

# AUSTIN FORWARD. TOGETHER.



Austin Coming Together



## STEERING COMMITTEE | PLAN PHASE, 2017-2018

The Steering Committee for the Austin Quality-of-Life Plan was the governing body of the planning process. Steering Committee members mobilized their networks to participate in three community summits, co-led working groups, and oversaw the planning process.

Annette Wilkerson  
*1300 N. Long Block Club*

Cassandra Norman  
*South Austin Neighborhood Association*

Crystal Bell  
*Ella Flagg Young Elementary*

Deborah Williams  
*Habilitative Systems Inc.*

Maretta Brown-Miller  
*Chicago Park District, Friendship Baptist Church*

Mildred Wiley  
*Austin Community Action Council, Institute for Nonviolence*

Natasha Smith-Walker  
*Project Exploration*

Bradly Johnson  
*BUILD, Inc.*

James Bowers  
*Local Civil Rights Attorney and Business Owner*

Ruth Kimble  
*Austin Childcare Providers' Network*

Terry Redmond  
*South Austin Neighborhood Association*

Sharon Hartshorn  
*South Austin Neighborhood Association, Friendship Baptist Church*

Vanessa Stokes  
*600 N. Lockwood Block Club*

Tom Drebenstedt  
*Galewood Development Committee*

Athena Williams  
*West Cook Homeownership Center*

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Crystal Dyer  
*Gone Again Travel*

Dollie Sherman  
*Austin Coming Together, 600 N. Lorel Block Club*

Marvin Austin  
*Bethel New Life*

Stephanie Bell  
*HOPE Community Church*

Danielle Dixon  
*Westside Health Authority*

Kenneth 'Butch' Campbell (decd.)  
*Peacemakers Coalition*

Nate Washington (decd.)  
*Peacemakers Coalition*

## IMPLEMENTATION LEADERSHIP

Implementation of the Quality-of-Life Plan will be led by the Chairs and Co-Chairs of seven task forces. These individuals are responsible for mobilizing community leadership, partner organizations, and other resources to implement the actions of the Quality-of-Life Plan.

### Community Narrative

*Co-Chair*  
Briana Shields, Briana Janeé Arts

*Co-Chair*  
Kenneth Varner, Healthy Schools Campaign

### Economic Development

*Co-Chair*  
Jerrold Williams, Community Resident

*Co-Chair*  
Thomas Gary, Community Resident

### Education

*Co-Chair*  
Natasha Smith-Walker, Project Exploration

*Co-Chair*  
Crystal Bell, Ella Flagg Young Elementary

*Co-Chair*  
Charles Anderson, Michele Clark High School

### Housing

*Co-Chair*  
Athena Williams, West Cook Homeownership Center

*Co-Chair*  
Allison McGowan, Community Resident

### Public Safety

*Co-Chair*  
Bradly Johnson, BUILD, Inc

*Co-Chair*  
Marilyn Pitchford, Institute for Nonviolence

### Youth Empowerment

*Chair*  
Carmen Scott, BUILD, Inc.

### Civic Engagement

*Chair*  
Deborah Williams, Habilitative Systems Inc.

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Cover photo: Residents form a prayer circle at the beginning of a February 2017 block clean-up organized by West Side resident and activist Marseil Jackson.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

Austin is becoming a powerful community of civically engaged residents, responsive and accountable institutions, and highly collaborative private, public, nonprofit and faith-based leaders.

Out of that power, we will create:

- Support for our youth and a high-quality cradle-to-career education system
- Economic revitalization for and by Austin
- Safe neighborhoods for all ages
- A revitalized community spirit built on our cultural and recreational assets
- A vibrant real estate market that supports homeowners and affordable housing

Austin is ready to make great strides. Our first ever community Quality-of-Life Plan sets out a comprehensive strategy to restore Austin and to create something new. To reach our goals, we are creating deeper relationships and working together in a coordinated way like never before.

The largest community area in Chicago, with the second largest population, Austin contains many neighborhoods, each unique but interconnected.

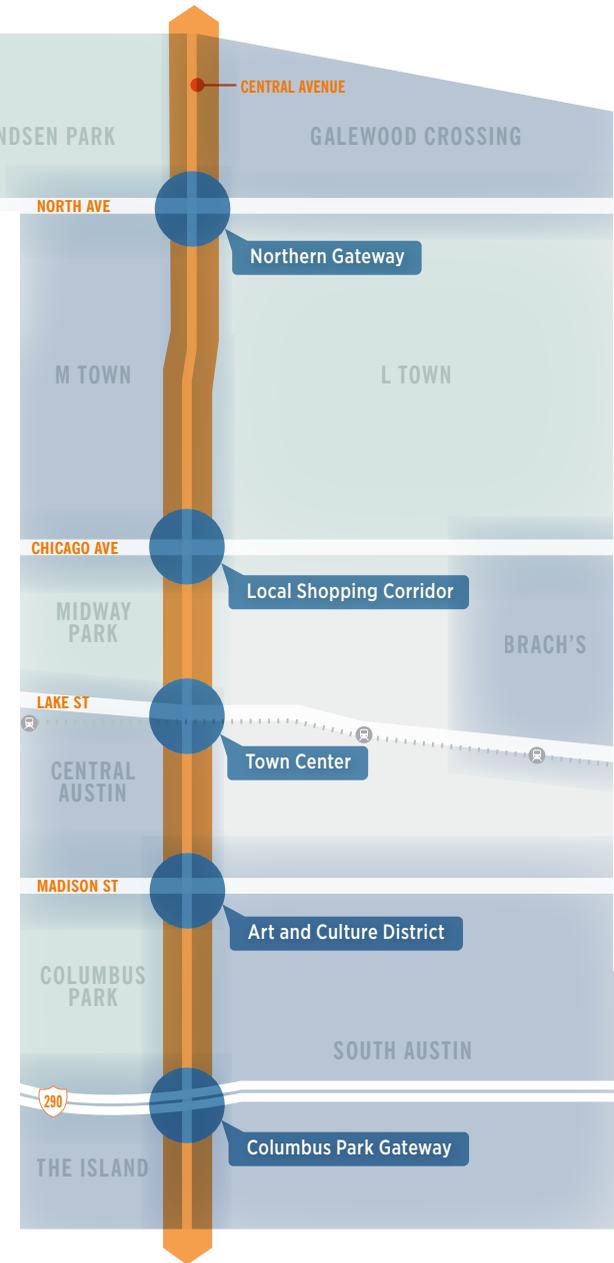
We have hundreds of blocks of well-maintained housing, national historical landmarks, and resources like the Austin Town Hall Park and Cultural Center. We are an “urban suburb,” connected to downtown and to nearby towns via commercial corridors and public transportation. Central Avenue is truly central, connecting all the parts of Austin, from North Avenue down south of the expressway.

### A symbol of a united Austin: Central Avenue Corridor

Central Avenue represents a unifying and supportive spine through Austin. It connects the neighborhoods and districts that together make up our community, from Galewood Crossing in the north through shopping near Midway Park and Austin's historic downtown, past Columbus Park and on to The Island in the south. Some appear on official city maps and some do not, but all are important to us.

When discussing Austin's main thoroughfares, many people think of our east-west corridors: Madison and Lake streets, Chicago and North avenues, the Eisenhower Expressway. These have become paths that often help people move through Austin on their way to Oak Park or the Loop, instead of to our community. Local leaders are working to revitalize Austin's east-west corridors and renew them as vibrant commercial districts, and this plan includes such projects as well.

We also propose that Central Avenue can complement these efforts by becoming Austin's Main Street, connecting some of our community's strongest assets. A healthy Central Avenue Corridor consistently branded from the north to the south will serve as a unifying presence, both supporting and illustrating a thriving and united Austin.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

As Austin's population went from majority white to majority African American, services and attention by the City of Chicago receded. The housing bubble and resulting recession hit our community hard.

Yet things are changing in Austin. Thousands of residents have stayed in the community, invested in their homes, their blocks, and their neighborhood. The population has stayed relatively steady since 2010, and neighbors have started small groups to help local kids or clean up empty lots. Social service and advocacy organizations are working in concert like never before, and the City of Chicago has invested in major restoration projects.

To create this plan, we launched an unprecedented effort to bring together and create synergy among local leaders. That steering committee founded seven working groups that met regularly over nearly a year to address the issues in this plan. We held one-on-one meetings with local stakeholders, presented at community meetings and held three public forums with hundreds of participants. As we move forward together, we are building a new Austin, by our community and for our community.

## Key Assets and Plan Partners



 <b>FAITH CENTERS</b>	 <b>COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>
 <b>YOUTH DEVELOPMENT</b>	 <b>BUSINESS &amp; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>
 <b>COMMUNITY PARKS &amp; GARDENS</b>	 <b>LIBRARIES</b>
 <b>HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS</b>	 <b>ARTS &amp; CULTURE</b>
 <b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	 <b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b>

## ISSUE AREA I COMMUNITY NARRATIVE

We will revitalize the image and spirit of Austin by promoting assets such as our historic housing, creating a healthy community and building a more robust environment for local arts and culture.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Invest in local arts and cultural spaces.

- Create local arts and cultural centers, while leveraging our historic buildings, which serve the entire community.
- Establish public/ private partnerships that support and expand existing funding for arts and culture.
- Activate our school spaces to provide options for student, resident and traveling arts fairs, programming and activities.

*Key Potential Partners:* Catalyst Circle Rock, Austin Town Hall and Cultural Center, Austin College and Career Academy, Chicago Children's Choir, AMFM, Christ the King College Prep, St. Angela School, Chicago Austin Youth Travel Adventures\*

### STRATEGY 2

#### Increase the number of authentic images and stories portraying the Austin community.

- Bridge the gap between how residents' experience Austin and how local, regional and national media outlets reflect them.
- Create a new social media campaign, led by youth, with images, stories and conversations that reflect the many interesting and important facets of life in Austin.
- Create materials that brand and market Austin and all it offers to residents and visitors.

*Key Potential Partners:* Austin Talks, Austin Weekly News, The Austin Voice Newspapers, BUILD, Westside Health Authority, Austin Chamber of Commerce, Choose Chicago, Chicago Architecture Center, DCASE, Prevention Partnership

### STRATEGY 3

#### Create environments that foster health and wellness in the community.

- Improve our parks and vacant spaces, increasing residents' access to healthy activities.
- Increase the local choices for healthy food options—from grocery stores to local restaurants and schools.
- Establish a network of proactive, trauma-informed programs.
- Build our sense of community by engaging residents in activities that enliven our blocks with green space.
- Lead a campaign for a ballot initiative to establish a new community mental health center in and for our community.

*Key Potential Partners:* Chicago Park District, Park Advisory Councils, Block Clubs, Catholic Charities, SANA, CANA PCC Wellness, Chicago Market, CLOCC, Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry, Austin Community Food Co-op, Greater Chicago Food Depository, BUILD, Chicago Public Schools Network 3, Chicago Teachers Union, Restorative Justice Hubs, Austin Green Team, St. Angela, St. Anthony Hospital, Habilitative Systems Inc., Westside Health Authority, Loretto Hospital, West Side United/Rush

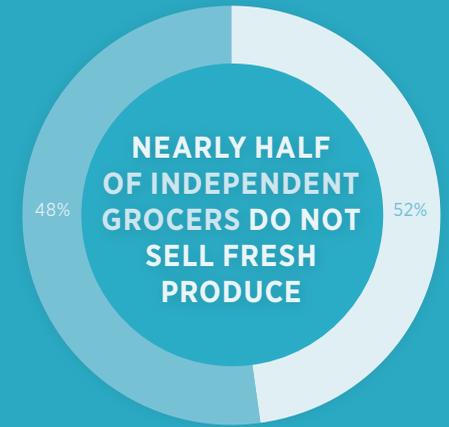
**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Increase the ratio of positive to negative stories about Austin
2. Retain or increase the number of families with school-age youth
3. Increase life expectancy in Austin zip codes



1 acre in Austin: 521 residents  
1 acre in Chicago: 205 residents

**Each acre of park space in Austin serves 2.5X the residents as compared to the rest of the city.**



THESE GROCERS TEND TO BE CONCENTRATED IN THE NORTHERN SECTION OF AUSTIN

*Source: Fresh Moves audit of 25 independent grocers, 2011*



**3 to 1:**

Ratio of negative stories about Austin to positive stories in 2017



The “**Empress of the Queen Annes**” is one of four homes in Austin from before 1895 by acclaimed architect **Frederick Schock**, all designated Chicago Landmarks

## ISSUE AREA I ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We will create economic revitalization in Austin and by Austin. We will support new and existing local businesses, entrepreneurs, and the workforce; improve our commercial corridors; and attract new investment to build a stronger, more dynamic local economy.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Improve transportation infrastructure to and through Austin.

- Establish a process to catalogue current resources, organizations and people working on infrastructure projects in Austin.
- Engage an expert in urban infrastructure as a community consultant, so Austin is prepared when plans that will impact our community are proposed or possible.
- Invest in beautification and signage for Austin's commercial corridors to create an attractive and walkable neighborhood environment.

*Key Potential Partners:* Westside Health Authority, CMAP, Great Cities Institute, City of Chicago, Austin Chamber of Commerce

### STRATEGY 2

#### Train and develop local workers and entrepreneurs.

- Connect existing programs that prepare residents for well-paying jobs and careers, such as workforce development and entrepreneurship trainings.

- Expand and support local resources like boot camps and apprenticeships in high demand economic sectors such as advanced manufacturing in key sectors, healthcare, and building and trades.
- Establish a new Manufacturing Training Center in Austin to serve the West Side.
- Support existing and create new entrepreneurship development programs, so Austin becomes a place where someone with vision and hard work can build their own enterprise.

*Key Potential Partners:* Manufacturing Renaissance, Jane Addams Resource Corporation, St. Joseph Services, Catholic Charities, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago Federation of Labor, World Business Chicago, Bethel New Life

### STRATEGY 3

#### Build the local economy and small businesses to improve community wealth and self-sufficiency.

- Explore bringing in new local restaurants, grocery stores, and housing with the co-op model.
- Develop materials about opportunities in Austin and reach out to commercial enterprises, including national and regional commercial anchors.

- Collaborate with other neighborhoods in Chicago that have grown their local economy to learn from their experience.
- Work with Austin's council members to ensure local stores and restaurants are clean and safe.
- Expand the boundaries of Austin's Retail Thrive Zone to encompass more of the community's business areas.
- Establish a "Shop Local" initiative to keep more of our own spending power in the Austin economy.
- Educate investors and lenders on the commercial opportunities and incentives in Austin.
- Use our industrial heritage and other land as sites for a new generation of advanced manufacturing and build facilities and resources to support these opportunities.

*Key Potential Partners:* Bethel New Life, IFF, Chicago Community Loan Fund, CMAP, World Business Chicago, Civic Consulting Alliance, City Colleges of Chicago, Metropolitan Planning Council, local elected officials

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Increase the number of strong blocks of occupied businesses with a clear cultural identity
2. Improve walkability score in Austin
3. Increase opportunities for paid training and apprenticeships at local businesses
4. Decrease the supply/demand gap in Austin's spending power
5. Attract new anchor commercial operations and increase diversity of overall commercial mix in Austin



**\$159.5 million:**

Annual amount spent outside of Austin by local residents on retail and eating out

**\$14 million:**

Annual amount spent in Austin from people outside the community at beer, wine and liquor stores



32 percent of jobs in Austin pay less than \$15,000 a year, and 75 percent pay less than \$40,000.

**The median household income is \$31,634.**

**55 percent** of Austin residents **over age 16** are **not in the labor force**



Chicago Avenue is one of Austin’s primary thoroughfares that can once again become a main shopping district in our community and a draw for residents and visitors. Streetscape enhancements and other public and private investments can develop a vibrant, sustainable and safe business corridor.



This zone from Central to Laramie is a part of the Soul City Corridor, establishing an African-American cultural identity along Chicago Avenue. The Quality-of-Life Plan seeks to support this effort, supporting local and black-owned businesses to thrive in the corridor.

Two design charrettes during the process to create this plan identified initial physical opportunities to meet the community’s goals for the corridor,

outlining potential ideas and options for the former Laramie State Bank and other locations rather than final recommendations. Determining specific improvements to the streetscape and sites along Chicago Avenue will continue to bring together residents, local businesses, elected officials and outside experts.

Improving Chicago Avenue is an example of how strategies from across this Quality-of-Life Plan work together to create comprehensive change.

As roadway lighting is enhanced, for example, new light poles can include high-quality metal identity signage of local landmarks like Austin’s Town Hall and fabric banners commissioned from local artists. Curb bump-outs can create mini plazas for outdoor seating for local restaurants or areas for positive loitering, helping to reclaim safe public space. This section of Chicago Avenue can be a demonstration to better market the available commercial space and pursue healthy food businesses or potential spaces for community arts and cultural organizations.

**SPECIFIC PLAN ACTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE REDEVELOPMENT ALONG CHICAGO AVENUE ARE:**

**Community Narrative**

- 1.1 Create community arts and cultural centers
- 1.2 Build a public/private partnership to support and expand existing funding for arts
- 3.1 Improve our parks and vacant lots and use the sites for healthy activities
- 3.2 Promote healthier food choices across Austin

**Economic Development**

- 1.3 Invest in beautification and signage for Austin’s commercial corridors
- 3.4 Work with aldermen to improve local businesses
- 3.5 Expand Austin’s Retail Thrive zone
- 3.6 Promote community engagement and outreach around a “Shop Local” initiative
- 3.7 Educate investors and lenders on the commercial opportunities in Austin

**Housing**

- 4.1 Preserve and invest in vacant buildings

**Public Safety**

- 3.1 Create art/design showcase opportunities
- 3.2 Launch beautification projects that create pride in the neighborhood
- 3.3 Promote community engagement opportunities for local institutions
- 4.1 Organize events that reclaim parks and other public spaces

# IDEAS



## STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

### --- Raised Landscaped Planter Curbs

Repair Sidewalk Condition  
New Roadway Lighting/  
Banners  
(Existing Overhead Lighting  
Wires to be Removed)

### --- Repair Sidewalk Condition

New Roadway Lighting/  
Banners  
(Existing Overhead Lighting  
Wires to be Removed)

## CDOT PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

### — Parking Restriping

### ● Pedestrian Refuge Island

### ● Existing Pedestrian Refuge Island

### ● Bump-out at Side Streets Opportunities for Landscaping, Public Art and Seating Areas

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: CHICAGO AVENUE

### A Mixed-Use Building (Existing Parking Lot)

3-Story (28,000 g.s.f.)  
1st Floor Retail: 6,000 s.f.  
2nd-3rd Floor: 24 units  
750 s.f./unit  
Parking: 23 spaces

### B Repurposed Garage Building

• 8,800 s.f.  
• Restaurant with Outdoor  
Dining Plaza

## FORMER LARAMIE STATE BANK SITE

### C Makers / Artisan Space: 1-Story 15,000 s.f.

Shared Outdoor Space  
with Rehabbed Bank  
Parking: 19 spaces

### D Rehab Former Laramie State Bank



## ISSUE AREA | EDUCATION

Our local educational system and partners will provide the services, opportunities and support to help all our students stay on track, enrich their education and serve their needs, from early childhood through high school to job and career readiness.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Improve and expand access to quality early-childhood programs.

- Increase training and educational opportunities for the staff at early-childhood providers, making the field more desirable and effective as a workplace.
- Help existing early-education providers become accredited and more deeply prepared for child development.
- Increase the services for children with special needs in quality early-education programs.
- Work with the Chicago Public Schools to align curriculum for seamless transition to kindergarten.

*Key Potential Partners:* Austin Childcare Providers' Network, Illinois Department of Human Services, New Moms, VOCEL, A House in Austin, Truman College, PCC Wellness, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago Public Schools

### STRATEGY 2

#### Increase parents' involvement in their children's education.

- Ensure that parents understand what is expected of their children in school.

- Provide convenient programs at schools that help parents tutor and support their children academically.
- Create outreach and clear communications to parents so they understand what services and agencies for their children are available at the school.
- Empower parents to be leaders in their children's schools and join and support their Local School Council.

*Key Potential Partners:* Kids First Chicago, Community Organizing and Family Issues, Catholic Charities, St. Joseph Services, Chicago Public Schools Parent University, Westside Health Authority, POWER PAC Westside Branch

### STRATEGY 3

#### Increase student access to wrap-around services.

- Implement the Community School Model in Austin schools.
- Establish a proactive, healing network of trauma informed programs, teachers and staff in our schools.
- Implement restorative justice practices school wide for all staff and students.

*Key Potential Partners:* Westside Health Authority, St. Joseph Services, Catholic Charities, BUILD, Chicago Public Schools, CPS Network 3, Chicago Teachers Union, Resilience, Restorative Justice Hubs, Mt. Sinai, UIC Jane Addams College of Social Work

### STRATEGY 4

#### Increase student enrollment in Austin neighborhood school.

- Establish a high-quality high school International Baccalaureate program, as well as other options for students with different academic interests.
- Review curriculum program needs and collect current data to create profiles of all local schools.
- Expand dual-credit programs in our schools that allow a student to earn college credit in a high school course.
- Improve communication and marketing from neighborhood schools so they are on a level playing field to attract incoming students.

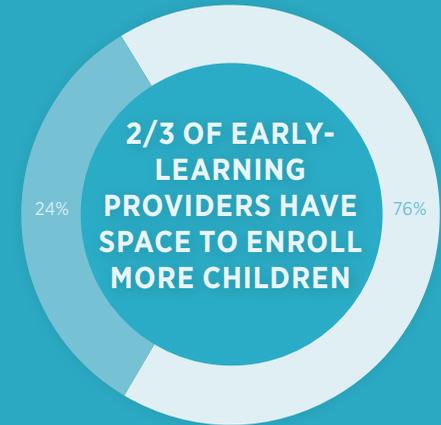
*Key Potential Partners:* Kids First Chicago, Austin Coming Together, Chicago Public Schools, Austin CAC

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Increase level of enrollment within Austin community schools from early childhood to high school
2. Increase college and workforce preparation course options for elementary and high school students
3. Increase number of high-quality enrichment and supportive options for at-risk youth
4. Increase the number of Austin schools offering wrap-around services
5. Increase parent access to social services and resources at local schools



Neighborhood schools lost about a quarter of their students from 2013 to 2017



▲  
BUT MOST NEED HELP GETTING FULLY ACCREDITED



There are **8,687 open slots** across Austin's elementary and high schools, which equates to a **loss of \$41.5 million** from local school budgets

**20% of third graders** in Austin elementary schools met or exceeded reading scores

ACROSS THE DISTRICT: 32%

AUSTIN THIRD GRADERS: 20% OVER 10% LOWER



**Madison and Central is one of the most important intersections of Austin. The architecture and history of Madison Street make the site a gateway to Chicago, and Central Avenue is a spine that connects the many smaller neighborhoods that compose Austin.**

At the heart of the location is a unique opportunity: the redevelopment of Emmet School. One of the community's key institutions, Westside Health Authority, has negotiated site control for future use of the building. Urban design can improve Madison and Central in other ways too, connecting key sites such as Catalyst School's new performing arts center and the Frank Lloyd Wright home on Central, for example. Development can include infill housing on nearby vacant lots, a space for events such as a local farmers' market, and a more pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Westside Health Authority and other Quality-of-Life Plan leaders agree that it will be important to listen to direct community voice as formal redevelopment plans are crafted because collaboration among many Austin stakeholders will be required for its long-term sustainability. Two primary themes emerged from

charrettes during the planning process: the need to provide comprehensive community services and the opportunity to use the arts to engage and empower the community.



**SPECIFIC PLAN ACTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE EMMET SCHOOL SITE ARE:**

**Community Narrative**

- 2.2 Expand and support local resources like boot camps and apprenticeships in high demand economic sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and building and trades
- 2.3 Build a new Manufacturing Training Center in Austin
- 2.4 Invest in entrepreneurship development programs
- 3.1 Incorporate the co-op model for local restaurants, grocery stores and housing
- 3.2 Attract major commercial anchors
- 3.8 Build facilities and resources to support the new generation of advanced manufacturing

**Youth Empowerment**

- 1.2 Create physical places where youth can gather and community-based organizations can offer services
- 2.3 Establish programs to build personal and professional career development and entrepreneurial training

# IDEAS



Planners and architects helped scope some options, and confirmed that redevelopment at this intersection can achieve many Quality-of-Life Plan strategies. The site could be an opportunity for a new Manufacturing Training Center, and other workforce boot camps and apprenticeship programs. Commercial use from retail to light manufacturing is also a possibility, whether through traditional or co-op models proposed in the plan. Beyond economics, youth gathering and arts spaces could also play a part.

#### MADISON AND CENTRAL: NEARBY ASSETS

- A** New Catalyst Auditorium
- B** Grocery Store
- C** Walsler House
- D** Frank Lloyd Wright Home

#### STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

-  Neighborhood Gateway/  
Seating Opportunity
-  Repair Roadway Surfacing
-  Raised Landscaped Median
-  Raised Landscaped Planter  
Curbs
-  Repair Sidewalk Condition
- Infill Street Trees
- New Roadway Lighting/  
Banners
- (Existing Overhead Lighting  
Wires to be Removed)



We will create a stabilized housing market in Austin, with support for local homeowners and a wide array of affordable housing options.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Increase the amount of owner-occupied housing stock in Austin by local stakeholders.

- Give local residents first opportunity to purchase homes that have been foreclosed or are otherwise owned by the City or financial institutions.
- Expand programs that help existing homeowners retain their homes if facing a crisis due to issues such as deferred maintenance, a loss of a job or sharply increasing property taxes.
- Educate families and provide support for the transfer of homeownership within families.
- Expand pre- and post-purchase homebuyer education programs so that buyers are prepared for financial and other responsibilities of being an owner.
- Create a new community land trust to buy vacant or foreclosed properties and keep them affordable for current residents.
- Promote and expand use of the Federal Section 8 Homeownership Voucher Program, which allows voucher holders to use those funds for homeownership.

*Key Potential Partners:* Hunters Realty, City of Chicago, West Cook Homeownership Center, NHS, Illinois Housing Development Authority, Because I Care, LAF, Center for Disability and Elder Law, Chicago Housing Authority

### STRATEGY 2

#### Allocate resources in Austin to support renters.

- Ensure that there is easily accessible information about who owns property in Austin.
- Expand the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to build housing in the community.
- Promote and expand local use of the Section 8 Homeownership Voucher Program.
- Increase communication and education between tenants and property owners/ management.
- Become a leading advocate for a local policy agenda to address barriers to accessing affordable housing for low-income families.

*Key Potential Partners:* Mercy Housing Lakefront, GADA, Heartland Alliance, Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Housing Authority, CIC, West Cook Homeownership Center, Westside NAACP

### STRATEGY 3

#### Develop a variety of affordable housing choices to serve a wide array of residents.

- Develop housing for residents age 55 and over, so they can stay in the community when their working years are over.

- Build new quality transitional housing for populations facing specific challenges, such as reentering citizens and women experiencing domestic abuse.

*Key Potential Partners:* Westside Health Authority, Mercy Housing Lakefront, Heartland Alliance, POAH, Mather LifeWays

### STRATEGY 4

#### Decrease the vacancy rate of buildings in our community.

- Preserve and invest in vacant buildings so they return to residential homes.
- Expand home-buyer assistance programs at local banks and nonprofit organizations to include down-payment assistance programs, credit counseling and special loan rates.
- Increase capacity and awareness of the Home Preservation Program, which distributes small grants to property owners in Austin to help get their buildings ready for tenants.

*Key Potential Partners:* West Cook Homeownership Center, Westside Health Authority, Rebuilding Together

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Decrease number of vacant properties
2. Increase the percentage of Austin residents who are homeowners
3. Increase number of community based developers willing to provide affordable housing
4. Decrease number of foreclosures filed and decrease property tax sales
5. Increase number of homebuyers occupying formerly vacant properties



**12,670**  
own their  
homes

vs.

**19,367**  
rent their  
homes

▲  
**40%**  
OF HOUSEHOLDS

▲  
**60%**  
OF HOUSEHOLDS



In Austin, **16% of all rental units are rented using a housing choice voucher**, compared to 7% across Cook County

**1/3** of Austin homeowners filed for foreclosure at some point from 2005 to 2017



We have a shortfall of **more than 8,700** affordable homes

## ISSUE AREA I PUBLIC SAFETY

We will collaborate and create programs that increase a sense of safety, community and quality of life, building a healthy and resilient neighborhood.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Create high-quality prevention strategies to build a safer Austin.

- Add more restorative justice activities in the community, such as peace circles, to help mitigate conflict and address injustice and trauma.
- Build a greater sense of community and connect neighbors with a community website, events and door-to-door outreach.
- Launch new efforts in our local schools to create new peer support groups for youth that foster emotional and social connections.
- Establish new trainings for local police in issues such as community engagement, cultural humility and mental health.
- Create programs that engage the community and police officers to repair distrust and build relationships.

*Key Potential Partners:* Catholic Charities, CPD 15th and 25th District CAPS, Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, BUILD, Westside Health Authority, Jehovah Jireh #1 Outreach Ministry, Austin Coming Together, Circles & Ciphers

### STRATEGY 2

#### Promote high-quality intervention strategies to help at-risk residents and those impacted by the criminal justice system.

- Build and promote a trauma-informed network that offers services for mental health, domestic violence, housing support and returning citizens.
- Create a restorative justice community court to provide an alternative to incarceration.
- Expand outreach intervention programs that have proven to be effective in breaking the cycle of violence on our streets.

*Key Potential Partners:* Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, Catholic Charities, BUILD, Chicago Public Schools Network 3, Chicago Teachers Union, Resilience, Restorative Justice Hubs, Jehovah Jireh #1, Outreach Ministry

### STRATEGY 3

#### Increase displays, activities and events of culture and peace in the community.

- Create art/design showcase opportunities in our community.
- Establish unique signage and beautification projects that create pride in the neighborhood.

- Catalogue and promote existing community engagement programs for youth at schools, churches and other local institutions.

*Key Potential Partners:* BUILD, St. Angela School, Westside Health Authority, AMFM, Austin Town Hall and Cultural Center, South Austin Neighborhood Association, PCC Wellness, Austin Green Team, Territory, Central Austin Neighborhood Association

### STRATEGY 4

#### Establish more safe spaces in the community for youth.

- Organize events that reclaim parks and other public spaces for peaceful and fun uses.
- Provide young people with more choices of interesting, engaging activities outside of school.
- Reclaim and restore public spaces to become peaceful places that are clearly valued by the community and welcoming to youth.

*Key Potential Partners:* Westside Health Authority, BUILD, Jehovah Jireh #1 Outreach Ministry, St. Joseph Services, Project Exploration, The Peace Corner, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Decrease number of non-violent arrests among Austin youth
2. Create cross-training in nonviolence and trauma-informed practices across all community institutions
3. Increase resident participation in programs addressing Austin's sense of safety
4. Decrease number of shooting incidents



**12th:**

Rank of Austin among Chicago's 77 community areas for violent crimes per capita

**\$550 million:**

Amount spent on incarceration of Austin residents from 2005 – 2009, the highest of any Chicago community



Local programs like the **Good Neighbor Campaign, Austin Reponse Team and Light the Night** bring together neighbors to strengthen social cohesion

The City of Chicago spent **5x more** on policing in 2018 than on mental health and youth services



## ISSUE AREA | YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Austin will have healthier and more engaged youth, able to reach their full potential.

### STRATEGY 1

**Increase positive social connections, communications and information shared among Austin youth.**

- Involve young people in the leadership of the Youth Empowerment Task Force.
- Create new spaces in the community dedicated to youth, a mix of places where youth can gather and locations where community-based organizations can offer services.

*Key Potential Partners:* Austin Coming Together, BUILD, Chicago Park District, Westside Health Authority, Assata's Daughters, World Vision, Chicago Park District, Christ the King College Prep

### STRATEGY 2

**Prepare youth for year-round employment and career opportunities.**

- Build networks of professionals who can be a resource for our young people.
- Create programs that discuss and foster self-awareness and career-focused thinking.
- Establish programs to build personal and professional career development and entrepreneurial training.

*Key Potential Partners:* St. Joseph Services, Manufacturing Renaissance, Chicago Beyond, Youth Guidance, Academy of Scholastic Achievement, Austin Career and Education Center, Westside Health Authority, One Summer Chicago, Apple, The Hatchery

### STRATEGY 3

**Expand supportive programs for local youth's social, emotional and physical well-being.**

- Expand access to trauma training for professionals working with our youth in all capacities.
- Expand the network of trauma support service system for youth and families.
- Create new partnerships and collaborations between schools, community-based organizations, churches and the Chicago Park District to build a more supportive network.
- Create new paths for youth interactions with mentors and role models who can speak directly to youth.

*Key Potential Partners:* Catholic Charities, Lurie's Children Hospital, Illinois Caucus of Adolescent Health, CPS, PCC Austin Family Health Center, Rape Victim Advocates, Sister Survivor Network, Cluster Tutoring, Chicago Department of Public Health (ReCAST), Chicago Beyond, Friends of the Children, College Mentoring Experience, BUILD, Chicago Dept. of Family Support Services, Westside Health Authority

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Increase youth job and entrepreneurship opportunities and participation
2. Increase intergenerational community engagement programming and participation among Austin youth
3. Increase use of restorative justice practices
4. Strengthen ties between local public schools and the community
5. Youth able to advocate for themselves and identify positive coping mechanisms
6. Increase participation in youth programming



**Austin ranks “very low” on the Child Opportunity Index,** a measure of 19 indicators around educational, health/environmental and economic opportunity

Six in ten young men in our community age 20 to 24 are unemployed and not in school



**35,736** Austin residents are younger than 24



## ISSUE AREA | CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Sustain collaborative community involvement—from community campaigns to engaging elected officials—so we can bring voices and power to the efforts to improve Austin.

### STRATEGY 1

**Empower local voters and elected officials to be a voice for Austin.**

- Develop a training for political candidates to engage the community, such as the participatory budgeting process.
- Create and sustain voter turnout and ensure that voters are educated about the most important issues facing our community, city and state.
- Provide opportunities for students to become civically engaged in local efforts to improve youth outcomes and become socially active through new high school civics requirements.

*Key Potential Partners:* South Austin Neighborhood Association, Chicago Westside NAACP, Westside Ministers Coalition, Austin Coming Together, Organizing for Action

### STRATEGY 2

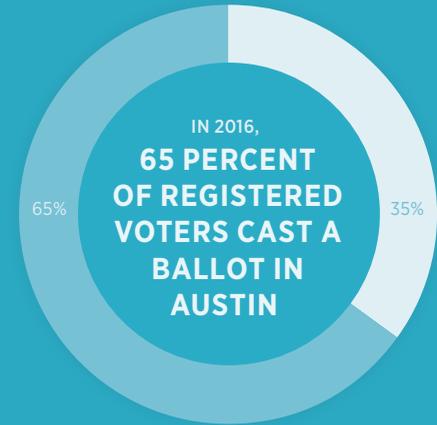
**Cultivate local leadership to become more effective advocates for our community.**

- Empower, train and prepare parent leaders to advocate on behalf of our community, including serving on and working with Local School Councils.
- Identify and train community organizers to create robust community campaigns to garner support and momentum for this plan's vision.
- Build a core of organizers between the ages of 18-35 who can help reach out to Austin younger population.

*Key Potential Partners:* Austin Coming Together, Westside Health Authority, Chicago Westside NAACP, Kids First Chicago, POWER PAC Westside Branch

**OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

1. Increase the number of Austin residents attending public schools in Austin
2. Increase voter registration and voter turnout
3. Increase the number of students enrolled in civics courses
4. Increase the number of people attending beat meetings
5. Increase the number of economic opportunities for students



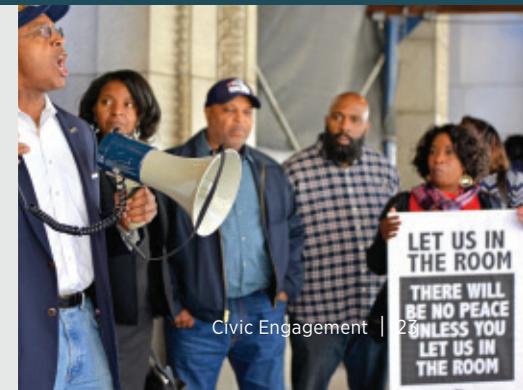
▲  
ACROSS CHICAGO, THE TURNOUT WAS 71 PERCENT



Austin is served by **three aldermen, two state representatives, two state senators, a county commissioner and one U.S. Congressman**

## 12 of the 17 schools

that serve Austin still had open seats on the Local School Council (LSC) after the 2018 application deadline



## Lead Agency: Austin Coming Together

Austin Coming Together (ACT) was founded in 2010 by a group of 20 community leaders that came together to discuss how to create systemic change in Austin. These leaders envisioned a thriving Austin community whose actions are driven by the core values of unity, commitment, transparency, collaboration, and action.

ACT's mission is to increase the collective impact of its member organizations on education and economic development outcomes in Austin. ACT functions as the backbone agency for collective impact—guiding a unified vision and strategy for Austin, aligning activities of our members to ensure they are mutually reinforcing, measuring the shared outcomes of our members, and facilitating continuous communication with the broader community.

ACT's long-term collective strategy is called Thrive 2025. Thrive 2025 outlines four measurable impact goals to achieve by the year 2025. These include increasing access to high quality early learning, creating pathways to living wage careers, improving neighborhood safety, and stabilizing the housing market. ACT and its members will achieve these ambitious goals through three strategic imperatives: 1) enhancing the access, coordination, and quality of human services, 2) creating community-driven plans like this QLP that attract public and private investment and 3) changing public policies that impede the achievement of our goals.

## LISC Chicago

With residents and partners, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Chicago forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families.

Embedded in LISC's founding, and strengthened over the last two decades, we are committed to comprehensive community planning. This planning process is essential to building the local capacity to effectively connect to the right resources to achieve fundamental change and long-lasting results in our communities. In the late 1990s, LISC, with leadership support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, created the New Communities Program (NCP), a groundbreaking, bottom-up, comprehensive community planning effort in which LISC supports the development of Quality-of-Life Plans (QLPs) by community leaders and residents in Chicago neighborhoods.

In each neighborhood, a designated lead agency brings together a diverse group of organizations and residents to identify priorities ranging from better education, housing, broader job choices, safer streets, new economic opportunities and stronger personal finances. LISC invests in, coaches and champions each effort from the earliest building of local relationships, through plan creation, implementation and continual evaluation.

As of 2018, 27 QLPs have been created, garnering more than \$872M in new investments aligned in support of community visions in neighborhoods across the city.

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**Austin Coming Together**

