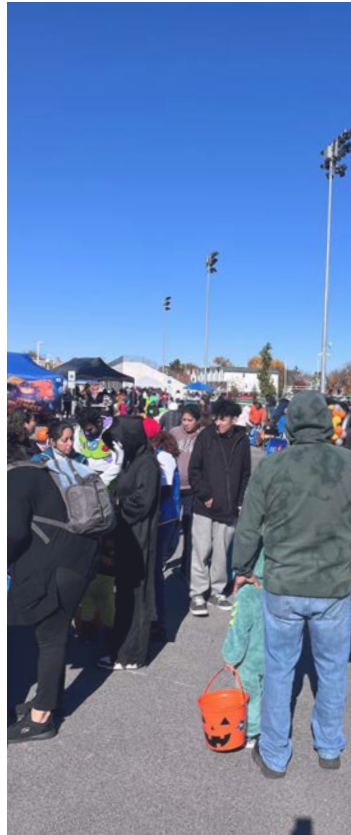


STITCHING IT TOGETHER

Session III: Building a Vision Together



Community Engagement Summary

ENGLISH VERSION



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A planning initiative by:



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UrbanWorks

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SBFRIEDMAN

MARKET STUDY

OMNI
ECOSYSTEMS

ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE



STUDY BACKGROUND

Stitching It Together is the first of a multi-phased planning initiative led by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) that aims to center local voices in a vision to strengthen connections between the Brighton Park and Gage Park communities and improve access to the new Park District facility at 48th Street and Western Boulevard. This initial phase will lay the groundwork and direction of all future planning phases, which may include DPD and other relevant departments and sister agencies.

Stitching it Together includes areas of Brighton Park and Gage Park. This planning initiative will serve as a vision for the communities and inform future planning work.

This study will explore ways to:



Improve the Public Realm

Make it safer and more comfortable to move around and access the Park District facility through public realm improvements



Support Local Business

Foster thriving commercial corridors by supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs



Manage the Impacts of Industrial Operations

Articulate design ideas that help to mitigate the impacts of existing industrial operations



Improve Public Health & Safety

Provide a future vision for the area that raises up and leverages community, institutional partners, and city investment toward a safer and healthier Brighton Park and Gage Park

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Why is planning important?

Urban planning helps create a vision for the future of communities and city by helping understand how residents experience, work, grow, and interact with the urban environment. Recommendations and decisions in urban planning give shape to neighborhoods by informing future economic development, locations for public assets such as parks and open space, community centers, and other public amenities, and improving physical and cultural connections.

The planning process brings together diverse representatives from the community to help shape a future that elevates quality of life for residents.

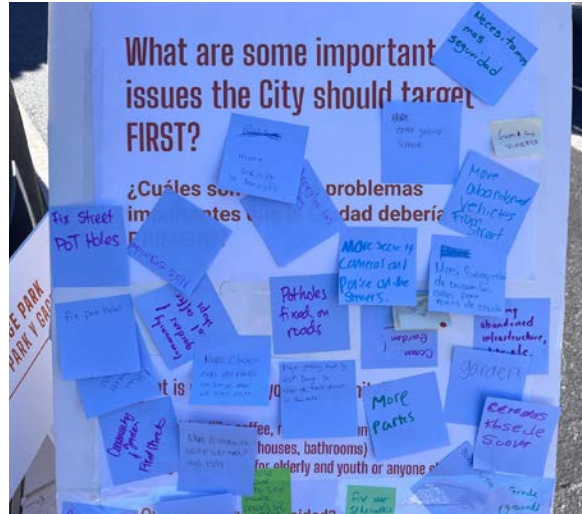
What will the engagement process look like?

Stitching It Together began in late 2023 and is anticipated to continue through late 2024. *Stitching It Together* is the first stop that will help to inform future phases of planning in these communities.

There will be multiple opportunities to engage and provide comments, ideas, and feedback. These opportunities will include: community open houses, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and opportunities at pop-up or other community events.

There will be four engagement sessions for this initiative. The first engagement session was completed in early spring. The second engagement session was completed in late summer. Each engagement session will include a Community Engagement Summary Report that will document the event, findings, and next steps. Future engagement opportunities will be announced in advance on social media outlets and through community and governmental partners.

Questions or comments regarding the engagement process are welcomed at dpd@cityofchicago.org.



SUMMARY

In the first session community engagement session, the team captured feedback on pressing issues, concerns, ideas and aspirations from community members. In the second community engagement session, DPD captured community feedback and preferences for priorities and potential solutions informed by initial engagement efforts. This feedback provided guidance for recommendations the community wishes to implement in common corridors and areas found around Brighton Park and Gage Park.

In this third session, DPD engaged with over 200 community members at a variety of fall events. Community members shared their thoughts through a map activity that will help inform the implementation of future strategies and recommendations. In addition, community members were asked “what is missing” and “what the city should target first” in the neighborhood. The comments received highlighted concerns and priorities for community safety and safe connections, the needs for youth and family programming, and attention to infrastructure and environmental conditions.

The next steps for Stitching Together will require collaboration among other city Departments, Sister agencies, and community organizations to generate a final document that can be shared with the community for input. Once a draft is ready, DPD will share this with the community at events and invite the public to provide their comments. DPD’s goal is to be inclusive of the many voices that comprise the community and have an understanding of community’s priorities and needs.

SESSION #3 ENGAGEMENT TEAM

DPD

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SOM

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Urban Works

Maria Pellot, Jose Esquinca

Special Thanks

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, SGA - Youth and Family Services, Chicago Public Library - Brighton Park Branch

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

For the third community engagement session, DPD shared the community feedback from the events attended in the summer of 2024. The team provided a summary of community priorities and preliminary recommendations, a recap of the Summer community engagement events attended, and focus areas depicting the implementation of certain recommendations in corridors and areas commonly found in the neighborhoods. Community members were invited to share their comments and ideas on what and where to implement certain recommendations as well as what recommendations should be addressed first.

Open House #3

This event took place at the Brighton Park Branch on October 10 and 13. The open house served as a community exhibition where DPD shared an overview of the ongoing study progress. This overview included a summary of the community priorities and preliminary recommendation preferences, information on the planning process, examples of city projects in the region, and thematic visions for common corridors and areas found in Brighton Park and Gage Park that demonstrate the implementation of certain recommendations. Community members were invited to share their thoughts and suggestions on where recommendations should be implemented. A map of the area was available for community members to provide their suggestions and highlight any issues.

Although DPD did not see robust attendance at these two events, DPD participated in other fall community events. A few of the engagement boards were also left on display at the library for community members to view and share comments.

Community Events

The team participated in the following engagement events during the Fall of 2024:

Date	Event Name
Oct 26	Trunk or Treat at Brighton Park Community Campus
Oct 27	Trunk or Treat at PODER
Nov 2	Fall Kermes at Kelly High School

Over 200 community members were engaged. At these events, community members suggested recommendation locations on a table map and shared general comments. DPD participated in the trunk or treat by providing swag, candy and stickers. The DPD engagement station included Halloween and Dia de Los Muertos decorations.



WHAT WAS HEARD

Sharing what we heard from Session #1 and #2

Community exhibition boards summarized feedback that was shared during the second engagement session. This included the results from the summer survey and highlighted preliminary recommendations developed from the community engagement process. Each board included a series of exhibits and community insights categorized by the six priorities identified through the community engagement process:

- Prioritize Safe Streets and Community Spaces
- Community Programming for All
- Housing Affordability
- Economic Development and Opportunity
- Open Space and Beautification
- Health and Environment

Participants were asked to provide comments, additional insights, and suggestions on where to implement certain recommendations in the neighborhood.

The community engagement reports summarize the feedback received during the first and second engagement sessions:

- Community Engagement Session #1 Report [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Community Engagement Session #2 Report [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Community Engagement Session #3 Meeting Materials: [Link](#)

Thematic Focus Areas

Introducing Thematic Focus Areas

Three focus areas were chosen to demonstrate how certain recommendations could be implemented and how they would fit within the neighborhood context:

- Main Streets
- Land Use Transition Areas
- Green Boulevards

These focus areas represent typical places found in both Brighton Park and Gage Park.

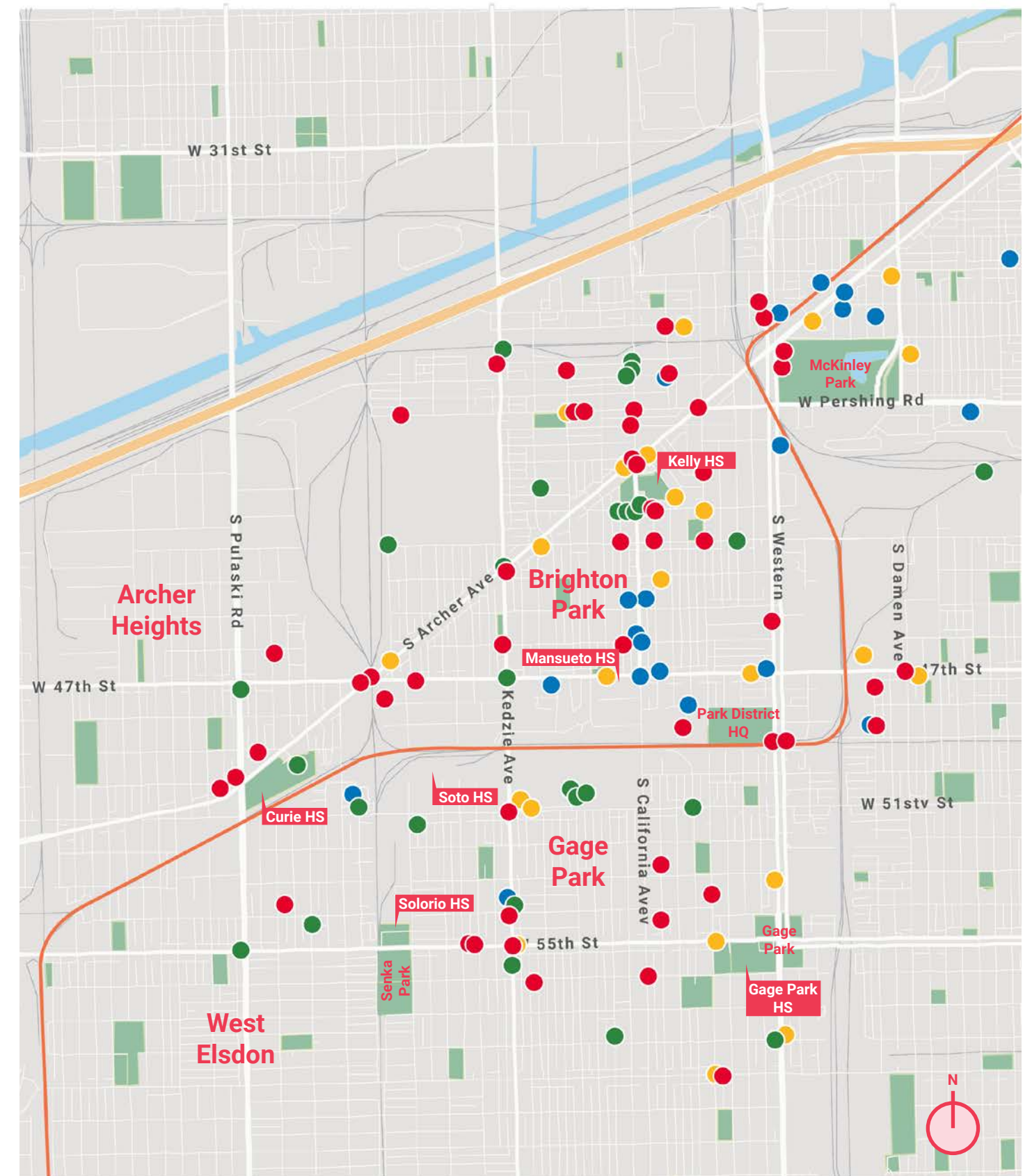
Community members had overall positive views of the thematic areas chosen. Overall these focus area examples and their depiction of potential recommendations prompted conversations with community members. Community members shared their ideas and concerns with the team. Some of the topics mentioned included:

- More programming and spaces for children and teens
- Safe streets including pedestrian safety improvements, enforcing road laws like stop signs and red lights
- Flooding and infrastructure repair
- Air quality and freight traffic management
- Improve the Gage Park Library
- Improve emergency service response times
- Address the waste facility smells in the neighborhood
- Attention to maintenance requests and road and sidewalk conditions

Map Engagement

Community members shared their recommendations and concerns on a map of Brighton Park and Gage Park. These suggestions will help inform future implementation of recommendations. Community members were asked:

- What parts of your community need better maintenance, attention, or pedestrian safety improvements?
- Where should the city consider more housing options like apartments and duplexes?
- I would like to see more public spaces like parks, plazas, and spaces to hang out (indoors or outdoors) here...
- I would like to see more art/cultural features or amenities (coffee shops, restaurants, stores) here...



Open Comment

Community members shared their comments and specific recommendations the city should consider in this plan. Community members answered the following prompts:

- What are some important issues the city should target FIRST?
- What is missing in your community?

Things Like:

- Amenities (like coffee, restaurants, fun spaces)
- Facilities (like field houses, bathrooms)
- Programming (like for elderly and youth or anyone else)

Summary of Recommendations from Community Members to Consider in this Vision Plan

The community would like to see more programming that supports youth and families, especially teenagers/young adults and women. These programs should consider supporting education, health, and community activities, like cultural heritage. In addition, more community-serving spaces should be considered, like community gardens, recreation centers, parks, health and vet clinics, and spaces for sports and swimming. A new and expanded library at Gage Park was mentioned multiple times.

There is a desire for increased police presence, including on foot and bike, a more efficient response to emergency calls, and increased security measures for streets and crosswalks. Suggestions included more traffic lights at crossings on major intersections like Western, California and near schools and areas of high pedestrian activity or mass transit stops.

Infrastructure improvements should prioritize fixing potholes, streets, and garbage collection. Abandoned infrastructure, like underutilized rail and industrial land should be maintained and improved. Parking should be reconfigured to improve efficiency and distribution. There needs to be an improvement in the reliability and accessibility to mass transit. Environmental health was also a concern.

Consider targeting business development along major streets like Western and 59th, especially in areas with empty storefronts and residents with limited access to community amenities. The increase in property values have had an impact on property taxes and rents.

STAY INFORMED

Stitching It Together is expected to come to a close in late 2024. DPD would like to thank community members for their ongoing engagement in 2024. DPD will share a draft of this vision plan for community input prior to its finalization.

The team looks forward to working together towards a future, equitable vision in Brighton Park and Gage Park and the future implementation projects that arise from this plan.

If you have any questions, or if you would like for the team to keep you informed of any future public meetings and events, please email DPD at:

DPD@cityofchicago.org

