

NORTH PARK COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS STUDY

Open House Summary February 4, 2019



On Monday, February 4th the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) hosted an Open House for the North Park Commercial Corridors Study at Northside College Preparatory High School, located at 5501 N. Kedzie Ave. Participants had the opportunity to review and comment on draft findings and recommendations relating to the three main components of the project: a Market Study, Outreach + Engagement and Design Guidelines.

The meeting kicked-off with an introduction from Todd Wyatt of DPD. Alderman Laurino (39th Ward) provided remarks and emphasized the importance of community involvement and partnering with residents, business owners, and the future elected alderman to implement recommendations from the Study.

Members from the project team then gave a presentation that summarized project activities to date and provided an overview of the main findings and recommendations. This report summarizes the information presented at the meeting and the feedback received from meeting attendees.

The full presentation and all other meeting materials can be viewed on the project website [here](http://www.tinyURL.com/NorthParkStudy) (www.tinyURL.com/NorthParkStudy).



People from across the North Park community attended the February 4th Open House

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Purpose + How to Use This Study

- Create a reference tool for community stakeholders that provides guidance on improving the commercial corridors in North Park (Bryn Mawr, Foster, and Kedzie)
- The North Park Study provides:
 - Data and facts about the neighborhood
 - Information on resources to support existing business owners
 - Market data that can help attract new businesses
 - Design guidelines to encourage quality development

Land Use

- Largest land use category in the Study Area is Institutional (35%), mostly due to the many schools
- Commercial uses occupy 26% of the area and vacant land occupies 7%

Community Engagement Summary

- The community was engaged through: 3 Pop-up Events, 7 Stakeholder Interviews, 2 Working Group Meetings, a Community Survey with over 300 responses, and an Online Comment Map with 154 visitors and 43 comments
- Key themes learned from the outreach process include: Filling Vacant Storefronts, Keep it Local + Unique, and Three Distinct Corridors

Market Study Summary

- **Demographics + Diversity**
 - Even split between owners and renters, wide range of household incomes, decreasing household sizes, and rebounding home sales prices
 - Efforts to support existing businesses should focus on connecting owners to resources such as SBIF, Small Business Center, and Class 7a/7b incentives
 - New businesses should build upon cultural diversity of North Park

- **Engage Institutions + Employers**

- There are almost 15,000 students and 1,800 faculty and staff in the Study Area
- Build on existing relationships with area institutions to identify opportunities to fill vacant and underutilized property in the commercial corridors
- Form strategic relationships between institutions and small businesses
- In appropriate areas along Foster and Bryn Mawr, consider mixed-use development with ground floor commercial space and residential above that might be attractive to area employees

- **Support Local Businesses**

- Bryn Mawr has the highest vacancy rate of the corridors with 45% vacant storefronts
- Most businesses in the area are locally owned (not national chains)
- High daytime population driven by institutions; dining establishments are important to commercial mix
- Consider development of a business organization that can help organize landlords and business owners to market North Park specifically

- **Attract New Business**

- Bryn Mawr: Smaller specialty retail or personal services establishments, work with NEIU and other landlords to seek new tenant opportunities (entertainment, cultural, maker/entrepreneurial)
- Foster: Encourage more retail, restaurants, and services to serve students, faculty and residents; work with NPU to encourage redevelopment of NWC of Foster/Kedzie
- Kedzie: Encourage service businesses and/or institutional uses along Kedzie given proximity to existing critical services (such as the CTA Facility)
- The Market Study recommends considering relaxing dry district restrictions to increase revenue for existing restaurants and the attractiveness of the area for potential restaurant tenants

Design Guidelines

- Design Guidelines can be used by DPD, the Aldermen, and community organizations to guide development and enhance the character of each corridor
- The draft Design Guidelines offer recommendations for the following categories: Architectural Character, Ground Floor + Signage, Building Setbacks + Public Spaces, New Construction, Building Orientation, Parking + Curb Cuts

Next Steps

- Public comments due by February 19th
- View draft materials on the project website and email comments to DPD@cityofchicago.org
- Final report available in Spring 2019

PUBLIC INPUT

In general, the input received supported the draft market findings and recommendations. Before and after the presentation, attendees were encouraged to review a series of boards that displayed more detailed information and graphics to illustrate the project findings. Participants were able to ask questions of the project team and/or submit comments via the Comment Card. Below are highlights from the input received at the Open House relating to the goals of this Study.

Existing Businesses

- There is untapped demand from the 660 senior housing units located in the North Park Village Apartments at Pulaski and Bryn Mawr
- Protect unique architecture on Bryn Mawr

New Businesses

- How to incentivize landlords to fill their empty storefronts?
- Desired future uses: walkable bars/pubs, salon/spa services, sidewalk cafes, farmers market and more local events, outdoor sports shop (kayaks, running/biking equipment), children's activities/programming, theater/entertainment venues, drug store, grocery, book store
- Partner with local schools, WFMT, and Channel 11 to foster more creative uses on Bryn Mawr
- New businesses should think of ways to reach/advertise to surrounding residents
- Pop-ups can demonstrate the value of new business ideas to community and future potential business owners

Implementation

- How can residents help in efforts to bring in businesses?
- How can organizations work together to implement the projects?

