won't come." Task force members stress the need for creative solutions that range from traditional security measures and policing, to more positive community and business engagement and presence. For instance, QCDC recently applied for a grant from Operation Safe Zone, which will be used to provide funds to small businesses to tackle safety concerns and make streetscape improvements such as lighting, business façade improvements, and attractive window displays that also allow for more eyes on the street. Efforts also should build on the work of Concerned Citizens of Bronzeville (CCOB), a local group of largely younger, newer residents who have addressed safety concerns by drawing attention to problem liquor stores, holding community forums, and advancing proposals such as using SSA funding to hire private security to patrol the commercial corridors.

Security Rebate Program

In 2009, SSA 34 in Uptown established a security rebate program through which member businesses could be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of the cost of external security cameras. To be eligible, the cameras must feed into the Office of Emergency Management's private camera program.

Density

As one interviewee stated, "We do not have the density for the development we are looking for."

Task force members and interviewees alike stressed the need to fill in the "missing teeth" along these corridors with mixed-use projects that will help raise density levels. Most retail requires a certain number of people to be economically viable; in addition, major retailers often consider vehicle counts per day and proximity to public transit in their location criteria. Thus the task force recommends focusing not only on retail recruitment but also on filling vacancies along the corridors with mixed-use development near transit stops. When the housing market recovers, some residential-only development also will be a welcome addition to the corridor's fabric.

In addition to helping draw retail, greater density results in lower cost per unit, which translates into lower rent or sales prices for residents. Dense developments that put residents in close proximity to transit and retail also provide more opportunities for an active lifestyle. A 2002 national survey found that 55 percent of respondents would like to walk more throughout the day, and 61 percent reported that the reason they do not walk more is that destinations are too far away.⁹ Density and clustering can help to meet this demand.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



Eric Young Smith

Cleanslate is a job training/employment program in Chicago that trains local residents to beautify neighborhoods along high-traffic corridors. Chambers of Commerce and SSAs typically contract with Cleanslate for litter abatement, snow removal, and additional garbage and recycling services that help establish an area as a well-cared-for place. What does this have to do with safety? Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design, advances the theory that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can reduce crime and the fear of crime, and improve quality of life. A built environment must be maintained properly. As their web site states, Cleanslate interns "are on a first-name basis with most business owners along the corridor, and quickly become a visible and permanent fixture of safety and service in a neighborhood."⁸



School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University

CPTED also applies to retail: In the store above, the windows are so covered with advertisements that a robbery could be taking place inside and no one would know it; likewise a brawl could be occurring outside and the store owner would have no idea. The store on the bottom employs CPTED principles, allowing passerby to see in and store employees to see out, thus increasing everyone's safety.

Financing



The task force recommends that the Alliance consider multiple financing sources, including the following:

Public-Private Partnerships

Gaining the interest of private developers usually involves a tight master plan, community consensus, and clearly defined guidelines for where investment can occur. A marketing package should be implemented to attract development proposals from restaurateurs, developers, and other private investment entities that fit within the goals of the community.

Progressive Options for New Markets Tax Credits

The CWEDA should learn how New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) work and how it can form strategic partnerships to best take advantage of the program. Examples include:

a) The CWEDA could apply to become an official Community Development Entity (CDE). This allows the CWEDA to apply for credits, raise capital from investors to create a loan pool, and use the capital to help fund commercial projects and provide low-interest loans to small businesses in the community. For example, a West Side community

development corporation, Bethel New Life, received a \$4 million allocation in the first round of NMTC that it used to establish a revolving construction loan fund and equity in a commercial project, including six retail storefronts.

b) The CWEDA could work with an existing CDE to include a specific project or the overall focus area in a NMTC application. Under this scenario, the CDE would note within its application plans to specifically target, for instance, 47th Street; and/or detail project-specific plans for which a NMTC allocation is requested.

Tax Increment Financing/Small Business Improvement Fund

Bronzeville encompasses 12 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, four of which cover the three key corridors. Together they generate more than \$50 million in increment financing that could be directed to redevelopment projects along the corridors.¹⁰

Task force members recommend strategic expansion of the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF). According to Chicago's 2010 TIF Annual Report, only two Bronzeville-area TIFs have a SBIF: 43rd and Cottage Grove and 47th and King Drive. SBIF is a valuable tool that provides match-

ing funds for small business improvements such as new roofing, floors, windows, signage, and build-outs. In the 43rd and Cottage SBIF, grants can range from \$2,310 to \$150,000.¹⁰ These funds can be layered with any benefits from an overlapping SSA. While SBIF excludes certain types of businesses and is limited to projects that would qualify as basic business functioning, SSA funds can be used for a much broader scope including marketing, advertising and promotional activities, such as parades, festivals, and street beautification. Combining SBIF with SSAs thus makes for a very effective tool in the redevelopment of a retail corridor.

While a key first step, simply establishing a SBIF does not immediately translate into benefits for area businesses. Many SBIFs are underutilized because businesses are unaware that they exist or don't fully understand how they work. Successful SBIFs have been championed by SSAs and Chambers of Commerce, which work closely with local businesses to explain the process, often facilitate a bank loan for front-funding the costs and, if needed, help broker a loan for the owner's portion of the rehab. In Bronzeville, QCDC and the 51st Street Business Association have played a key role in publicizing the SBIF and facilitating its use.

New Special Service Areas

Currently, a Special Service Area (SSA) exists on 47th Street in the 4th Ward, going west to St. Lawrence Avenue. The task force recommends creating a new, adjacent SSA on 47th Street in the 3rd Ward so that the work with businesses and streetscapes is carried through the corridor regardless of ward boundaries. This application is underway.

In addition, an SSA on 51st Street has been approved.

Class 7a/7b Designation

This financing tool reduces the property tax rate on commercial and industrial projects in areas experiencing severe economic depression; projects must involve new construction or substantial rehab of an existing property.¹¹

Class 8 Designation

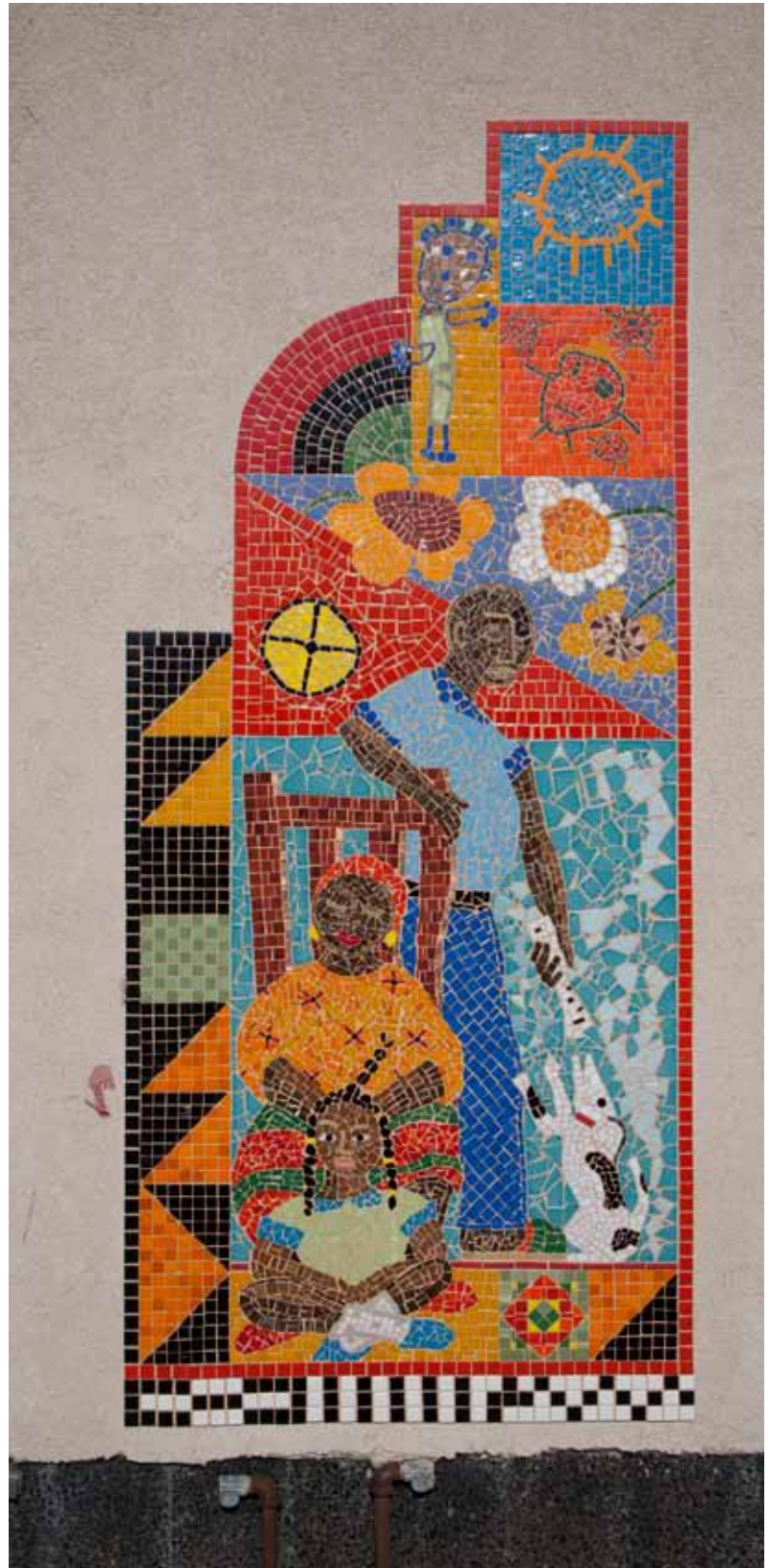
This designation functions the same way as the class 7a/7b designation above but applies to an entire area.¹²

Enterprise Zone/Designated Zone Organization

Through the Illinois Enterprise Zone Association, the CWEDA could become a Designated Zone Organization (via City of Chicago ordinance). This status would allow the designee to solicit funds and/or in-kind contributions from corporations to support an approved project. The donor may then deduct double the value of the cash or in-kind contribution.¹³

One task force member recounted how his CDC developed its own financing mechanism:

“In my SSA, we started a development fund. Once we put that money into a project, everyone started paying attention to us. Then, once we made a return on it, we saved it and started to grow a pot of money. Eventually, we took this money and started using this fund to pay for sculptures and other needs. Development funds in communities are the way to go.”



Organizations Supporting Retail – Who Does What?

Many strong organizations are doing important work in Bronzeville. Before embarking on any new ventures, it is essential to understand who already does what in the realm of economic development. This chart provides a quick snapshot of the landscape.

Organization	Retail Recruitment/ Placement	Workforce Development	Marketing	Tourism	Technical Assistance
51st Street Business Association	• ⁱ		•		•
Bronzeville Chamber of Commerce			•		
Bronzeville Tourism Visitor Information Center			•	•	
Chase Workforce Development Consortium		•			
IIT					•
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization		•			
Quad Communities Development Corporation	• ⁱⁱ		•		•
Bronzeville Community Development Partnership			•	•	
Southeast Chicago Commission	•				
Renaissance Collaborative		• ⁱⁱⁱ			
Outside Technical Assistance/ Lending/Financing					• ^{iv}

i. On 51st Street only

ii. 4th Ward only

iii. 3rd Ward only

iv. e.g. Women's Business Development Center, Chicago Community Ventures, Chicago Community Loan Fund, and LISC Chicago

The task force recommends creating a central retail development hub, building off the knowledge and expertise of organizations that already exist. As one interviewee from a citywide organization stated, "Much like businesses, CDCs can fail. It's a much better strategy to bring others into the fold instead of starting from scratch and competing with other existing ones... You're more likely to bring the right people to the table if you have a big tent." Another interviewee concurred, "If you have an organization that has the capacity already, you're five steps ahead."

Progress in the area has been stymied in the past by multiple groups competing for the same resources. Several interviewees stressed the need for one group to manage all three corridors in a coordinated fashion. The task force strongly recommends that the Alliance see itself as the band leader overseeing broad-level community retail efforts.

As noted in the chart in the previous section, QCDC is a strong force in the 4th Ward in business recruitment and technical assistance, the 51st Street Business Association has played the same role on 51st Street across both wards, and the Renaissance Collaborative is a successful 3rd Ward housing developer.

The task force recommends that the Renaissance Collaborative leads the cross-ward economic development arm (CWEDA), which will act as the umbrella to all of the disparate efforts currently underway. Additional partnerships should be explored with other nearby entities such as the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization and the Southeast Chicago Commission. Specifically, the Renaissance Collaborative would partner with the following entities to provide:



Technical Assistance

(Chief partners: QCDC/51st Street Business Association)

- Technical advisory services to businesses
- Resource inventory
- Expedited permitting, zoning and business services

Recruitment and Partnerships

(Chief partners: QCDC, City of Chicago)

- Land and building assembly/banking. The task force recommends that the City play an active role in land banking and assemblage in the area to most effectively address the high number of city-owned vacant lots.
- Site inventory – parcel by parcel, register of ownership, current use, zoning
- Retail broker recruitment and partnership
- Strategic developer recruitment. QCDC is known for this already; as one interviewee noted, “A lot of developers hear from communities what they don’t want. But, in this part of Chicago, they will tell you what they want. They put together an agenda and they get it. It’s proactive vs. reactive.”

Marketing (Chief partners: QCDC /51st Street Business Association)

The task force recommends the CWEDA develop a master plan for each corridor that considers the unique needs and nuances of each by analyzing data on existing businesses, demographics, housing starts and rehabs, transit ridership, traffic counts, and information from area institutions, landlords, real estate developers and brokers. Each plan would incorporate this data in addressing streetscaping, pedestrian safety, parking, public art, and design guidelines.

Branding Bronzeville Retail

In 2004, Rogers Park’s CDC DevCorp North (now Rogers Park Business Alliance) realized that they were recruiting businesses and evaluating proposals without a clear understanding of their goals for the area. DevCorp North began its retail planning process by examining two major commercial corridors, Howard Street and Morse Avenue. Both corridors had suffered from decades of commercial disinvestment and were in need of clear revitalization strategies. They analyzed 14 previous studies of the area, held three community meetings, conducted customer intercept and business owner surveys, and reviewed land use maps in the process of designing the master plan for each corridor. The resulting retail master plans are specific to each corridor’s assets and needs and identify its brand. As Rogers Park Business Alliance Executive Director Kimberly Bares stated, “We are honest about what we have to offer. Rogers Park is diverse and edgy, and we’ve branded that as an asset.” What can Bronzeville brand as their distinctive assets?

Elements of a Retail Master Plan

Retail Master Plans should examine the following four elements:

Places to Play

Understanding where people gather, public open space, plazas, outdoor events, character of the street, festivals, and overall character of the place for entertainment and gathering.

Places to Work

Understanding how the integration of retail also can include places where people work. This includes office space Class A, B, and C for entrepreneurs as well as corporate branches, the integration of public services (libraries, health clinics, medical office buildings) and social service agencies.

Places to Learn

Providing a sustainable strategy throughout the corridor that allows people to live and learn the concept of sustainable solutions, waste removal, energy conservation, and sustainable landscape design.

Places to Move

Understanding the layers of pedestrian traffic, storefront awareness, as well as parking, bike lanes, and vehicular traffic.¹⁵

For more on Retail Master Plans, download *Retail 1-2-3* at metroplanning.org/retail123.

Land Banking for Retail Development

Between 1995 and 2009, foreclosure filings and real estate crises rose dramatically in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The county’s abandoned and deteriorating buildings not only threatened the work of community development corporations but also attracted criminal activity and depressed the economic value of surrounding commercial and residential properties. In response, the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (CCLRC), commonly known as the regional “Land Bank,” was created in January 2009 to “strategically acquire properties, return them to productive use, reduce blight, increase property values, support community goals, and improve the quality of life for the county.” In its first two years of formation, the Land Bank acquired more than 1,200 abandoned properties.

A nonprofit organization called Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation (FRDC) then collaborated with the CCLRC in promoting economic activity and initiating commercial and retail development on this land. Some of their development initiatives include the renovation of a community health and senior outreach center, and the construction of a new food retailer.¹⁴

Quick Wins



Civic Center



Civic Center

Task force members thought it important to spell out some specific initiatives that could be done relatively quickly, to build momentum and energy around BRI's retail work. These quick wins include:

Address safety concerns.

- Expand programs like Cleanslate (see sidebar, page 21).
- Enforce codes and ordinances to reduce undesired behavior, in partnership with the police department and local block clubs.
- Enhance security.

Establish a public cross-ward agreement.

The current 3rd and 4th ward aldermen are united on many issues facing their communities. Given the fractured history of the area, however, task force members recommend a public agreement to emphasize their shared priorities. Why public? Just as with marketing the area, it is important to publicize progress. Symbolism matters. (Note: the 2012 Aldermanic Ward remap may alter the relevant ward boundaries, but the final boundaries had not been established at the time this report was finalized).

Determine the most viable arrangement for establishing the CWEDA as a central hub for commercial development.

The hub must cover all three corridors across the 3rd and 4th wards, with roles sufficiently defined to seek funding.

Determine a plan for the interim use of vacant land.

Special cultural events, such as a music festival (see sidebar, page 20) draw new people and spending to the area.

Return Bronzeville signage to the Dan Ryan Expressway and Lake Shore Drive.

Signs directing motorists to Bronzeville are not only an important wayfinding tool, they also reinforce the neighborhood's identity as a historic and cultural asset to the city.

Engage in Placemaking.

Examples abound of fun, relatively inexpensive, and creative ways to make an area special. These small things, in concert with larger, coordinated efforts such as streetscaping and programming, can begin to transform a street into a place. Ideas are illustrated on these pages.

Create a comprehensive land use and zoning plan.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is helping the Alliance to engage the City, community residents, and other stakeholders in a planning project that will build on the recommendations of this report to draft land use and zoning recommendations for strategic investment and optimal configuration of retail. Once agreed upon by the stakeholders, CMAP will work with staff of the City of Chicago Dept. of Housing and Economic Development toward adoption of the recommendations by the City Council.



Facing page: The side of a vacant building in New Orleans was transformed into an interactive public space, asking passersby to note what they would like to do before they die.
 Above: The Chicago Loop Alliance’s Pop-Up Art Loop works with local artists to occupy vacant storefronts in the Loop.
 Right: “Yarn bombing” made Howard Street in Rogers Park more attractive and attracted visitors to the corridor.



Rogers Park Business Alliance



Quad Cities Development Corporation



Redesign Inc

The Bronzeville Community Market took place every Saturday from June through October 2011, filling an empty lot on Cottage Grove Avenue with fresh and prepared food from regional vendors.

The Franklin Avenue Planning Corporation’s creative crosswalk improvements in Minneapolis, Minn., also included wayfinding elements to direct visitors to neighborhood businesses.



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Since 1934, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has been dedicated to shaping a more sustainable and prosperous greater Chicago region. As an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, MPC serves communities and residents by developing, promoting and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.



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