


Partnership **Update**

 news and information from *The Partnership for New Communities*

Recruiting a “dream team” of investors

Near West Side CDC launches Madison retail initiative



Trademark “safety green” shirts and vests will become a familiar sight on the Near West Side, as Cleanslate crews launch services as part of the Madison Retail Initiative.

Chicago’s United Center was the site of a draft on November 5 for a new “dream team.” Earnest Gates, executive director of the Near West Side Community Development Corporation (Near West) was looking for talent and commitment – but not on the basketball court, and not for just a season or two.

Instead, he was recruiting the next generation of long-term investors in his community – the planners, developers, retailers, property managers, and non-profit partners that would work together to bring vitality back to the Madison Street trade area.

“We’re tired of playing away games,” said Gates. “It’s time to bring it home.”

Near West introduced the Madison Retail Redevelopment Initiative, a major effort to attract commercial development to the community. The Partnership for New Communities is supporting the initiative with a \$130,000 grant approved this month.

As part of a community “Quality of Life Plan” designed by Near West, neighborhood residents expressed a clear need for retail, restaurants, and other amenities. Near West staff knew that to attract development, they’d have to back up the community’s wishes with hard data.

(continued on p. 4)

Opportunity Chicago

\$1.5 million in grants support employment programs

Opportunity Chicago launched three new programs in September to help public-housing residents overcome basic barriers to employment by improving reading, math and computer skills.

Three contextualized literacy providers – **Central States SER-Jobs for Progress**, **Association House of Chicago**, and the **LEED** (Local Employment and Economic Development) **Council** – will deliver intensive literacy instruction combined with industry-specific skills training and in some cases, on-the-job experience.

The Partnership awarded \$1.5 million in workforce development grants in August, including \$790,000 for the three organizations to work with at least 215 residents through December 2008. They will begin recruiting for the classes in November and December 2007.

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'Connecting the Dots'**Communities outline transit needs to reconnect neighborhoods**

Armed with sheets of four colorful adhesive dots, groups of community residents, planners, aldermen, state legislators and not-for-profit leaders crowded around easels to complete a serious task. Each participant in a process called *Reconnecting Neighborhoods* used the stickers to vote for the most pressing transportation issue facing their community.

After an hour of facilitated discussion, the easels were filled with ideas and concerns. Better safety. More frequent bus service. A Metra stop at Oakwood Boulevard. A Green Line stop at Damen Avenue. Better parking.

The exercise was part of the *Reconnecting Neighborhoods* launch November 6 at the Chicago Cultural Center. The Metropolitan Planning Council, which is coordinating the planning process, hopes that these kinds of collaborative brainstorming sessions will result in transit-oriented development at several Plan for Transformation sites.

The Near West Side, Near North Side, and the Mid South Side will each form its own transit task force. With the help of MPC, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and consulting firm HNTB, the local task forces will complete transit-oriented development plans that outline concrete steps for action.

The Partnership for New Communities awarded a \$30,000 grant to MPC to support this work, and Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs is serving on its Intergovernmental Committee. "Transit concerns are directly linked to economic development issues in Chicago's transforming neighborhoods," she said. "This process invites residents and other stakeholders to participate in recommending better transit services, a more pedestrian-friendly environment and new commercial opportunities."

At an MPC forum on transit-oriented development in July, Chicago Housing Authority CEO Sharon Gist Gilliam reiterated that ending isolation was a guiding principle of the Plan for Transformation. New housing developments need to be integrated into the rest of the city by bringing back the street grid improving public transit access, she said.

Congratulations, Café Penelope!

Chicago Community Ventures client Café Penelope was voted "Best Soup" and "Best Brunch" in Chicago by the 2007 Citysearch Poll. It was also named "Best Caterer in Chicago" by the Best Independent Restaurants Association in 2006 and 2007.

The Near West Side restaurant, located at 230 S. Ashland Avenue, is one of 11 small businesses receiving individual counseling and workshops through CCV's Small Business Development Initiative, supported in part by The Partnership for New Communities.



Fourth Ward Alderman Toni Preckwinkle casts her vote for high-priority transit needs at the opening session of Reconnecting Neighborhoods .

"All residents, but low-income families in particular, need quick and cost-effective ways to get to their jobs," said Hibbs. "The economic revitalization of formerly isolated neighborhoods also depends on bringing consumers into these communities via adequate public transit options."

The Partnership's support complements the efforts of two key development entities – Quad Communities Development Corporation and Near West Side Community Development Corporation – by bringing transportation-planning experts to the table. For more information, visit MPC's website – www.metroplanning.org.

New leadership**Partnership welcomes IIT's John Anderson to committee**

John Anderson, the new president of the Illinois Institute of Technology, has joined The Partnership for New Communities' 15-member Advisory Committee, replacing Lew Collens, who retired as the university's president earlier this year.



John Anderson

IIT is an institutional anchor in the South Side Douglas community, long the home of a significant concentration of public housing now being redeveloped under the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation. Collens, who served as IIT's president for 17 years, was among The Partnership's founding members.

"When I asked Lew to join The Partnership Advisory Committee in 2003, he readily accepted," said David Vitale, Partnership co-chair and a member of IIT's Board of Trustees. "We are grateful for his vision, leadership and many contributions to the university, to the community and to The Partnership."

"IIT – and Lew in particular – has been a generous and active partner," said Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs. "Lew has hosted lunches and tours for developers, bankers and retailers to attract business investment in the community."

The university also pioneered an employer-assisted housing program in which IIT employees received down payment assistance to purchase homes in the neighboring Park Boulevard mixed-income development stretching from 35th Street to 39th Street between State and Federal streets.

Before becoming IIT's eighth president, Anderson was provost of Case Western Reserve University from 2004. Prior to Case, he served for 28 years at Carnegie Mellon University, including eight years as dean of the College of Engineering. He was a member of the Cornell University faculty before joining Carnegie Mellon.

Anderson received his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Delaware and his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Opportunity Chicago Launches New Programs (cont'd . from p. 1)

The Partnership and the Chicago Jobs Council coordinated an orientation for Opportunity Chicago's provider partners, including the three new "contextualized literacy" programs, on September 28.

Opportunity Chicago is a \$23 million workforce development collaborative with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, the Chicago Housing Authority and other partners.

"In the work we're doing together, communication is very important!" said Alaina Harkness, The Partnership's program officer. "When new grantees and providers become a part of this initiative, they need to know more than just what outcomes are expected – they need to understand the context and Opportunity Chicago's larger goals. This launch helped everybody feel like they're starting on the same page."

Leise Grimmer, CJC's project coordinator for Opportunity Chicago, facilitated the meeting, which included presentations by the CHA and Chicago Department of Human Services staff. It gave the new partners a chance to ask questions about the initiative's strategy as well as discuss implementation of their own programs.

For more information about these programs, and all of Opportunity Chicago's offerings, contact Leise Grimmer at 312-252-0461 or leise@cjc.net.

Near West launches Madison retail initiative (cont'd. from p. 1)

So they enlisted LISC MetroEdge, which conducts market analysis and identifies business trends to help drive economic development in underserved urban neighborhoods.

The November 5 United Center launch unveiled the data to back the business case for Near West Side retail development to a group of bankers, developers, property managers, and community residents.

The buying power of area residents is tremendous - \$91 million per year - and the gaps in retail and services are huge - 100% of demand for clothing retail goes unmet, and nearly 70% of demand for food. The "leakage," or dollars spent outside of the neighborhood because of these gaps, amounts to millions of dollars every year.

Of course, collecting the data and presenting the case on paper is just one step in a systematic process of planning new development. Other key elements include enhancing the streetscape and helping community residents take advantage of new job opportunities coming to the area. Near West is partnering with Cleanslate, a neighborhood beautification business, to accomplish these objectives.

With \$75,000 in support from The Partnership, Cleanslate will remove trash, recyclables, and snow from sidewalks and vacant lots throughout the Madison trade area over the next year while educating community residents and businesses about the importance of recycling.

Cleanslate is partnering with Near West's Center for Working Families to staff the Madison trade area crew with individuals, primarily residents of public housing, who need work experience. This collaboration will provide real opportunities for individuals to learn and apply new skills, earn money, improve their long-term job prospects, and make a difference in their neighborhood.



The core of the Near West Side's development "dream team" – Project Director, Kyle Smith, New Communities Program Director LaShunda Gonzalez, and Executive Director Earnest Gates.

The Partnership for New Communities

thanks our investors:

Bank of America, Illinois
(www.bankofamerica.com)

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(www.mccormicktribune.org)

National Fund for Workforce Solutions
(www.nfwsolutions.org)

The Northern Trust Company
(www.northerntrust.com)

Polk Bros Foundation
(www.polkbrosfdn.org)

Opportunity Chicago takes its place on global stage

When urban leaders from throughout the Western Hemisphere gathered in Chicago in September to explore the role that cities can play in confronting the challenges of globalization, Opportunity Chicago was on the agenda.

Partnership for New Communities Executive Director Maria Hibbs described the five-year initiative as a panelist at CEOs for Cities national membership meeting.

The organization, which promotes the role of cities as the centers of America's global prosperity, hosted an international conversation addressing urban competitiveness in a global economy. *The Global City* convened an elite group of urban leaders from the United States as well as mayors from Canada and South and Central America.

Among subjects on the conference agenda: connecting low-wage workers to the global economy. Several panels examined successful efforts to link labor force and economic development investment, public policies that can increase economic security, new and better approaches to training workers and helping employers with retention challenges, and strategies for assisting the most challenged workers.

"Opportunity Chicago is an outstanding example of diverse interests converging to pursue solutions across boundaries," said Hibbs. The initiative spans departments within the City of Chicago and various levels of government as well as the public, for-profit, not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors.

CEOs for Cities

"We're working together to meaningfully transform public systems to benefit extremely low-income individuals with numerous barriers to employment – in this case, residents of public housing in Chicago," she said.

After describing Opportunity Chicago's context – the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation – Hibbs noted that the CHA had some success with rapid job placement earlier in the Plan, but it also became apparent that more intensive employment services, career education, skills training and retention services would be needed to meet the needs of many residents.

The Partnership proposed convening a group of strategic workforce advisers to help the CHA think through and implement a comprehensive workforce development strategy, which has come to be known as Opportunity Chicago.

While the initiative is exceeding its annual goals, she noted that challenges remain. The initiative is becoming more complex, involving numerous public agencies, businesses and not-for-profit partners. "So it's increasingly critical that Opportunity Chicago's programs and services are aligned. This coordination will result in greater efficiency as a system and better outcomes for residents," she said.

"And, of course, continuing the initiative's track record will require sufficient funding from both public and private sources," she said.

Partnership Update

November 2007

The Partnership for New Communities is a funders collaborative bringing together business, civic and philanthropic leaders to invest in strategic economic development, community-building and employment-related initiatives to promote large-scale improvements in the neighborhoods most affected by public-housing transformation in Chicago.

Partnership Update is published regularly by The Partnership for New Communities to provide information on a variety of topics, including status reports on the CHA's Plan for Transformation, updates on The Partnership's activities and projects and highlights of relevant research findings.

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Hospitality Bridge Program all about customer service

“Whether you’re serving a customer at Macy’s or a guest at the Hilton, it’s all customer service.”

So observed Mayor Richard M. Daley on October 24 he and other top city officials joined major employers in announcing a new public/private partnership at Harold Washington College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, designed to streamline career opportunities across the hospitality sector.

City Colleges Chancellor Wayne Watson and representatives from THOR Equities, the Palmer House Hilton, Macy’s, the Illinois Restaurant Association, the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Foundation, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce share Daley’s vision for integrated and professionalized training programs that will support Chicago’s growing tourism industry.

“In other countries, cities have recognized that hospitality is a real profession, and we want to do the same thing here in Chicago,” Daley said.



Mayor Daley inspects the décor in one of Harold Washington’s new “classrooms,” which include a mock Macy’s sales floor, dining room, and suite at the Palmer House Hilton.



Harold Washington’s students – dressed for success, even in the computer lab!

Harold Washington College's new Hospitality Bridge Program is designed to do just that: help Chicago’s employers and residents turn “jobs” into “professions.”

In its location at 226 W. Jackson, the program provides the setting for “real” work experience: a mock Macy’s sales floor and a replica hotel lobby, guest room and dining area at the Palmer House Hilton. Thirty students will spend 12 weeks training for jobs in hotels, restaurants and retail stores. They will graduate with five industry certificates, eight college credits toward a two-year degree in hospitality management, and an understanding of the many new career paths that are open to them.

Harold Washington College is planning to graduate 300 students from the program in 2008.

Retail & Hospitality is one of five high-growth industry sectors that Opportunity Chicago is targeting for job opportunities through its employer engagement strategy. The new bridge program will better prepare participants for careers in those professions.

For more information about careers in hospitality, and to find out how to enroll in course offerings through City Colleges of Chicago, contact Brian J. Hill or Sharon Bryant at 312-553-3309.

Work critical to family stability, community viability

Forum highlights employment, training, expectations

Macy's employee Sherissa Cross offers one piece of advice for unemployed Chicago public-housing residents who may be afraid or reluctant to engage in employment services or look for work:



Sherissa Cross

"Get behind your fears."

Cross shared her insights during a November 1 Metropolitan Planning Council forum on jobs, training and workforce development. More than 100 attended the forum, the 12th in MPC's *Building Successful Mixed-Income Communities* quarterly series.

Formerly a resident of the Chicago Housing Authority's Ida B. Wells development on the city's South Side, Cross has lived at Oakwood Shores, the new mixed-income development that replaced Wells, for the past two years. She participated in an employment program offered through The Community Builders, master developer for Oakwood Shores, and is working in her second term as a seasonal employee at Macy's. She is now seeking full-time work with the retailer.

Macy's Stacy Ganea, recruitment manager for the State Street flagship, told forum attendees that the store has hired 39 Oakwood Shores residents through its partnership with TCB.

Cross noted that the work requirement at the new development is "a good idea because people need to be able to support themselves...You can't depend on the system."

Her remarks were timely. The CHA has proposed expanding the policy beyond mixed-income sites to adult residents of traditional public housing and those with housing choice vouchers.

One of the featured speakers at the forum, Housing Authority CEO Sharon Gist Gilliam discussed the new policy, which exempts residents 62 years of age and older, the disabled and individuals who are primary caregivers to a disabled family member. The proposal also includes a safe harbor provision for individuals working to meet the requirement through involvement in work-readiness, training and literacy programs, internships and job-search services.

Offering the experience of a housing authority that has already implemented an authority-wide work requirement, Atlanta Housing Authority CEO Renee Lewis Glover said, "Expectations indeed matter."

Because of the employment requirement for residents in the AHA's mixed-income developments, 93 percent were working, she said. But the same was not true in traditional public housing. "Millions were being spent on workforce development; the thing missing was the requirement." Now, three years after Atlanta established an authority-wide work requirement, 83 percent of households comply.

"A subsidy doesn't mean a person can't achieve success," Glover said. "We must tap into residents' God-given human potential. We have to make sure we're investing in our people."

Other forum speakers included Evelyn Diaz, deputy chief of staff to Mayor Richard M. Daley; Bill Goldsmith, director of TCB's Midwest Region; and MPC President MarySue Barrett. Partnership for New Communities Executive Director Maria Hibbs moderated. **(continued on p. 8)**

Partnership helping in 3 ways

- The Partnership has worked closely with the CHA, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and others to develop and implement Opportunity Chicago.
- The Partnership has pledged \$5 million to the initiative.
- Members of The Partnership's Advisory Committee are hiring public-housing residents who have engaged in Opportunity Chicago programs and services.

Success Story: Harborquest

Nine public-housing residents are among the 13 June graduates of the "Discovery Time" phase of Harborquest's transitional jobs program. This was the third class to complete job-readiness training and move into subsidized jobs since Harborquest began working with Opportunity Chicago earlier this year. By the end of October, 23 participants had completed Harborquest's entire training program and have full-time, unsubsidized jobs. Stay tuned for updates on these individuals and their new jobs...

Forum highlights work, training, expectations (cont'd. from p. 7)

"A key tenet of the Plan for Transformation and a critical issue for its success is improving the economic circumstances of residents," Hibbs said. "Those circumstances are affected most directly and most significantly by employment – a core condition for both long-term family stability and community viability."

Opportunity Chicago, a five-year, \$23 million workforce development initiative to help 5,000 residents prepare for work, find a job and continue working, has exceeded expectations since it launched in January 2006, said Diaz, who serves on a panel of workforce development experts overseeing the initiative. After less than two years, 2,700 public-housing residents have found work.

The mayor, she said, remains committed to expanding opportunities for public-housing residents and to the Plan for Transformation's mixed-income approach as a standard for community development throughout the city.

Opportunity Chicago extended through 2010

Originally conceived as a three-year effort to help public-housing residents prepare for work, find jobs and advance, Opportunity Chicago was scheduled to wrap up by December 2008. However, new developments have led key partners, including the Chicago Housing Authority, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and The Partnership for New Communities, to add two years to the initiative's timeframe.

Opportunity Chicago has attracted significant contributions in 2007 from several local, state, and national investors that will support programming for the initiative through 2009.

The extended timeframe will also provide more time to participate in best-practices exchanges that will contribute to the initiative's strategy, test and document the most effective strategies, and develop a plan to sustain the initiative's most successful elements.

New Starbucks perks up Bronzeville corner

When can a cup of coffee energize an entire neighborhood?

When it's being served at a new Starbucks store located at a site once dominated by a massive public-housing development.

"It is impossible to overstate the importance of a retailer like Starbucks locating at 35th and State," said Mayor Richard M. Daley when the store opened for business in September.

The store, at 3506 S. State is on the ground level of the new Park Boulevard mixed-income development, which is replacing the Stateway Gardens housing project as part of the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation.

When completed, Park Boulevard will have more than 1,300 new units of public, affordable and market-rate housing.

"New housing creates a market for new retail businesses and other commercial developments. Pretty soon, you have a self-sustaining cycle of neighborhood transformation. Starbucks is committing early in the transformation of this neighborhood," he said.

The store is the ninth Starbucks opened in Chicago as part of its Urban Coffee Opportunities program to develop locations in ethnically diverse neighborhoods. It was built in partnership with Earvin "Magic" Johnson and his Johnson Development Corporation.

"We made a commitment that the replacement housing wouldn't be cut off from the rest of the city, as the old CHA units were," Daley said. "Instead, our goal is to transform those old isolated developments into vital communities where residents of mixed income levels live together in a neighborhood with good schools, jobs, shopping and housing.

"The Park Boulevard development is an example of how that approach is working for the improvement of this neighborhood and of the entire city," he said.



Mayor Daley and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson celebrate the opening of a Starbucks store in September.

Partnership announces 2008 grant proposal deadlines

The Partnership's Advisory Committee meets quarterly to review proposals and approve funding recommendations.

Proposal Deadline

November 2, 2007
February 1, 2008
June 6, 2008
September 5, 2008

Funding Decision

January 30, 2008
May 7, 2008
August 20, 2008
November 20, 2008

Funding priorities, proposal guidelines, submission form and reporting requirements are available on our website, www.thepartnershipfornewcommunities.org. Click on "[What we Do.](#)"

Questions?

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