01 – NAME OF APPLICANT

Uptown United
4753 North Broadway, Suite 822
Chicago, Illinois 60640
(773) 878-1064
www.exploreuptown.org
Uptown’s Community Economic Development Organization / Chamber of Commerce / Special Service Area

02 – MAIN CONTACT FOR APPLICATION

Justin Weidl
Business District Manager
(773) 878-1064
jweidl@uptownunited.org

03 – TYPE OF APPLICANT

Nongovernmental organization
Name of local governmental partner: City of Chicago
46th Ward Alderman James Cappleman
47th Ward Alderman Ameya Pawar
48th Ward Alderman Harry Osterman

04 – PROJECT TYPE

The project involves preparation of a plan.
The project links land use, transportation, and housing.
The project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.

05 – LOCAL MATCH REQUIREMENT

I am aware that a local match will be required for most projects, and understand that if my project is selected it is up to the project applicant to contribute a local match.

_____ Yes, I understand that applicants will be required to contribute a local match.
06 – PROJECT LOCATION

The Uptown community in Chicago is generally defined as the area from Irving Park Road on the south to Foster Avenue on the north, Lake Michigan on the east, and Ravenswood Avenue on the west.

![Uptown Community Map with Chicago Ward Boundaries](image)

07 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For over a century, Uptown has been a bustling business district brimming with entertainment, culture, and diversity. Today, Uptown is a vibrant, thriving, and one-of-a-kind historic neighborhood and entertainment district. Uptown boasts a densely populated multicultural community of 56,000 residents. Adding to Uptown’s population are the thousands of daytime professionals, transit users, and students. Plus, Uptown is located at the nexus of large-scale events, such as the annual Pride Parade and lakefront concerts.

Public investment is rebuilding Uptown’s transit and streets, enhancing its vibrancy. The Wilson El station is undergoing a $205 million reconstruction that will add Purple Line service to Uptown, the recently-completed $5 million Argyle streetscape project is also Chicago’s first “shared street,” and a $6 million Lawrence-Broadway streetscape project will add a public plaza and outdoor stage to Broadway in 2017, plus the Lawrence and Argyle CTA Stations will soon be rebuilt. Additionally, 2,300 new residential units are either under construction or proposed. These public and private investments ensure continued vibrancy and growth in the neighborhood for years to come.
With this investment comes fears of a loss of affordable housing options for Uptown and some of the neighborhood’s long-time residents. While the City of Chicago aims to preserve and expand affordable housing city-wide with its Affordable Requirements Ordinance, some in the neighborhood argue that developers in Uptown should go above and beyond these requirements because Uptown is home to so many financially vulnerable residents. Others argue that Uptown does more than its fair share of providing affordable housing and that it is time for other neighborhoods to address this issue. They would argue that development in Uptown shouldn’t be required to provide affordable housing because the neighborhood already has a higher proportion of affordable housing units than any other neighborhood. Additionally, the City of Chicago’s Affordable Requirements Ordinance allows for flexibility and developers can meet the ordinance by either providing 10% affordable units on-site, or by providing 2.5% affordable units on-site and paying in-lieu fees for the other 7.5%. This bring another layer of complexity and controversy to the affordable housing issue in Uptown

Nearly every development proposal in the Uptown neighborhood is faced with this battle and showcases a divide within the Uptown community. What we lack is concrete, comprehensive data on housing affordability in Uptown, how that compares with other neighborhoods, and evidence-based best practices from other communities. Uptown United, with assistance from CMAP and other partners, would like to gather comprehensive data on housing in Uptown and how Uptown compares with other Chicago neighborhoods.

After gathering data, we’d like help collecting best practices from other communities to address affordable housing. By combining data and community input with best practices, we’d like a third-party recommendation for a rubric to evaluate development proposals within our organization related to this issue. What do we tell developers that we meet with who are looking to develop housing units in Uptown? We want our policy stance to be based on third party data and interpretation of data, input, and best practices, not to come from within the organization but from an outside expert.

QUESTION 08 – PREVIOUS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

In recent years, Uptown has seen numerous planning initiatives – with Uptown United playing a key role in each.

Urban Land Institute Report: Discover Asia on Argyle

In 2008, Uptown United applied for and received a Technical Assistance Grant from the Urban Land Institute. Recognizing that planning for a multiethnic enclave such as the Argyle area required particularly sensitive consideration, the ULI convened a Technical Assistance Panel - with the Metropolitan Planning Council - of area business owners and local leaders to develop strategies for growing and supporting the district’s pan-Asian commercial vibrancy. The Panel spent a year exploring the area’s goals, needs, and opportunities to produce its report, with Uptown United playing a key supporting role in the process that included bringing together local stakeholders and gathering data.

The ensuing report made numerous recommendations, including managing parking, new senior housing, new events, and more. Since then, many of the document’s recommendations have been implemented – including the “Asia on Argyle” moniker and a matching identifier at the L station, the repaving of the street between Broadway and Sheridan as a “shared street”, improving business facades, and the Argyle Night Market. For each, Uptown United worked with local officials, city agencies, area businesses and organizations, as well as residents to help manage and navigate the planning process. The Night Market series, in its sixth year, has been an Uptown United project since 2011. Hosting these markets, similar to ones commonly held in Asian cities, has been a way to celebrate local culture and cuisine and has grown to attract over 20,000 attendees annually. Uptown United has also signed maintenance agreements with the Chicago Department of transportation (CDOT) to make the shared-street and neighborhood identifier possible. Additionally, Uptown United administers a Curb Appeal Rebate Program which provides financial assistance to business and property owners who which to improve their storefronts and building
facades. Some of Uptown United’s partners in implementing the document’s recommendations have been the 48th Ward Alderman's office, the CTA, CDOT, DCASE, and the 20th Police District.

In late 2000, Uptown United’s predecessor, the Uptown Community Development Corporation (UPCORP) assisted the Urban Land Institute an Advisory Services panel report on Uptown’s market potential, potential development, and area planning and design. This study took a comprehensive look at Uptown and made recommendations on strategies for preserving historic architecture, enhancing the entertainment district, and incorporating an urban public market into the community. Since then, UPCORP/Uptown United has worked to realize the plan’s recommendations. Many buildings identified in the report for restoration and redevelopment have been successfully rehabilitated to their original historic look, which has in turn made possible the recent designation of Uptown Square as a City of Chicago landmark district.

Uptown United has been key to realize the plan’s recommendations. Designating Uptown’s historic core as an Entertainment District was a recommendation of this document, which has since been a key goal of Uptown United. For the past several years, Uptown United has also worked closely with CDOT to prepare for a streetscaping project at Lawrence and Broadway slated to begin in late 2017, which was a recommendation of the plan. Uptown United has participated in the redevelopment of Wilson Yards, pursued a market analysis study with LISC Chicago, promoted the name “Uptown” in all it does, and helped guide development. To promote the community, the agency has planned numerous event series with city agencies and partners, namely Uptown Saturday Nights – in its third year – to highlight local late-night entertainment options. Uptown United has also published design guidelines for local business and property owners about storefront and signage designs appropriate for the area. Additionally, as part of the CTA’s overhaul of the Wilson Station, Uptown United has worked to help area businesses manage the years-long construction process by organizing and leading bi-weekly informational meetings for business owners, as well as designing informational banners to draw foot traffic.

LISC MetroEdge Demographic Information
The Local Initiative Support Corporation’s (LISC) Metroedge program creates annual market profiles of each of Chicago’s 77 Community Areas. Uptown United has used this data in its economic development and business attraction materials.

2000-2005 Corridors of Vision
From 2000-2005, Uptown United initiated and facilitated a long-range planning process designed to identify a comprehensive vision to revitalize Uptown’s primary commercial corridors. Over the past ten years Uptown United has worked to implement many recommendations of this plan. Key recommendations of the plan included working with the City to develop lighting and planter plan along with signature symbol and creating a Public Plaza area. The CDOT Lawrence/Broadway streetscape project will begin in the summer of 2017 and includes new planters, lighting, and neighborhood identifiers. The streetscape project also includes the development of a plaza space in from of the Riviera Theater. Uptown United played a crucial role in the project by hosting and facilitating design workshops, and signing a maintenance agreement with CDOT to ensure long term maintenance of this major public investment.

Another top priority of the Plan was to create a café culture in the neighborhood. Since then Uptown has seen a boom in the number of restaurants installing sidewalk cafes. Uptown United has played a critical role by offering technical assistance to business owners who need help applying for a sidewalk café permit. Uptown United has also offered a sidewalk café rebate to first-time sidewalk café owners, which rebates the entire $600 permit fee for a sidewalk café.

Lastly, one overriding theme of the Corridors of Vision Plan was to develop design guidelines and a façade improvement plan for the neighborhood. Uptown United has since published and updated a Guide to Good Storefront Design to help business and property owners when making investments to their building façade. Uptown United has also provided technical assistance to business and properties owners to guide them through the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) grant program, which
primarily funds façade and storefront improvements. This has directly impacted and improved properties throughout the neighborhood. Additionally, Uptown United administers a Curb Appeal Rebate Program which has provided financial assistance to business and property owners who make improvements to their building façade.

QUESTION 09 – ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Uptown United’s Development Partners Committee would be the key driver of this project within our organization. Development Partners works to guide and encourage healthy and sustainable development in Uptown, as well as engaging in its own development projects. Development Partners is organized as an Advisory Committee made up of landowners, architects, real estate professionals, affordable housing experts, urban planning professionals, and developers from across the community. Working closely with the other arms of Uptown United, Development Partners’ mission is to initiate and participate in strategic planning, promote appropriate land use, and encourage development projects that provide a strengthened economic base and an enhanced quality of life for Uptown’s diverse population.

Uptown United has met with the Heartland Alliance Social IMPACT Research Center and plans to partner with the organization throughout the duration of this study process. The Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance does research that helps leaders create change. They collaborate with clients to measure and grow an organization’s social impact. The Center’s user-friendly work equips nonprofits, foundations, and governments to advance real-world solutions to poverty.

The Social IMPACT Research Center is a program of Heartland Alliance, the leading anti-poverty organization in the Midwest. They believe good data drive good decisions, but also know it can be daunting to evaluate what’s needed to create change and what works. The center’s down-to-earth and responsive team collaborates with clients to measure results and provide user-friendly recommendations so that organizations can take action to grow their social impact.

The center can play a critical role in this planning process by helping to conduct surveys, evaluate program outcomes, and offer in-depth poverty data. With over two decades of experience working closely with nonprofits, the Social IMPACT Research Center has become a leading source of social issues research. As a nonprofit with strong ties to the neighborhood, the center is deeply committed to meeting the needs of the Uptown community.
28 June 2017

Tony Manno
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

RE: Uptown United application for LTA Program

Dear Mr. Manno:

I fully support Uptown United’s (UU) application for the 2017 Local Technical Assistance Program. The LTA program will help UU conduct a comparative study of Uptown’s affordable housing which is expected to be of relevance to other Chicago neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Ameya Pawar
Alderman, 47th Ward