Symposium Discussion Session Summary

This section summarizes the input gathered during small group discussion sessions at the GHN Symposium on September 24. Comments that were written on maps follow these written notes.

Housing

Facilitator: Joanna Trotter, Metropolitan Planning Council
Staff: James Wilson, Department of Housing and Economic Development

- Both groups expressed frustration about transparency and clear objectives when it comes to property owners’ ability to purchase adjacent properties.
- There was debate about 63rd Street being over planned or still needing more attention. Most participants believe more strategic planning is needed in areas around major corridors with many vacant parcels. An example would be 63rd Street from Drexel to Woodlawn.
- There was general support for Transit Oriented Development and appropriately higher densities along 63rd Street between Drexel and Woodlawn. The challenge was getting input at the scale at which the maps were presented. Participants were able to focus on the highly visible corridors, but had trouble providing input in neighborhoods they did not know very well, i.e., whether they were more or less distressed or strong.
- There was general consensus about more density at train stations and that targeted investment would need to occur in highly visible areas as catalysts to spur additional investment.
- Both discussion groups felt the Chicago transit typology was accurate until you got to the 63rd and Cottage station, where, because of the POAH development, the character is changing beyond an urban neighborhood into something that is more mixed use.
- Residents would like to see better design guidelines for infill building, especially residential. Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) designs for the units located at 63rd & Cottage Grove are not satisfactory.
- Attention needed on M.L. King Drive (55th to 59th Street). Take advantage of Washington Park views. Rehabilitate troubled buildings and build on vacant parcels.
- Take advantage of the parks especially where there are vacant lots zoned for residential use.
- Garfield Boulevard is an asset that needs design guidelines.
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**Business / Commercial / Retail**
Facilitator: Bernita Johnson-Gabriel, Quad Communities Development Corporation
Staff: Benet Haller, Department of Housing and Economic Development

**Overall Recommendations**
- Restrict new, denser residential development (4+ unit buildings) to within 1000 feet of CTA stations
- Provide support for local businesses
- Differentiate business nodes with distinctive streetscape elements
- Support Urban Ag Initiatives along 59th Street but create market for produce from these sites near a CTA station, such as with the Eastern Market in Detroit
- Support enhanced transit and preservation of existing buildings along Garfield Boulevard
- Developments must retain current residents
- Focus recommendations to transit nodes
- Develop alternate uses for former retail corridors (e.g., Racine and 59th)

**63rd and Halsted Streets**
- Bring new businesses into the area: daycare; incubator; mix of national chains and local businesses; sit-down restaurants; coffee shop; internet café; donut shop; ice cream shop; movie theater; printing and other office support uses.

**Kennedy King College**
- Build on existing parking lots along Halsted with multi-story buildings and ground floor retail oriented to the street
- Dormitories
- Expand Culinary School (to a 4 year program)
- Partner with KKC to increase local entrepreneurial opportunities
- Develop shared parking facility
- Encourage multi-story buildings
- Needs strong marketing initiative
- Area should be like University Village at Roosevelt and Halsted

**Garfield Green Line Station**
- Keep Boulevard Character
- Develop multi-story buildings
- Develop visitors center
- Should be like area around Fullerton or North/Clybourn Redline stations
- Bring new businesses to the area: restaurants; music venues; comedy clubs; art galleries
- Revitalize Schulze Bakery Building
- Museum of Southside History
- Encourage development of housing for U of C and U of C medical center employees

**Garfield Red Line Station**
- Create some retail in first couple of blocks west of the Dan Ryan
- New Businesses: movie theaters; live entertainment; office and professional space; medical facility
- Develop a Youth Center

**60th and Wentworth Red Line Station**
- Grocery Store
- Home Improvement Center
- Furniture Stores
- More small businesses

**63rd and Cottage Green Line Station**
- Rehabilitate building at the southwest corner
- Redevelop sites at the northeast and northwest corners
- Set back new buildings along 63rd Street L structure to improve light and air
- Continue retail along Cottage Grove south of 64th Street
- More parking for retail businesses
- Should be like the Belmont Red/Brown Line Station
- Business Incubator

**63rd Red Line Station**
- Game room
- Intergenerational art center
- Grandparent/grandchild housing (‘grandfamily housing’)
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Food

Facilitator: Curt Winkle, University of Illinois at Chicago
Staff: Brad Roback, Department of Housing and Economic Development

Soil

- Figure out composting at larger scale so that it can be used for urban farm sites, community gardens, amending soil or other uses. Identify existing reliable sources of compost.
- Environmental contamination - assume every site is contaminated. This is one of the biggest problems facing urban agriculture. Compile soil testing results from sites and make available to the public. Lower contamination levels can be safely mitigated just by using raised beds.

Emergency food

- Less food and greater demand has resulted in a food pantry crisis. Donated food is scarce and not free, contrary to popular opinion. Need to form partnerships to obtain food.
- Community gardens could provide food for pantries.
- Living Room Café at 64th / Cottage Grove a great example of food pantry that treats people in need with dignity.

Learning labs

- Identify additional land near / at schools to grow food.
- Use growing food as a teaching resource.

Urban Agriculture

- Difficult to gain access to city-owned property. Clarify and streamline the process for leasing or purchasing city property.
- Large (5 acre) farms will not fit in most of the GHN area. Focus should be on neighborhood scale developments that have different components. Proposed urban farm site at 70th and Princeton is a good example of a site with three components: a commercial urban farm, a community and school garden, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning components.

Kitchen facilities

- Test kitchens exist in Englewood – 10 to 15 small businesses use KKC/Washburne Culinary Institute to prepare food for sale. Expand these types of facilities.
- Chicago Theological Seminary has a large commercial kitchen that lacks programming.
- Look for institutional and commercial kitchens at schools, churches, and nonprofit organizations.

Food access

- Fast food and convenience stores are the only option for much of GHN area. Need healthy options.
- Many stores listed on the map do not sell quality food.
- Areas for food focus (see map): 63rd St., 59th St., 71st St., Green and Red line stations and other transit stops, Midway Plaisance and Stony Island.
Green Infrastructure and Open Space Connections

Facilitator: Jeff Wickenkamp, Hey and Associates
Staff: Michael Berkshire, Department of Housing and Economic Development

The facilitator showed a series of slides depicting stormwater practices and systems and asked for comments and reactions:

- Require these techniques in NSP projects that the Stormwater Ordinance does not apply to
- How do you calculate how big a rain garden should be?
- City should provide information, establish policies, and set priorities for green infrastructure
- Are we doing this now? If not, why?
- Will the City help with trash that will collect in sunken parkways?
- The City should experiment with alternatives to using salt on streets during the winter
- We need demonstration sites
- 63rd/Woodlawn and 61st/Woodlawn may be good places to put permeable pavers in parkway
- Wet/damp detention basins would make vacant parcels less attractive for loitering
- Can we use vacant parcels to grow biomass?
- Can we use these vacant lots for dual purposes, e.g., stormwater and planting?
- The City needs to address how the Stormwater Ordinance impacts Urban Ag facilities
- Wendy Walker Williams has a list of block clubs that have asked for help in planting their parkways – we could target these for demonstration projects
- Extend Urban Ag District west to Damen Avenue
- Area near 59th and Sealy experiences flooding
- Apply stormwater BMPs to west side of Washington Park along Martin Luther King Dr.
- Favorite rain garden was the end of block example shown in the slides
- Sherman Park and Libby School – no connection to Racine
- The community would support rain gardens throughout neighborhoods
- Dumas parking lot is a good candidate for a campus park
- There is a history of farmers in Englewood – use this wealth of knowledge
- Catalogue sustainable efforts such as Edgewater
- Pedestrian connection from the Englewood Line to Washington Park.
Cultural and Historic Resources
Facilitator: Jackie Samuel, Claretian Associates
Staff: Julie Burros, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

Some cultural and historic assets in the area include:

- Englewood Community Cultural Planning Council (ECCPC) based in Hamilton Park
- Jazz Festival is long-standing but is now becoming more publicized
- Arts Festival – this is the 3rd or 4th year just for display, not sale, of art
- Ogden Park Festival
- Back to School Festival has been going on for 51 years
- Poetry readings at Soul Vegetarian restaurant
- Parkway Ballroom (venue) in Woodlawn

Artists in the area:

- Pieces by John Gillis Porter
- Theaster Gates (Woodlawn)
- Brenda Woods (tap and dance at Harrison Park)
- Pat Devine Reed ran the former Boulevard Art Center
- South Side Artists Association
- ECCPC has a list of artists
- Sam Smith of Perry Mansion (7042 S Perry Ave)

Community History:

- Openlands has a large list of important dates and people in the area

Possible anchors and locations offering arts and community support:

- Peace Center at Peoria and 65th offers stepping for seniors and poetry
- More regular tap and stepping classes at senior centers
- Schultz Bakery Building
- Masonic Temple has special sentiment as place that used to host activities, e.g., dance class, computer classes, public services
- Raber House
- Places of worship; arts activities are happening in some of them now, Arts in Sacred Places program was received with interest.

Need a plan for arts and culture
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Role of Park District and/or Chicago Public Schools buildings as sites for the arts

- Harrison Park has tap class for seniors
- Hamilton Park houses the Englewood Arts Council, their jazz and art festivals
- Work with the park district historian on an exhibit of the history/historic elements of the parks
- Lindbloom Math and Science Academy has a nice auditorium and provides greenhouse access to the community to start spring plants
- Bernie Mac and Mae Jamison went to Wentworth Elementary School
- Hope College Preparatory High School has a nice stage, murals and mosaics, and a good arts program
- Goodlowe Magnet School has a good arts program

Items that spill over into other areas

- Need for an Englewood Chamber of Commerce
- Schools need a health clinic and a holistic approach

Resources to consider preserving

- Keeler Library
- City Health Clinic at 63rd
- Masonic Temple
- Multiple schools in one building causes disconnection, they mentioned using the arts as a way to create ties among youth in different schools

Tie between Arts and Environment/Green/Healthy

- The Fresh Moves bus made an appearance and was a hit at the arts festival
- Viaducts of Norfolk and Southern line can be places for public art
Discussion Session Mapped Input
The following maps display discussion session input that was written on the maps provided.