



NORTH RIVER COMMISSION

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2014 Projects & Priorities

Arts & Culture:

- **Support public arts project with/for strategic community action by creating outdoor Murals:** Partner with Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) to develop mural creation workshop in summer for high school students. Partner with NEIU, Northwest Arts Connection (NAC), civic associations, schools, and local artists to create outdoor murals on Lawrence &/or Foster &/or Bryn Mawr.
- **Enhance student learning through Artist in Residence programs in schools:**
 - 1) **Pilot Chicago Kids Create: “Look at me! What do you See?”:** Partner with founder of project and lead pilot program of leather mask-making and exquisite corpse sculpture creation at Belding and Murphy Elementary schools. Act as fiscal agent, sit on project advisory committee, assist with project grant writing, and connect project leaders to other NRC area schools and local artists to expand project in year two as funding permits.
 - 2) **Connect local artists and arts organizations to NRC schools:** Partner with local artists and arts organizations to identify their interest in working in Chicago Public Schools to provide arts enrichment courses and opportunities. Connect new CPS model to fund arts programming in neighborhood schools.
- **Brand and Market the NRC area as a destination for Arts & Culture by co-hosting Quarterly Arts Nights:** Partner with NAC and other local organizations to hold quarterly Arts Nights featuring local artists of all disciplines. Grow both participant and audience base through promotion of events, connections to performers, and event venues.
- **Formalize Network of Supporting Groups** in order to position NRC as an Arts leader in the community and build a track record as a group to leverage resources for long-term, large scale projects such as the Multicultural Sculpture Park and Healing Garden or creation of an Arts Center.
- **Promote and support cultural events throughout the neighborhood to celebrate our diversity by Hosting 3 Ronan Park Summer Concerts:** Concerts will feature music from different genres and from around the world.
- **Create a collaborative online clearinghouse to share resources and information with artists and the community** by developing a Comprehensive Arts Website in partnership with Northwest Arts Connection (NAC) and others to meet the needs of both artists and the community at large. Continue to expand and update the directory of NRC area artists and art organizations.

Economic Development:

- **Market our commercial districts** by developing a plan, along with both the 33rd and 35th Wards and local civic associations to re-brand & market the Albany Park Chamber of Commerce/North River Commission’s Economic Development Program by creating new signage which defines character, identifies boundaries, a strong website presence, which will include vacancy lists, continuing to work with the City of Chicago’s Business Affairs and Consumer Protection products, newsletters, LADCOR (Lawrence Avenue Development Corporation) updates, and continue to grow the Albany Park Restaurant Crawl.
- **Develop business attraction and retention efforts** by working with local civic associations to create a plan to fill vacancies, including developing a master list of the top 20 vacancies in the NRC area, and identifying specific businesses to recruit.
- **Beautify and market our commercial areas, expand business resources, and increase safety and security** by implementing services through the Albany Park/Irving Park Special Service Area (SSA #60). The SSA will address issues within the commercial district such as beautification including street maintenance/litter & snow removal, etc., public safety through security patrols, expand business resources such as façade improvements, and market and promote our commercial district attract new customers and help fill vacancies.

- **Improve transportation** by creating several DIVVY transit bicycle stations throughout Albany Park and Irving Park with the help of the City of Chicago, their consultants and local civic associations.
- **Improve parking and transportation** by continuing to work with 33rd Ward, IDOT and the CTA on a Feasibility Study grant for a TOD (transit-oriented development) opportunities near the CTA Ravenswood Brown Line El stations (*Kimball & Kedzie*) and in the “downtown Albany Park” corridor (*Lawrence from Kimball south to Kedzie, Kedzie from Lawrence south to Montrose*).
- **Expand business resources** by operating and supporting the Albany Park Chamber of Commerce and its members. Develop and strengthen leadership of Chamber Board Committee. Host various business networking events throughout the year and the year-end holiday party.
- **Beautify commercial areas** by partnering with Albany Park Neighbors to complete 1-2 storefront renovations on the portion Lawrence Avenue outside of the SSA boundaries.

Education:

- **Continue developing relationships with ISU** by expanding the Teacher Education Pipeline programs in North River area (TEACH, CONNECT, STEP UP, PDS) to provide resources and expertise to our neighborhood schools. 2 new schools that will participate in ISU related activities such as student teacher placements and observations.
- **Deepen connections and creative partnerships between the community, schools, businesses, and other area universities such as NEIU and NPU. Expand service learning, internships, and out-of-school time opportunities for students by:** 1) coordinating the second annual Cesar Chavez Day of Service to build a new Peterson Garden Project site at NEIU; and 2) Engaging local student leaders and school staff in planning 3 college readiness workshops and/or community-based projects.
- **Structure and strengthen the base of parent leadership and engagement; support network of parent leaders** by expanding NRC’s Parent Leadership Network in partnership with CPS office of Family and Community Engagement to include at least 8 schools in the NRC area.
- **Facilitate strategic planning between school leaders and Local School Councils** by collaborating with LSCs, PAC/BACs, and other community stakeholders to increase participation in 2014 LSC elections. Host new candidates training sessions.
- **Expand out-of-school time opportunities for students** by co-hosting “Hoops in the Hood” basketball and soccer training camps with local civic associations and schools during the summer throughout the NRC area.
- **Partner with Heartland Health to enroll 500 youth in the Illinois All Kids health insurance program** over the next 2 years. Connect Heartland staff to NRC area schools.

Housing:

- **Preserve quality rental housing for seniors** by re-syndicating NRC’s 97 unit affordable senior housing building in the Mayfair community.
- **Preserve quality rental housing for families** by launching NRC’s Group Purchasing program with local landlords and affordable senior housing property owners.
- **Explore opportunities to create new affordable housing** by working with G&A Development, Alderman Mell and local civic associations to plan for the construction of a 50 unit affordable senior housing development in the Irving Park community.
- **Promote energy efficient resources to homeowners and area landlords** by partnering with area civic associations and Center for Neighborhood Technology’s Energy Impact Illinois Rebate & Energy Savers programs.
- **Secure appropriate housing options** for Illinois State University’s 2014 Step-Up Fellows and PDS student teachers.

Environment, Parks and North Park Village:

- **Address local environmental issues and concerns** including Flood Abatement by forming and leading a coalition to address flooding issues and develop a water management model for the North River Communities by implementing water diversion techniques and strategies such as permeable paving, rain gardens, gutter diversions, etc.
- **Support quality park programming, infrastructure and safety** by forming and leading a coalition of local park advisory councils to advocate for playground improvements, more programs, and expanded efforts to combat the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.
- **Incorporate greening and gardening into North River area's parks and open spaces** by supporting and promoting "Global Gardens" on Lawrence Avenue and its supporting partner organizations to make the gardens a destination in our community, and to encourage more greening of our open spaces.
- **Protect, preserve and treasure the 155-acre North Park Village as a free public-use site forever** by working to secure support to extend the 75-year easement in perpetuity. Hold Officer elections for NPV Advisory Council. Continue assistance to support the long-term sustainability of the cafeteria.